



**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**IT STARTS WITH A MAP: AN INVESTIGATION
INTO THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN
THE MORO MUSLIM INSURGENCY**

by

Sean T. Daley

September 2023

Thesis Advisor:
Co-Advisor:

Anshu N. Chatterjee
Feroz H. Khan

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE September 2023	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE IT STARTS WITH A MAP: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE MORO MUSLIM INSURGENCY			5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S) Sean T. Daley			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) The 1970s modern Moro insurgency can trace its roots back centuries to the period of Spanish colonization. The impact of geography as a significant variable throughout the insurgency was consistently undervalued in explaining the conflict. This thesis seeks to answer the question: How did the Philippines' physical geography contribute to producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency in the Mindanao Island Group? This research identified key geographical themes that have consistently contributed to the insurgency and focused on physical geography as a highly impactful yet often neglected variable: monsoons, littoral maritime highways, and the proximity of Moros land to Malaysia vis-à-vis Manila. As a result, geography is clearly a significant factor in the Moro insurgency. The monsoon winds have consistently contributed to the movement of merchants and foreign powers into and throughout the region. The Moros have used the waterways and physical geography of the waterways to maintain their historical connection to each other and geographically close societies. Recommendations for the Philippine government include controlling external support to the insurgency via countries such as Malaysia. Recommendations that support U.S. diplomacy include maintaining safe maritime trade routes throughout the islands and the greater archipelago. A further U.S. effort includes continuing to equip and train the Filipino military, focusing on maritime counterinsurgency operations.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Moro, Mindanao, Muslim, insurgency, identity, nationalism			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 65
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

**IT STARTS WITH A MAP: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF
GEOGRAPHY IN THE MORO MUSLIM INSURGENCY**

Sean T. Daley
Major, United States Marine Corps
BS, Oregon State University, 2010
MA, Webster University, 2018

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(EAST ASIA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2023**

Approved by: Anshu N. Chatterjee
Advisor

Feroz H. Khan
Co-Advisor

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

The 1970s modern Moro insurgency can trace its roots back centuries to the period of Spanish colonization. The impact of geography as a significant variable throughout the insurgency was consistently undervalued in explaining the conflict. This thesis seeks to answer the question: How did the Philippines' physical geography contribute to producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency in the Mindanao Island Group? This research identified key geographical themes that have consistently contributed to the insurgency and focused on physical geography as a highly impactful yet often neglected variable: monsoons, littoral maritime highways, and the proximity of Moros land to Malaysia vis-à-vis Manila. As a result, geography is clearly a significant factor in the Moro insurgency. The monsoon winds have consistently contributed to the movement of merchants and foreign powers into and throughout the region. The Moros have used the waterways and physical geography of the waterways to maintain their historical connection to each other and geographically close societies. Recommendations for the Philippine government include controlling external support to the insurgency via countries such as Malaysia. Recommendations that support U.S. diplomacy include maintaining safe maritime trade routes throughout the islands and the greater archipelago. A further U.S. effort includes continuing to equip and train the Filipino military, focusing on maritime counterinsurgency operations.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	THE MORO INSURGENCY: THE FACTOR OF GEOGRAPHY	1
A.	RESEARCH QUESTION	3
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
D.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES	7
E.	RESEARCH DESIGN	8
F.	THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	8
II.	THE MOROS: HISTORY OF THE INSURGENCY	9
A.	THE MORO MOSAIC AND PERIODS OF HISTORY	9
B.	SULTANATES (PRE-COLONIAL): THE IMPORTANCE OF MONSOON WINDS.....	11
C.	SPANISH COLONIZATION: ROOTS OF THE MORO INSURGENCY.....	12
D.	U.S. COLONIZATION: AN EMERGENT INTERNATIONAL POWER	15
E.	PHILIPPINE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE MOROS	18
F.	SOCIO-POLITICAL INEQUALITIES AND PRODUCTION OF THE MORO INSURGENCY	22
	1. Land Ownership	23
	2. Sustaining the Insurgency	25
	3. State Response to the Insurgency: Establishment of an Autonomous Region.....	26
	4. Military Action and Derailed Peace Negotiations.....	26
G.	CONCLUSIONS	27
III.	THE CONTINUING MORO INSURGENCY: IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY.....	29
A.	SULTANATES (PRE-COLONIAL): TRADE ROUTES AND GRADUAL CONVERSION TO ISLAM	30
B.	SPANISH COLONIZATION: THE MOROS ADVANTAGE IN THE LITTORAL WATERWAYS.....	31
C.	U.S. COLONIZATION: THE MOROS' MARITIME HIGHWAY	33
D.	PHILIPPINE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND ISLAND OF THE MOROS	34

E.	SUMMARY	36
IV.	THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHY FOR PEACE.....	37
A.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
1.	State and Society Relations: Recommendations	40
2.	Future Steps for the U.S.: Recommendations	41
B.	AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	42
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	45
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	49

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
FOIP	Free and Open Indo-Pacific
INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the early 1970s, the modern Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines took shape with the establishment of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).¹ However, the Moro insurgency can trace its roots back centuries to the period of Spanish colonization.² While most of the research on the Moro insurgency centers on the Moros' demands and grievances and the Philippine government's inability to counter the insurgency, this thesis focuses on to the region's physical geography as a major contributor to the insurgency's centuries-old success.³ As a result, this thesis seeks to answer a key question: How did the Philippines' physical geography contribute to producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency in the Mindanao Island Group?

Employing the single case study method, the research indicates that the Moros were able to use the region's geography to effectively combat foreign powers from either defeating the insurgency or fully integrating them into a larger collective Philippine society. During the period of Spanish colonization, the Moros had a significant advantage over the Spanish with the littoral waterways.⁴ During the era of American colonization, the Moros largely maintained their advantage in the littoral waterways. The Moros are traditionally ocean-going people who effectively used the littoral features in their ancestral homeland to maintain movement throughout the islands. The geography of the Philippine archipelago represents a misalignment between the physical geography and the political boundaries between the Philippines and Malaysia. The Moros continue to utilize the same waterways as they have for centuries while the Philippine government is impeded by the

¹ "Moro National Liberation Front," Center for International Security and Cooperation, May 2019, 1, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-national-liberation-front>.

² Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 26 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3–4.

³ Mike Fowler, "Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now," *Small Wars Journal*, January 18, 2011, 7–10.

⁴ James Francis Warren, "Review of The Sulu Zone Revisited, by James Francis Warren" (Cambridge University Press on behalf of Department of History, National University of Singapore: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, February 2004), 8–10, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20072560>.

national boundaries, territorial waterways, and islands with their neighbors to the south. Over centuries, the Moros have consistently shown an ability to use the region's geography to maintain a level of autonomy separate from that of a foreign or external domestic power. While foreign powers and, subsequently the Philippine government, has significantly degraded their traditional way of life, the Moro insurgency and desire for autonomous rule endures.

This thesis also provides recommendations that address domestic considerations for the Philippine government as well as U.S. diplomatic recommendations, the domestic recommendations include greater control over external support to the Moro insurgency, which largely stems from the Moros' proximity to northern Malaysia. A further domestic recommendation includes a more equitable domestic management system that includes a well-coordinated infrastructure development and reconstruction plan. The U.S. diplomatic recommendations include increased bilateral and multilateral coordination with Philippines and other regional partners and allies, specifically focusing on the protection of maritime trade routes. Another U.S. recommendation is continued training, equipping, and execution of counterinsurgency operations with the Philippine government forces. While some recommendations seem to be similar to those that have been tried before, with a greater emphasis on the geographic aspect of each recommendation will offer a more successful approach to a sustained peace between the Moros and Philippine government.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give my greatest appreciation to Dr. Cheryldee Huddleston and Professor Anshu Chatterjee for never giving up on me, even in my darkest hours. I would also like to give a special thanks to Dr. Sandra Leavitt, Professor Feroz Khan, and Ms. Heather Eldridge for their unwavering support. I could not have asked for better assistance than I received from the Graduate Writing Center and National Security Affairs department at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my mother, father, and sisters for supporting me through another college degree. Subsequently, I would like to apologize to them for having to endure me going through another few years of school.

Finally, to that very special person, you know who you are. While your methods were far outside my comfort zone, you are a big contributor to this achievement, and I will be forever grateful.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. THE MORO INSURGENCY: THE FACTOR OF GEOGRAPHY

The Moros and Philippine government continue their attempts to counter a long-standing Moro insurgency that can trace its roots to the Philippines period of Spanish colonization and the Moros' resistance to foreign rule.¹ The Moro insurgency took its current shape in 1972 under the banner of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and has since spawned similar separatist organizations such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1977 and Abu Sayyaf in 1991.² Despite various efforts by the state to end the conflict and consolidate its power, the Moro insurgency endures in the Philippines. While self-governance and retaining the Moros ancestral homelands were the original root cause of their conflict, the religious divide between the Moros, who are mainly Muslims, and the predominantly Christian Philippine government is more pronounced in the modern insurgency. Despite the focus on religious symbols and narratives that accompany this insurgency and confrontation with the state, the issues remain rooted in protecting the homeland and economic inequality in the modern state of Philippines. In addition to the inequalities, other neglected factors such as geography are also critical for understanding the ongoing conflict.

The Philippines consists of 7,107 islands.³ Luzon and Mindanao, the main homeland for Moros, account for two-thirds of the land area.⁴ The insurgency remains largely isolated among the Mindanao Island Group, approximately 470 miles measured from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila to the Laguindingan International

¹ Fermin Adriano and Thomas Parks, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance; The Case of Mindanao, Philippines* (Bangkok, Thailand: The Asia Foundation, 2013), 12.

² "Abu Sayyaf Group," Center for International Security and Cooperation, August 2018, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/abu-sayyaf-group>; "Moro Islamic Liberation Front," Center for International Security and Cooperation, January 2019, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-islamic-liberation-front>; "Moro National Liberation Front."

³ David Joel Steinberg, *The Philippines: A Singular and a Plural Place*, 4th ed, Nations of the Modern World (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 13.

⁴ Steinberg, 13.

Airport in northern Mindanao.⁵ Other regions closer the capital appear to have lesser contention with the central government. Such a fact raises the question as to what role island geography has played in producing and sustaining the insurgency.

The Moros of Mindanao Island Group has consistently challenged the state's ability authority and control throughout the southern islands.⁶ The physical distance from the capital city of Manila to the non-contiguous Mindanao Island Group stands out as traditional forms of state influence remains ineffective, as compared to a more contiguous nation. The geographic isolation of the Moros is represented in the challenges that have perennially faced the armed forces of the Philippines: the logistics requirements, ability to command and control, and ability to maintain communications become substantially more difficult in non-contiguous military environments. The isolation has also shaped the state's ability to integrate the island's economy and distribute public goods to primarily the Moros and other members of the local population.

The research around the insurgency concerns the demands and grievances of the community and the weakness of the state's counterinsurgency or political efforts in containing it. Such research, however, often omits the region's physical geography, despite works by well-respected scholars such as Kaplan and Ellis, who extensively studied the impacts of geography on conflicts between populations.⁷ Despite the significance of their work, physical geography remains understudied in analyzing insurgencies and the failure of the state to consolidate power. Given the state's inability to end the conflict, geography needs to be further considered as a viable aspect which can help find an enduring peace to the conflict.

⁵ Mike Fowler, "Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now," *Small Wars Journal*, January 18, 2011, 7–8.

⁶ Lawrence Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 11, no. 3 (December 1, 2000): 134–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310008423291>.

⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2011), 6–8; Earl Ellis, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*, FMFRP 12–46 (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, 1921), 31–34; <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/ref/AdvBaseOps/index.html>.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

The thesis explores the following research question: How did the Philippines' physical geography contribute to producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency in the Mindanao Island Group?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Researching the role of geography associated with the Moro insurgency is significant from both academic and security perspectives. The discussion will broaden the academic understanding of insurgencies and plausible ways in which to resolve them.

Academically, this research could increase understanding of how geography shapes modern state and its challenges by focusing on the Moro insurgency and the effects of previously under-leveraged geographic variables. Furthermore, analyzing geographic characteristics may illuminate variables that have been neglected in studying the Moro insurgency's origin and sustainment: for example, the effect of the insurgency's physical distance from the seat of the national government and state power. A second variable under focus here is the clear religious divide between the majority Christian and minority Muslim populations. The physical and maritime geography of the Philippine islands had a significant impact on where each of the religions had the greatest impact on the local populations. While the Mindanao Island Group is geographically distant from Manila, the island group is relatively close to Indonesia and Malaysia. This study will also help illuminate how religious communities and their relations are affected by geography.

Pragmatically, this research is important because the long-running Moro insurgency prevents domestic stability and Westphalian state unification in the Philippines. In addition, resolving this domestic conflict supports U.S. interests in Southeast Asia, which is critical to the U.S.-China great power competition as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) lies at the heart of the United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) strategy. The relationship between the United States and Philippines is historically tenuous with periods of great collaboration and others of violent conflict. Assisting the Philippines in resolving the insurgency will have long-lasting positive effects on their bilateral relationship. Furthermore, the domestic stability of the Philippines

contributes to regional stability. It is in the United States' best interest to facilitate greater peace and security aligned with present-day diplomatic policies and international relations. While physical geography has been a relevant consideration in addressing warfare, its impact on economies, population distribution, and neighborly influences has been significantly undervalued. A greater understanding of the role geography plays in insurgencies will contribute to a more refined and effective whole-of-government and international relations strategy.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research question leads to an evaluation of the central role geography plays in shaping human society. The vast amount of literature on the Moro insurgency focuses primarily on economic and political factors that have played prominent roles in producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency. Another important factor details the rise of the insurgency stemming from the establishment of national sovereignty that failed to integrate smaller communities. Drawing upon this literature, these factors reveal the complex variables involved, as well as other variables that have been neglected in understanding and attempting to resolve the conflict.

Geography as a variable, if not causal, cannot be ignored in understanding how human history has unfolded. To paraphrase the Prussian General and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, the character of geography may change but the nature of geography endures.⁸ Robert Kaplan also argues in his book *Revenge of Geography*, that the idea of technological advancements overcoming the impact of geography is a logical fallacy.⁹ In addition to these scholars, United States Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Earl "Pete" Ellis recognized the importance of physical geography in strategic military campaign planning when he authored *Advanced Base Operations* in Micronesia, his seminal work detailing

⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87–89.

⁹ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*, ebook (New York: Random House, 2013), 73–75.

the rise of Japan. Ellis prescribed the necessity for amphibious assault operations to defeat Japan.¹⁰

The vast literature on the Moro insurgency focuses primarily on economic and political factors that played prominent roles in producing and sustaining it.¹¹ Another important causal factor of the insurgency details the rise of the insurgency stemming from the establishment of national sovereignty that failed to integrate smaller societal groups such as the Moros into the greater national society. Research reveals complex variables at play in the insurgency and this study of geographic variables will help to fill in gaps that are pertinent yet remain minimally researched.

Economic factors which are common to most insurgencies include severe and generational poverty, as well as a lack of economic opportunity.¹² In the case of interstate insurgencies, a distinction needs to be made between absolute poverty and relative poverty. While absolute poverty may be an appropriate metric internationally, a more appropriate measurement domestically is relative poverty. Relative poverty can be used in understanding various identity groups despite their differing social cleavages or geographic considerations. For example, Thomas McKenna, an author and anthropologist studying the southern Philippines since 1985, suggests that insurgencies occur because of relative poverty vis-a-vis other domestic communities. In the case of the Moros, widespread poverty compared to other domestic groups and political corruption sparked civil unrest in the 1970s that continues to simmer today.¹³ According to McKenna, the Philippine government has been unsuccessful in alleviating generational poverty in the regions where

¹⁰ Ellis, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*, 29.

¹¹ Jeroen Adam, "Bringing Grievances Back In: Towards an Alternative Understanding of the Rise of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 174, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17401001>; Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics*, Policy Studies 24 (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2006), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06517>; Abel Escribà-Folch, Covadonga Meseguer, and Joseph Wright, "Remittances and Democratization," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (September 2015): 571–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12180>.

¹² Thomas M. McKenna, "The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines," *Asia Society*, 3, accessed November 3, 2021, <https://asiasociety.org/origins-muslim-separatist-movement-philippines>.

¹³ McKenna, 13–18.

the Moros predominantly live, specifically Mindanao. As a result of endemic poverty and against the backdrop of tremendous economic growth in other regions, especially in the 1970s through the 1980s, the insurgency gained strength.¹⁴

Further economic considerations that have contributed to the state's long-standing economic issues is the lack of a sustainable policy on land reforms.¹⁵ Periodically, the Philippine president and congress have taken up the mantle of developing and implementing a sustainable land-reform policy to address relative economic conditions. However, each attempt has been met with significant criticism from various political, business, and social groups including accusations of corruption and partisanship. Scholars such as Omar Shahabudin McDoom, Celia Reyes, Christian Mina, and Ronina Asi also point to disparities in economic development and education among the island's groups; the Mindanao Island Group lags significantly behind in economic equality when compared to other island groups.¹⁶ The lack of development is particularly apparent among the Muslims of Mindanao.¹⁷ Jeroen Adam also makes a similar argument when he puts forth a more nuanced perspective on the rise of the MILF.¹⁸ He argues that the MILF was a legitimate and morally just organization created to combat the inequalities and injustices perpetrated against Muslims in the Mindanao Island Group by the government and the greater Philippine society.¹⁹

Another important economic aspect that has contributed to the insurgency is the heavy reliance in the Philippines upon remittances. Remittance is generally a transfer of money between one person to another person or household and is usually allocated for the

¹⁴ McKenna, 3–4.

¹⁵ McKenna, 2–3.

¹⁶ Omar Shahabudin McDoom et al., “Between Whom? Patterns, Trends, and Implications of Horizontal Inequality in the Philippines,” *Social Indicators Research* 145, no. 3 (October 2019): 923–42, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1867-6>.

¹⁷ McDoom et al., “Inequality Between Whom?,” 925.

¹⁸ Jeroen Adam, “Bringing Grievances Back In: Towards an Alternative Understanding of the Rise of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 174, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17401001>.

¹⁹ Adam, “Bringing Grievances Back In,” 1.

specific needs of those individuals.²⁰ However, remittances can be problematic. According to the World Bank, remittances in the Philippines fluctuate between 9.3% and 9.9% and remain one of the highest percentages in the world.²¹ In many cases, these payments are the sole or primary source of income for the family members who remained in the Philippines. The significant amount of remittance further de-links the Moros from their national affiliation and their identity as Filipino citizens and contributes to politically distancing a population that already feels disconnected from its nation. The thesis therefore proposes the following hypothesis based on the geographic variable identified by Kaplan: geography has contributed to producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency.²²

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The research here provides evidence to support the validity of the hypothesis. The first two points of evidence listed in this section relate to island geography and physical distance from the Mindanao Island Group to Manila and northern Malaysia respectively. Other points of evidence in this study focus on the impact of physical geography on social and political factors from the perspective of the Moros and Philippine government. The potential explanations identified support the position that the geography of the Philippines plays a significant role in producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency.

In terms of physical geography, the Moros have leveraged their island geography and distance from state power as physical buffers to safeguard their homeland against colonial powers and now against the government. Many Moros view the Philippine government as an invading force attempting to usurp their ancestral homeland, dominate local society, and wholly change their way of life. The government's seat of power is on the periphery of the greater archipelagic region, as opposed to the historic seat of power in the region of the archipelago much closer to the Moros homeland and northern Malaysia.

²⁰ Abel Escribà-Folch, Covadonga Meseguer, and Joseph Wright, "Remittances and Democratization," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (September 2015): 571, <https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12180>.

²¹ "Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP)-Philippines," World Bank, accessed October 19, 2021, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?contextual=default&end=2020&locations=PH&most_recent_value_desc=true&start=1977&view=chart.

²² Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 73–75.

As a result, the Moros have stronger cultural ties with societies to their south. The ease of movement throughout the geographic maritime space is supported by the Moros' closer ties to societies to their south over those in the north.

Meanwhile, human culture enhanced by the physical landscape has played a role in sustaining the insurgency as it provides symbols for mobilization against a state that has yet to accommodate their needs. Since the colonial forces landed on the islands, the Moro ethnic identity has coalesced around a mistrust of external actors attempting to usurp their way of life. Islam has also had an impact on human culture on the physical landscape. The centuries-long interlacing of the Moro identity with Islam has provided a prominent symbol of separation from the majority Christian Filipino population. From the Philippine government's perspective, such cultural mobilization hampers its ability to effectively unify and govern the region. The clearest evidence of this inability is the lack of national unity.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study will employ the single case study method to investigate whether the geography of the Philippines plays a role in producing and sustaining the Moro insurgency, specifically focusing on physical geography—a neglected variable that has played a significant role in producing and sustaining the insurgency. I will use primary and secondary sources, including documents from the Moro community and Philippine government, academic studies of the Moro insurgency, and ethnic and insurgent databases.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter I defines the research question, literature, multiple hypotheses, and methodology. Chapter II focuses on the history of the insurgency. Chapter III focuses on the impact of geography on the insurgency. Chapter IV offers recommendations for reconciliation between insurgent organizations and the Philippine government as well as opportunities for future research.

II. THE MOROS: HISTORY OF THE INSURGENCY

The Philippines has experienced several decades of sustained conflict. The Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines remains a significant contributing factor to the country's long-standing domestic security crisis.²³ While it has been argued that the insurgency is rooted in the Philippines' colonial past and subsequent formation into a modern nation, this thesis argues that geographic factors dramatically impact the initial and continued Moro insurgency. The chapter provides the political background of the Moros and their lineage within the Southeast Asian archipelago following a timeline beginning with the sultanate period, continuing through Spanish colonization, U.S. colonization, and ending with Philippine independence. During these periods, diplomatic, military, and economic factors significantly contributed to producing and sustaining the modern Moro insurgency. Overall, the chapter evaluates pertinent aspects of Philippine history and its collective contribution to the long-running Moro insurgency in the southern Philippine islands.

A. THE MORO MOSAIC AND PERIODS OF HISTORY

Throughout history, the Philippine islands have been inhabited by a multitude of small communities with varied linguistic, cultural, and socio-political backgrounds. Into the mid-19th century, most southern Philippine islands were under effective Muslim rule, most notably the Palawan and Sulu islands, and the majority of Mindanao. The Sultanate rulers saw that Islam introduced effective tools that furthered their control of the local population and legitimized their standing within society.²⁴ Conversely, during this period, most of the northern and central Philippine islands were under effective control by Spain including Luzon, Samar, Leyte, Cebu, and Bohol. The strong Muslim influence in the southern region is the primary ethno-cultural marker of the Moros. The conversion of Moros to Islam was a result of numerous factors, including Islamic missionary outreach,

²³ Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," 115.

²⁴ Paul Wormser, "The Spread of Islam in Asia through Trade and Sufism (Nine-Nineteenth Centuries)," in *Routledge Handbook of Religions in Asia*, ed. Bryan S. Turner and Oscar Salemink (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 110.

political opportunism, compliance to the Muslim Sultans, and historical contact with Muslim merchants.²⁵ Their ethnic heterogeneity and homogenous religious belief in Islam are firmly entrenched within the collective Moro society and personal sense of self. These identities were developed over time and were heavily influenced by commercial trade routes from the Indian Ocean into the archipelago of Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the ethnic and religious markers of the Moros have proven to conflict with a collective sense of Filipino identity.

The Moros are a culturally and ethnically diverse population, comprising 13 ethno-linguistic groups.²⁶ Of these distinct Moro groups, the Tausugs of Sulu and Maguindanaos of Mindanao are known to be the most dominant and influential.²⁷ Although diverse in ethnic identity, these groups successfully nurtured a singular Moro identity. Most Filipino-Muslims are Moros and live in the southern Philippines. Recent religious estimates throughout the Philippines have determined that approximately 5.6% of Filipinos are Muslim, 92.3% of Filipinos are Christian, 1.8% subscribe to other religions, .2% subscribe to tribal religions, and 0.1% are non-practicing, atheist, or agnostic.²⁸ While the issues underlying the Moro insurgency are largely due to the disparate treatment of the Moros compared to other Filipino groups, Islam eventually became a rallying cry for the Moros and their quest for autonomy. The link between the Moro and Islamic identity has developed over the past 500 years and remains important for contemporary mobilization.²⁹

²⁵ Wormser, 109–10.

²⁶ Susan Diana Russell, “The Mindanao Conflict and Prospects for Peace in the Southern Philippines,” in *Mindanao: A Perspective on Youth, Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Conflict Resolution in the Southern Philippines* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies and International Training Office, 2005), 6.

²⁷ Astrid S. Tuminez, “This Land Is Our Land: Moro Ancestral Domain and Its Implications for Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines,” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2007): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2007.0044>.

²⁸ “Philippines--Country Summary,” Central Intelligence Agency, August 15, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/philippines/summaries>.

²⁹ Cline, “The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines,” 117.

B. SULTANATES (PRE-COLONIAL): THE IMPORTANCE OF MONSOON WINDS

Islam was introduced to the region during the Sultanate period from foreign merchants who followed the monsoon winds into the archipelago.³⁰ Geography played an essential role in the spread of Islam as a shared belief system in communities throughout the Southeast Asian archipelago.³¹ Large-scale conversions to Islam were not initiated at the outset but developed over time as merchants and Muslim teachers began to integrate further into these Southeast Asian coastal communities.³² As a result of Islam's gradual integration into the communities, the religion was accepted by the local populace and ruling elites alike.³³ Causal reasons for Islam's acceptance by local elites included enhanced commercial trade opportunities and political strategy as Islam was not confined by social, cultural, or political factors and was capable of being integrated throughout the community.³⁴ While civil society in the Philippines benefited from an expanding relationship with Muslim traders, the ruling Sultanate class commercially and politically capitalized on the religion, using it to unify the general population while asserting more control over them.³⁵

It was not until the second half of the 15th century that Islam fully entrenched itself within communities throughout the Sulu Islands and coastal areas of the Mindanao islands.³⁶ The collective influence of the Muslim merchants was easily seen as Islam spread to the northernmost portion of Luzon.³⁷ On Luzon, the local community exported

³⁰ Wormser, "The Spread of Islam in Asia through Trade and Sufism," 109–10.

³¹ Wormser, 116–20.

³² Christopher Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History* (New York: Arco Pub. Co, 1975), 19.

³³ Lloyd, 19.

³⁴ Lloyd, 19.

³⁵ Jan M. Pluvier, *Historical Atlas of South-East Asia* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 19.

³⁶ Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History*, 19.

³⁷ Marc Bel and Peter van der Donck, *An Historical Atlas of Islam*, 2nd rev. ed (Boston: Brill, 2002), xii–xiii.

tobacco, sugar, hemp, and cabinet-wood while ginger was exported from Mindanao via foreign merchants.³⁸

At the outset of European contact within Southeast Asia, the presence of European traders remained limited to the coastal regions of the islands where their commercial interactions with the local population were brokered by the ruling elite.³⁹ However, multiple European countries desired a competitive advantage amongst each other and other merchants from the Middle East and South Asia to further their socio-political and economic control throughout the region. The competitive environment led to the colonization of the Philippines and nearly the entirety of Southeast Asia.

C. SPANISH COLONIZATION: ROOTS OF THE MORO INSURGENCY

Following the Sultanate period, the period of Spanish colonization is critical to understanding the roots of the Moro insurgency.⁴⁰ The collective Moro identity reflected the Sultanates' unification during this period, which later became the heart of the modern Moro insurgency initiated in the 1500s.⁴¹ The Spanish colonial forces first labeled the Sultanates as Moros but over time, the Sultanates claimed the label and identified themselves as Moros. The Muslims in Mindanao, Palawan, and Sulu continued to successfully resist total subjugation, a resistance movement and its symbolism that remains relevant to this day in the southern Philippines.⁴² However, European merchants, soldiers, missionaries, adventurers, and administrators arriving in the 16th century changed the societal structures of Southeast Asia.⁴³ The archipelago felt those impacts immediately, as the littorals and waterways served as important trade routes throughout the region.⁴⁴ As a result of Spanish influence, followed by direct rule spanning the 16th century to the end of

³⁸ Bel and Donck, xii–xiii.

³⁹ Ninian Smart, Frederick Mathewson Denny, and Ailsa Heritage, *Atlas of The World's Religions*, 2nd ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 62.

⁴⁰ Wormser, "The Spread of Islam in Asia through Trade and Sufism," 117.

⁴¹ Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," 117.

⁴² Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History*, 24.

⁴³ Lloyd, 23.

⁴⁴ Lloyd, 23.

the 19th century, the Philippines became the only country in Southeast Asia where a European power successfully imposed its civilization upon the local population.⁴⁵ The spread of Christianity by Spain in the Philippines relied upon the conversion of local elites to evangelize their communities as these individuals maintained their influence over their respective populations.⁴⁶ The conversion of Filipinos to Islam and Christianity differed in that Islam integrated with the local population over time while Christianity was imposed in a more aggressive and shorter span of time. The conversion to Christianity demonstrates how the Spanish created a socio-cultural shift in the central and northern islands of the Philippines.⁴⁷

Spanish colonization in the Southeast Asian archipelago in the 16th century focused initially on the northernmost islands: “Control of trade as well as exploitation of natural resources motivated European colonial interests in Southeast Asia.”⁴⁸ The Luzon and Visayan Island chains eventually succumbed to the direct rule of the Spanish and symbolized Spanish success in the Christianization and Hispanicization of the Philippines.⁴⁹ The Spanish identified Luzon, and specifically Manila Bay, as an ideal gateway to Asia to the north and the Americas to the east. Spain claimed the Philippine islands in 1544 and established its first permanent settlement on the island of Cebu in 1585. Spain’s colonial mission was heavily influenced by Evangelism and their goal for a rapid conversion of the local populace.⁵⁰ Spain’s ambitions achieved long-term success, specifically in regions of the Philippines where the local communities had not fully converted to Islam. Spain achieved effective control of Manila Bay and its surrounding lands in 1571.⁵¹ Thus, Spain created a geographically strategic outpost in the Philippines for Spain’s socio-political and economic interests with Asian countries to the north and the

⁴⁵ Lloyd, 24.

⁴⁶ Lloyd, 24.

⁴⁷ Lloyd, 24.

⁴⁸ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, “Atlas of The World’s Religions,” 199.

⁴⁹ Pluvier, “Historical Atlas of South-East Asia,” 30.

⁵⁰ Lloyd, “Atlas of Maritime History,” 23.

⁵¹ Lloyd, 23.

Americas to the east.⁵² The island of Luzon suited Spain’s colonial intentions most specifically due to its large size, geostrategic location, and the maritime advantages of Manila Bay.

Manila, Philippines became a gateway to Asia, and provided the Spanish with a major commercial hub enroute to the Americas. While Lloyd speaks of the Philippines as “a dependency [of] New Spain (Mexico),” it can be argued that New Spain was dependent on Manila as the hub “of the lucrative Spanish galleon trade from Manila across the Pacific Ocean” for the Spanish.⁵³ With the rise of Manila’s prominence as a commercial hub for Asia and the Americas, a near equivalent decline in intra-archipelagic trade occurred with the predominantly Muslim islands in the southern Philippines.⁵⁴ The decline of legitimate economic opportunities in the south perpetuated the rise of nefarious economic activities in the Sultanate region, such as piracy and the slave trade. The decline in economic opportunities and subsequent decision to participate in illicit and immoral activities furthered the socio-political separation within the Philippines which remains relevant to the Moro insurgency today.

While Palawan eventually succumbed to colonial rule, Sulu and Mindanao became the only two remaining Moro-Muslim States in the Philippines by the end of the 18th century.⁵⁵ Each remaining Muslim state was able to effectively defend themselves against Spanish forces and mount offensive attacks against Spanish-ruled territories. The introduction of Europeans to the region, “Spanish rule in Luzon and the Visayas, and Dutch domination of the Moluccas had adversely affected the Sulu’s trade and led to economic deterioration.”⁵⁶ The same was true for Maguindanao, a confederation of Muslim chieftains centered on the Pulangi Valley in Mindanao and reaching as far as the Zamboanga peninsula. Since normal trading activities were no longer possible, both states

⁵² Lloyd, 23.

⁵³ Lloyd, 24.

⁵⁴ Lloyd, 24.

⁵⁵ Lloyd, 29.

⁵⁶ Lloyd, 29.

resorted to piracy, slave raiding, and slave trading as their major sources of profit.⁵⁷ Through the 18th century, the Spanish and Sulu/Maguindanao forces fought pitched battles across multiple islands.⁵⁸ Ultimately, the Moros were largely successful in maintaining their autonomy from Spain by consistently blunting attempts at seizing the Moros ancestral homelands. Their wars against the Spanish were fought under the banner of Islam.

As Spain became increasingly successful at controlling large swathes of the Philippines, the Moro communities living on prominent islands such as Sulu and Maguindanao were effectively squeezed out of their traditional inter-archipelagic trade and economic activities.⁵⁹ In conjunction with the deterioration of inter-archipelagic trade, Spain was methodically centralizing political control over large swathes of the Philippines. The contentious relationship between the Sultanates in the southern Philippines against Spain and its occupied territories to the north, laid the foundation for the modern-day Moro insurgency. Spain eventually transferred colonial control of the Philippines and their American territories to the United States after a 4 month-long war that was fought between the two colonial powers from late April to mid-August 1898.⁶⁰

D. U.S. COLONIZATION: AN EMERGENT INTERNATIONAL POWER

The Philippines was a colony of the U.S. from 1898–1946. During this era, the United States was still developing into a significant player on the international stage. In the post-Civil War years, from 1861–1865, most of the United States’ time and attention was focused on domestic concerns while minimal attention was paid to overseas colonial actions until the end of the 19th century.⁶¹ For the United States to extend their influence overseas, a powerful Navy was necessary to protect U.S. flagged merchant vessels while also gaining and defending colonial territories. The U.S. found success in these endeavors by establishing overseas naval facilities and building warships. The first U.S. battleship set

⁵⁷ Lloyd, 29.

⁵⁸ Pluvier, “Historical Atlas of South-East Asia,” 29.

⁵⁹ Pluvier, 29.

⁶⁰ Lloyd, “Atlas of Maritime History,” 80.

⁶¹ Lloyd, 80.

sail in 1890.⁶² The U.S. Navy was eventually able to establish an effective two-ocean Navy in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans which significantly contributed to even further control of its overseas colonial holdings.⁶³ The U.S. was effective in its occupation of the Philippines by implementing strategies which promoted paternalism and accommodation. The implementation of this strategy is regarded as being much more successful in working with the Moros than their Spanish predecessors. Like the Spanish, the U.S. successfully consolidated its influence in the northern islands. However, even with a more successful U.S. strategy in contending with the Moros than the Spanish, the U.S. still met with stiff resistance in the southern Philippine islands.⁶⁴

While relations initially expanded between the U.S. and the Moros, the U.S. was ineffective at integrating the Moros within the greater Filipino society. The U.S. and Sultan of Sulu signed a treaty in 1899, which fell apart by 1904, leading to an increase in violence throughout the southern islands.⁶⁵ The Sultanate believed this to be an opportune moment to vie for a greater level of autonomy, similar to what they enjoyed prior to colonization. However, Moro autonomy did not occur as the U.S. achieved victory over the Sultanates in 1915.⁶⁶ Consequently, the Sultanate had to relinquish their political authority, Sulu was placed under direct rule, and Maguindanao was no longer an independent state.⁶⁷

Moro leaders petitioned the U.S. in 1921, 1924, and 1935 to keep their lands administratively separate from the future Philippine nation.⁶⁸ Some leaders even supported the idea of remaining under U.S. leadership rather than being integrated into the future Philippine nation.⁶⁹ The U.S. government ultimately chose to relinquish control of all

⁶² Lloyd, 80.

⁶³ Lloyd, 80.

⁶⁴ Pluvier, 43.

⁶⁵ Pluvier, "Historical Atlas of South-East Asia," 43.

⁶⁶ Pluvier, 43.

⁶⁷ Pluvier, 43.

⁶⁸ Rizal Buendia, "Bangsamoro Secessionism," in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 11 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 428–29, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09592310008423291>.

⁶⁹ Tuminez, "This Land Is Our Land," 78–80.

islands in the Southeast Asian archipelago and integrate them into the newly formed Philippine nation. The integration of the predominantly Moro islands ran counter to the collective wishes of the Moro community and effectively soured the relationship between the U.S. and Moros. While there were efforts to integrate the Moros into the greater Philippine society, these efforts were not enough to assuage the Moros long-held grievances. Eventually, the United States' collective practices resulted in a further sense of Philippine nationalism which indirectly alienated the Moros, as they perceived no additional benefits in adopting the Philippine identity.

In the early 20th century, strongly influenced by the Western ideology of freedom, self-determination, and social justice, an ideological wave of nationalist fervor took hold throughout significant portions of the colonized citizenry, who in turn, began to reject the occupation of foreign powers.⁷⁰ The Moros maintained their communal desire for independence, separate and distinct from Philippine national independence. The U.S. responded to calls for national independence by introducing a Filipino Parliament in approximately 1907. The U.S. later granted the Philippines a significant degree of autonomy in 1935, this was followed by the temporary occupation of the country by the Japanese during World War II.⁷¹ To the Moros great disappointment, the U.S. never fully supported or acknowledged the Moros and their homeland as separate and distinct from the Philippine state.

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the Moros temporarily aligned with anti-Japanese guerilla resistance forces, which included both Christian Filipinos and Americans.⁷² Some Filipino Nationalist leaders chose to collaborate with the Japanese, others chose to go “underground” and become leaders in the resistance movement.⁷³ Either way, these leaders were unified in the future goal of national independence.⁷⁴ The U.S. eventually recaptured the Philippines in 1945, and in the following year, fulfilled a promise

⁷⁰ Pluvier, “Historical Atlas of South-East Asia,” 45.

⁷¹ Pluvier, 45.

⁷² McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 111.

⁷³ Pluvier, “Historical Atlas of South-East Asia,” 46.

⁷⁴ Pluvier, 46.

made in 1935 of granting the Philippines national independence on 4 July 1946.⁷⁵ While the Philippines was recognized as politically independent, the country largely remained economically dependent on the U.S. until the post-Cold War departure of U.S. military forces in 1992.⁷⁶ Throughout this timeframe, the Moros remained steadfast in their quest for independence from the Philippines.

E. PHILIPPINE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE MOROS

Philippine independence on July 4th, 1946, did not produce a sweeping sense of national unity, nor a collective belief in Filipino identity among all the communities throughout the islands.⁷⁷ The Moros, specifically, had long-nurtured their own sense of identity which led them to resist consolidation into the modern Philippine state. The sense of independent identity was a culmination of history under the Spanish colonial rule and the previous decades by American recognition of a separate Islamic community in the Philippines with their own Muslim leaders.⁷⁸

Many colonial-era governing policies remained at the beginning of Philippine independence. These enduring policies, in conjunction with the Philippine government's collective practice of political overreach, led to the decline and near collapse of local governments throughout the Philippines.⁷⁹ Across large swathes of islands, the local governments experienced a relative decline in power that resulted in the Philippine military as, in some cases, the primary representative of the Philippine state amongst a vast community of Moros.⁸⁰ The lack of political and government leadership in these small communities only furthered the tension between the Moro identity and Philippine nationalism. The Moros lacked true representation in the regional and Philippine

⁷⁵ Pluvier, 47.

⁷⁶ Pluvier, 47.

⁷⁷ Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," 118.

⁷⁸ Cline, 118.

⁷⁹ Center for Research and Communication of the Philippines, ed., *The Philippines, Facing the Future: An Assessment of the Prospects for the Philippines and for Philippine-American Relations.*, Asian Agenda Report 4 (New York: Asia Society, 1986), 4.

⁸⁰ Center for Research and Communication of the Philippines, 4.

governments, leaving the local communities under a sense of relative occupation once more.

The Moros' sense of occupation was further perpetuated by government policies. Approximately five percent of the total Philippine population is Muslim. As Islam has historically been a minority religion in the Philippines, the discrimination has produced resistance to state control of any kind.⁸¹ Consequently, sectarian violence broke out at the beginning of the 1970s between Christian militias and Muslim settlers which created approximately 100,000 refugees and led to hundreds of deaths.⁸² The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 as a result of the "Muslim unrest" was the final spark in the eyes of the Muslim community and only provoked the conflict into a full-blown insurgency.⁸³ As such, the largely Moro community in the Philippines continued to be marginalized by the Philippine government and greater Philippine society. The marginalization of the Moro community inspired the emergence of radical insurgent groups such as the MNLF.⁸⁴ An Islamic insurgent group which spawned the modern-day armed struggle and who mainly utilizes guerilla tactics to achieve their desired goal of international recognition as an independent state.⁸⁵

The MILF formed in 1977 largely due to socio-political grievances within the Moro communities of Mindanao.⁸⁶ While the MILF is an insurgent organization, scholar Jereon Adams defends the MILF as a legitimate and morally just organization whose goal is to combat inequalities and injustices perpetrated against the Moros living in Mindanao by the Philippine government and the greater Philippine society.⁸⁷ The organization effectively recruited Moros to their cause by championing equality and morality through well-

⁸¹ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, "Atlas of The World's Religions," 211.

⁸² Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," 121.

⁸³ Cline, 121.

⁸⁴ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, "Atlas of The World's Religions," 211.

⁸⁵ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, 211.

⁸⁶ Fowler, "Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now," 8.

⁸⁷ Adam, "Bringing Grievances Back In," 1.

groomed arguments and religious discourse.⁸⁸ The MILF saw the Philippine government as illegitimate, corrupt, immoral, and poor representatives of the Moro people.⁸⁹ The MILF offered an alternative to the Moros socio-political landscape that the Philippine government did not or would not provide. The Philippine government's responses to the insurgency have often been ineffective at reducing tensions between the Moros, Philippine government, and other groups of Philippine citizens.

Immediately following World War II and prior to the 1970s, the U.S. separately identified the Muslim community in the Philippines.⁹⁰ The separation included the nurturing of social and political leaders. The U.S. further promoted the need for education throughout the Moro community with the goal that they would be well equipped to integrate into the larger national and international community.⁹¹ However, it was not just the American's who supported Moro education. Muslim countries such as Egypt provided scholarships for religious studies to Filipino Muslims who would later become leaders in the Moro independence movement.⁹² These leaders came of age most significantly in the 1970s, a seminal period of the modern-day Moro insurgency.

President Marcos' declaration of Martial Law in 1972 led to the escalating tension between Muslims and Christians and violent clashes between Moro insurgents and Philippine military forces.⁹³ In Mindanao, the declaration of Martial Law further drove many Moros to join insurgent organizations such as the MILF and MNLF. At the outset of the declaration, the conventional tactics, techniques, and procedures of the Philippine military was largely ineffective.⁹⁴ Throughout the period of Martial Law, as much as 70% of the Armed Forces of the Philippines were estimated to be conducting counterinsurgency

⁸⁸ Adam, 4.

⁸⁹ Adam, 4.

⁹⁰ Cline, "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines," 118–19.

⁹¹ Cline, 119.

⁹² Cline, 119.

⁹³ Cline, 121.

⁹⁴ Aaron Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise: Seven Decades of Civil War in the Philippines, Asia@War*, volume 1 (Solihull, West Midlands: Helion & Company Limited, 2016), 22.

operations in the southern Philippines.⁹⁵ Some of the most significant fighting occurred in the southern islands from 1972–1976 where an estimated 120,000 Filipinos died, another 1 million were internally displaced, and 100,000 became refugees fleeing to Malaysia.⁹⁶ The outcome of this period of human tragedy between the Moros and Philippine military was ultimately a stalemate.

The inability of the Philippine military to achieve a decisive victory against the Moros compelled the Philippine government to seek a political solution with the leadership of the Moro insurgents.⁹⁷ The Philippine government looked for solutions and mechanisms of appeasement which included the construction of a Mosque in Manila and national recognition of Islamic holidays. These and other actions were undertaken to extend an olive branch to the domestic Moro community and influential Islamic countries abroad.⁹⁸ The cease-fire stemming from the 1972–1976 conflict led to the Tripoli Agreement, a charter for Islamic autonomy in the Philippines. While the agreement would eventually collapse, the conflict has never again reached the level of violence perpetrated in that decade.

Multiple developments impeded the process for a peaceful resolution including the rise of Christian Filipinos who emigrated to the southern Philippines from the northern and central Philippine islands banded together and formed local militias or vigilante groups. These militias and groups of vigilantes were created as a localized response to defend against groups of Moro insurgents. Militias and vigilantism became increasingly popular amongst the Christian emigrants to defend against perceived threats from Moro insurgents. The popularity of militias and vigilantism had a decidedly negative impact and exacerbated the tension between the Moro and Christian communities, leading to periods of violent conflict and increasingly heightened tensions throughout the southern Philippines.

By 1976, the Philippine government began to intermittently support, and by extension legitimize, the local militias and groups of vigilantes whose mission was to

⁹⁵ Morris, 21–22.

⁹⁶ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 156.

⁹⁷ Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise*, 69.

⁹⁸ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 166.

defend the recently emigrated local community from Moro insurgents. A report by the Centre for Security and Conflict Studies determined deeply rooted economic issues in the southern Philippine islands as a causal reason for the rise in militias and vigilantism in response to the Moro insurgency.⁹⁹ These groups were not always ideologically driven, but joining them often provided economic opportunities in local communities which were not always readily available.¹⁰⁰ President Aquino, the immediate successor to President Marcos, nominally endorsed vigilantism by stating that it was the consensus of the southern Mindanao people to provide greater security against localized insurgent activities. She went on to say that “some groups [of local citizens] are very happy with their vigilantes” and that the Philippine government in Manila should not presume to have all the solutions to provincial issues.¹⁰¹ These militias and vigilantes sought to secure and control rural regions of the southern Philippines.¹⁰²

A fundamental shift in the Philippine government in 1986 ended more than a decade of Martial Law, eventually restoring parliamentary democracy in that same year.¹⁰³ In the 1980s and 1990s, different levels of regional autonomy were granted to the Moro Islamic community. More specifically, the Muslim regions in Mindanao were granted autonomy in 1987 and regional leadership was granted limited executive power in 1990.¹⁰⁴

F. SOCIO-POLITICAL INEQUALITIES AND PRODUCTION OF THE MORO INSURGENCY

According to several scholars, the Philippines socio-political development pre- and post-independence reflects levels of inequality which favored the Christian-dominated areas of the country over predominantly Muslim regions. Large swathes of the regions in the southern islands have been consistently under-resourced and under-developed as

⁹⁹ Justus Maria Van der Kroef, *Aquino's Philippines: The Deepening Security Crisis* (London, England: The Centre for Security and Conflict Studies, 1988), 17–21.

¹⁰⁰ Van der Kroef, 20–21.

¹⁰¹ Van der Kroef, 18–19.

¹⁰² Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise* 23.

¹⁰³ Lloyd, “Atlas of Maritime History,” 51.

¹⁰⁴ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, “Atlas of The World’s Religions,” 211.

compared to their predominantly Christian counterparts. These inequalities were reflected in developmental issues including education, economic growth, and infrastructure development.¹⁰⁵ Thomas McKenna articulates that insurgencies in the Philippines have endured because the Philippine government has been unsuccessful in alleviating poverty in Moro-dominated regions, contrasting with tremendous economic growth in other regions of the country.¹⁰⁶ Losing ancestral lands through government policies reduces the ability for many Moros to lead an agrarian life. An agrarian life promotes food security, surplus food stocks (which can be sold to local merchants), collectively provides jobs, and results in greater stability within the local community. Denying the Moros their ancestral lands severely hampers many from actively participating in the local economy, extends the cycle of poverty, and further isolates the Moro community. While these factors without doubt enhanced the Moro dissatisfaction, very few scholars have discussed the impact of geography in enhancing such issues, which will be further discussed in the following chapters.

1. Land Ownership

Land ownership policies enacted by the Spanish Colonial government, followed by the U.S. government, irreparably altered the ancestral land ownership claims of the Moros.¹⁰⁷ Spain and the U.S. expanded private land ownership-rights in the Philippines, which favored Filipinos in the north who were emigrating to the southern islands.¹⁰⁸ The implementation of these policies altered the fundamental understanding and physical ownership of the Sultanates' ancestral homelands and further increased the tensions between the Moros, Philippine government, and emigrating Filipino citizens. These rights had traditionally been informal and communal while the new system was formalized and

¹⁰⁵ Van der Kroef, *Aquino's Philippines: The Deepening Security Crisis*, 12–13.

¹⁰⁶ McKenna, "The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines," 7–8.

¹⁰⁷ Tuminez, "This Land Is Our Land," 78–80.

¹⁰⁸ McKenna, "The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines," 1–2.

relied on the notions of private property. The practical application of the land ownership program ultimately led to the loss of ancestral Moro lands.¹⁰⁹

The Philippine government that came to power in July of 1946 continued these land ownership practices, intensifying the tensions between the state and the Moros. The Philippine government announced that all unregistered land in Mindanao was either public property or given to the military. The Moros were largely unable to defend their land ownership claims and engage in policies instituted by the Philippine government. The Moros inability to defend their land claims was due to their lack of opportunity to participate, understanding of the policies, and/or economic means to officially own the ancestral homelands they had historically yet informally laid claim to.¹¹⁰ The resulting government-sponsored movement of Christian-Filipinos from the north to Mindanao produced significant demographic and socio-political changes in the region.¹¹¹ By the 1970s, unequal access to political decisions and land resources had contributed to a significant rise in economic inequality between the Christian and Muslim communities throughout the Mindanao Island Group.

Issues stemming from a lack of sustainable economic policies regarding land reform have contributed to increasing levels of inequality and the country's broader economic issues.¹¹² Periodically, the Philippine President and Congress have taken up the mantle of developing and implementing a sustainable land-reform policy. However, each attempt has been met with significant domestic criticism, including accusations of corruption and partisanship, from various political, business, and social groups.¹¹³ Such land issues were enhanced by the fact that the majority of the population was not exposed to the Moro people and saw them as outsiders; without doubt geographical location played a role in such a segregation.

¹⁰⁹ McKenna, 2–3.

¹¹⁰ McKenna, 2–3.

¹¹¹ McKenna, 2–3.

¹¹² Van der Kroef, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise*, 16.

¹¹³ Van der Kroef, 16–17.

Land ownership has historically been a significant basis for wealth and is a symbol for high status in the Philippines. Therefore, concessions made by the Philippine government to the Moros are often deeply unpopular with the greater Philippine society and welcomed by the Moro people. Domestic inequality within the Philippines further entrenched the Moro identity as separate and distinct from a broader Filipino identity. The Moro community redoubled their efforts to mobilize for further autonomy from the Philippine state. As inequality grew and became increasingly apparent, the Moros framed their grievances in economic, ethnic, and religious terms.

2. Sustaining the Insurgency

The Moros have successfully sustained their insurgency through support from the international Muslim community. Especially after the 1990s, the expansion of transnational Islamic movements produced and directed more resources to the Moros. Islamic communities and organizations in various regions of the world provided military and financial support to the insurgency.¹¹⁴ Much of this support came via the historic relationship between northern Malaysian islands and southern Philippine islands which are located nearby. For instance, the MNLF insurgents seized control of large swathes of southern territories mainly due to military support from Libya by way of Malaysian territories and an influx of Moro volunteers to the insurgency.¹¹⁵ While direct support from the Malaysian government and Moro insurgent organizations has not been definitively established, the Philippine-Malaysia relationship has been strained due to the northern Malaysian islands acting as a safe haven, logistics node, and financial hub for the collective Moro insurgency.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Raymond Scupin, "Peer Reviewed Article Summary...Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand. By W. K. Che," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 2 (May 1991): 450–52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2057272>.

¹¹⁵ Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise*, 25.

¹¹⁶ Morris, 17.

3. State Response to the Insurgency: Establishment of an Autonomous Region

In 1986, the Philippine government established the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) as a response to the conflict's devolution into a stalemate.¹¹⁷ However, the ARMM failed to address critical matters pertaining to the future of the Moro community.¹¹⁸ The ARMM's failure was caused by weak political support in the Philippine government for the initiative, especially from the political elites in Manila, and the inability of the Moro leadership to establish an appropriate socio-political framework to effectively lead the ARMM and Moro community.¹¹⁹ The ability to do maintain ARMM's objectives was no doubt hampered by the lack of relationship with the political elite in Manila. In addition, the funding from the Philippine government illustrated political corruption within the ARMM. The ARMM leaders eventually fractured into historic Sultanate fiefdoms as the opportunities for wealth and power trounced their collective Moro identity.¹²⁰

4. Military Action and Derailed Peace Negotiations

Beginning in 1986 with President Aquino's administration and carried forward in 1992 with President Ramos', the Philippine government rolled-out moderate political policies that promoted greater inclusivity and reconciliation with various political opposition groups. However, the continuation of military campaigns throughout both of their administrations degraded each of their renewed efforts to end the insurgency as the leaders of the Moro insurgents were unwilling to fully engage with the Philippine government while military conflict continued.¹²¹

Challenges to the peaceful end of the Moro insurgency have continued into the 21st century. Between 1998–2001, the Estrada Administration authorized the resumption of

¹¹⁷ Tuminez, *This Land Is Our Land*, 81–82.

¹¹⁸ Tuminez, 81–82.

¹¹⁹ Tuminez, 82.

¹²⁰ Tuminez, 83.

¹²¹ Stephen Watts et al., "Counterinsurgency in the Philippines," in *Countering Others' Insurgencies: Understanding U.S. Small-Footprint Interventions in Local Context* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5vjvnmn.12>.

major combat operations. The resumption of combat operations resulted in the derailment of peace negotiations and led to further violence within local southern Philippine communities.¹²² Meanwhile, the inability of the Philippine military to achieve victory has forced the Philippine government to seek political solutions with the Moro insurgent forces, hence perpetuating the cycle.¹²³

The administrations of Presidents Arroyo and Aquino, during the post-2001 era, engaged with relatively restrained insurgents, advanced peace accords, and created a more discriminate strategy to identify individual insurgents and hardline elements.¹²⁴ During this time, the Philippine government also pushed for further negotiations and an end to the conflict with groups of Moros who they believed shared these goals. The military's ability to adapt their counterinsurgent tactics supported the goal to end the conflict by shifting from a more lethal focus to that of minimizing civilian casualties and incidences of indiscriminate violence. The change in military strategy and earnest efforts by some Moro leaders and Philippine leaders have led to some legitimate successes on the road to ending the Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines.¹²⁵

G. CONCLUSIONS

Examining the Moro history from the Sultanate period, Spanish colonization, U.S. colonization, and continuing through the period of national independence is imperative for understanding the emergence of the modern insurgency in the 1970s. The chapter highlighted how intra-regional economic inequality, and the historic and relative impoverishment of the southern Philippine islands enhances tensions between the Islamic and Christian communities.¹²⁶ Significant variables of the Moro conflict are a result of land loss and marginalization.¹²⁷ As such, land in the southern Philippines represents both

¹²² Watts, 108.

¹²³ Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise*, 69.

¹²⁴ Watts, 108.

¹²⁵ Watts, 109.

¹²⁶ McKenna, "The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines," 9.

¹²⁷ Tuminez, "This Land Is Our Land," 77.

the primary contributing factor to the conflict as well as the key to an enduring resolution.¹²⁸

While the modern insurgency has endured for multiple decades, there have been several attempts made by Moro and Philippine leaders to establish peace. These attempts have often broken down due to spates of violent conflict. Thomas McKenna suggests that genuine regional development efforts will be the most effective way to establish sustainable peace accords.¹²⁹ Furthermore, a genuine commitment to preserving the unique identity of the southern islands and increasing access to significant economic opportunities in the region will improve domestic relations and may pave the way for a complete end to the Moro insurgency. Regional development and preservation of the unique southern island identity requires a specific focus on the physical and maritime geography of the region which is an integral part of Moro society.

¹²⁸ Tuminez, 77.

¹²⁹ McKenna, “The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines,” 9–10.

III. THE CONTINUING MORO INSURGENCY: IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY

“Geography” is a commonly misused and poorly defined term that has had a substantial impact on the relationship between the Moros and foreign powers. Foreign powers have historically been unable to either defeat or integrate the Moros living in the Mindanao Island region into their larger collective society. Their inability was largely due to the challenge of the region’s maritime and land geography which benefited the Moros and has been an obstacle to their occupation by foreign powers. The chapter provides an examination of geography’s interdependence between natural habitats and human society which has prolonged the Moro insurgency for nearly five centuries.

Throughout this chapter, the examination of geography and its relationship to the Moro insurgency will incorporate key variables. These variables include the maritime domain used as both a highway and tool for isolation; the proximity of Moro lands to Malaysia vis-a-vis Manila; and monsoon winds, which have all enabled the Moro insurgency to resist foreign powers. Additionally, key terrain in the maritime and land domains have had and will continue to have a significant impact on the current relationship between the Moros and the Philippine government.

In the maritime domain, the littoral zone is a complex environment; it is the mid-point between the islands/land and the large expanse of the ocean.¹³⁰ The position and resulting maneuverability gave the Moros a significant advantage over the Spanish and United States historically, and more recently, the Philippine government, all of whom were mainly equipped with large ships designed and built for crossing ocean expanses. The Moro ancestral homeland lies along the southern coastline of the southern Philippine islands bordering the Sulu Sea. Coral reefs and atolls kept the large and cumbersome Spanish and U.S. fleets from maneuvering close to the islands which allowed the Moros to sustain their culture and society without it being erased by foreign powers. It is important

¹³⁰ Biology Dictionary, “Littoral Zone,” in *Biology Dictionary*, June 13, 2017, <https://biologydictionary.net/littoral-zone/>.

to note that the Muslim merchants came in slowly over decades and were welcomed due to their largely peaceful integration into local society. The western forces, however, were seen as invaders and geography then became a barrier that could be used to thwart their abrupt impact. Furthermore, these maritime features have also been barriers which prevented the region from being properly resourced in the modern era by the Philippine government. As a result, the maritime geography of the coral reefs and atolls have both protected and sustained the Moros society but also resulted in extreme under-resourcing which continues to fuel the insurgency.

A. SULTANATES (PRE-COLONIAL): TRADE ROUTES AND GRADUAL CONVERSION TO ISLAM

During the pre-colonial, Sultanate era, the Moros largely accepted a conversion to Islam that would become intertwined with their Moro identity due to the positive trade relations with the Muslim merchants. The monsoon winds played a significant role in facilitating the movement of predominantly Muslim merchants to travel from the Indian Ocean to the Southeast Asian archipelago to finally arrive at the doors of the Moro communities.¹³¹ The Muslim merchants and teachers, carried by the monsoon winds, integrated with the Sultanates of the Mindanao Island Group. The success of Islam, to a large extent, was due to the wealth and trade brought about by the merchants and their ability to integrate with the local community. Islands such as Luzon and Samar in the northern archipelago were less impacted by the monsoon winds, therefore, had less contact with the merchants, which resulted in less success for Islam to fully integrate into the local societies.

The same winds that brought the Muslim merchants to the Southeast Asian archipelago also brought the Spanish to the islands of the Sultanates. However, while the Muslim merchants took a longer time to integrate into the local communities, the Spanish came as colonizers and quickly disrupted the pre-established social, political, and economic order in the region. The Sultanates did not take kindly to the aggressive colonization tactics

¹³¹ Bel and Donck, “An Historical Atlas of Islam,” xii–xiii.

of the Spanish and rebelled against the foreign powers. The rebellion then initiated the centuries-long Moro insurgency that still remains relevant today.

B. SPANISH COLONIZATION: THE MOROS ADVANTAGE IN THE LITTORAL WATERWAYS

In the mid-16th century, the Spanish colonization of the Philippines was inhibited in the Southern Mindanao Island Group by the Sultanates. While the Spanish were militarily powerful, their ability to fully colonize the Southeast Asian archipelago was significantly hindered by the strategic location and ability of the Moros to use the land and maritime geography to their advantage.¹³² Rather than accepting the Spanish efforts to colonize them, the Moros fought back, wanting to preserve their ancestral homeland and society dating back to the Sultanate era.

Reliant on the wind for propulsion, and with less maritime access, the larger Galleon vessels of the Spanish were less maneuverable, which prevented the Spanish from seizing total control of the Philippine islands.¹³³ The multitude of islands in the southern Philippines translated into a significant quantity of coastlines and by extension, littoral areas in a relatively small geographic area. The Spanish Galleons, and later Manila Galleons, were larger ships that were better equipped for cargo and facilitated movement in large open oceans.¹³⁴ The benefits of the Spanish Galleon ships included a cargo capacity of 500 tons while Manila Galleons had a capacity of 2,000 tons. Both versions of these ships had military and commercial applications.¹³⁵ However, the galleons were exclusively dependent on the wind for propulsion. The standard galleon was also relatively unwieldy, minimally maneuverable, and required a large crew for it to operate at its full capability.¹³⁶ In the littorals of the southeast Asian archipelago, they were significantly more cumbersome to maneuver.

¹³² Lloyd, "Atlas of Maritime History," 23.

¹³³ Reference.com, "What Are Some Facts About Spanish Galleon Ships?," in *Reference.Com*, March 25, 2020, <https://www.reference.com/history-geography/spanish-galleon-ships-f50aa61eab222346>.

¹³⁴ Reference.com.

¹³⁵ Reference.com.

¹³⁶ Reference.com.

The waterways in the littoral geography were similarly used by the Spanish and Moros but led to different outcomes for each. The Moros focused on inter-archipelagic trade and merchants carried to the region by monsoon winds, the Spanish focused on establishing a colonial outpost, further trade in northern Asia, and the Americas.¹³⁷ The physical geographic location of the Philippine islands afforded the Spanish an ideal outpost for merchant trade and commerce to other Asian countries to the north. It also acted as a way point for the lucrative Spanish galleon trade from Manila Bay, across the Pacific Ocean to the Americas coastline and back, proved to be strategically advantageous.¹³⁸

The Maritime geography of the Philippine islands offered the Moros more defensible positions which enabled them to maintain effective control over their ancestral homeland from foreign powers such as the Spanish and United States. Furthermore, maritime geography also insulated and protected the Moros from overland and large-scale military offenses historically and through the modern-day. Kennedy asserts that island geography is a strategic asset that enhances the ability of a local society to defend their homeland, an assertion that is validated by the Moros.¹³⁹

While the Spanish remained severely impacted by the littoral environment, it did not prevent them from being active in the region. The Spanish were able to slowly squeeze the Moros out of their traditional means of trade and commerce, thereby isolating them from commerce outside of their immediate physical region. In response to these isolation tactics, the Moros continued to fight the Spanish and use geographic safe havens for protection. As a result, the Moros were able to maintain a semblance of their traditional livelihood and continue to engage in economic activities. However, due to the slow squeeze by the Spanish, the Moros economic practices increasingly turned nefarious, reflected in piracy and hostage taking. These economic practices happened amongst a confederation of Muslim chieftains centered on the Pulangi Valley in Mindanao, reaching as far as the

¹³⁷ Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History*, 23.

¹³⁸ Lloyd, 24.

¹³⁹ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, Reprinted 1988 (Great Britain: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 14.

Zamboanga peninsula.¹⁴⁰ As a result, the confederation of Chieftains resorted to piracy, slave raiding, and slave trading as their major sources of profit.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, motivated by the isolation and unwillingness of the Moros to except colonial governance, the Sultanates became less powerful but were steadfast in their desire to maintain their ancestral homeland and collective autonomy from foreign powers.¹⁴²

Spain's colonial influence grew stronger over time throughout the northern Philippine islands, while the Moros continued to combat Spanish influence in the south. In the 18th century, the Moros, made up mainly of forces from Sulu and Maguindanao, fought pitched battles across multiple southern islands against the Spanish.¹⁴³ The rise of colonial power in the Philippines led to a decline in the Moros' ability to conduct inter-archipelagic trade with their traditional partners. While the Moros fought back against complete Spanish subjugation, their traditional trade and commerce rolls were disrupted. Without economic resources, their ability to govern their society was degraded.¹⁴⁴ Similar to what the Spanish experienced, the geography would also impact the United States' ability to fully conquer the Moros in the Southern Philippines.

C. U.S. COLONIZATION: THE MOROS' MARITIME HIGHWAY

The United States had a better relationship with the Moros than the Spanish but were never able to wholly contain the Moros on their individual islands. Yet, the United States was able to capitalize on the colonial actions that the Spanish accomplished in the northern Philippines by further consolidating their power over the local communities. While the United States was more impactful than the Spanish in the southern Mindanao Island Group, their influence over the Moros remained marginal at best. The United States was unable to close the maritime highway that the Moros used to such great effect. Because of the essential geographic position of the Moros, they still maintained their way of life as

¹⁴⁰ Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History*, 29.

¹⁴¹ Lloyd, 29.

¹⁴² Lloyd, *Atlas of Maritime History*, 29–30.

¹⁴³ Pluvier, *Historical Atlas of South-East Asia*, 29.

¹⁴⁴ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 83.

ocean-going people. The Moros used their environment to benefit and maintain a maritime lifestyle. Towards the end of the United States' colonial rule, the U.S. government relinquished complete control of the Philippine Islands and integrated the Moros' ancestral homelands into the greater Philippine nation. The Moros held out hope that the United States would acknowledge the Moros' and their ancestral homelands as a sovereign nation.

D. PHILIPPINE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND ISLAND OF THE MOROS

Since the Philippines gained their independence, the government has been unable to quell the Moro insurgency across a large swathe of the southern islands. The Moros want to retain their ancestral homeland, while the Philippine government wants to incorporate these lands into the greater Philippine society. The local governments in the region have failed to effectively represent the vast Moro community.¹⁴⁵ Since the 1970s, the modern Moro insurgency simmered into the 21st century.¹⁴⁶ The land and maritime geographic characteristics of the Mindanao Islands favors the strategy of the Moro insurgents over the strategy of the Philippine military forces who have yet to consolidate their authority.

The geography represents a misalignment of state boundaries with the physical geography of the archipelago, which severely restricts the ability of the Philippine government to pursue the Moros into the territorial waters and islands of the neighboring countries. The political boundaries of the Philippines are incongruent with the historical socio-political-religious relationships of the Moros, whereas societies in Malaysia and Indonesia, which are geographically closer, have more in common with the Moros. The Moros maintain historical ties with Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, Indonesia which were established during the Sultanate era. The Moros have historically had more significant relationships with communities living in modern-day northern Malaysia vis-à-vis the northern Philippine communities on Luzon, in large part due to considerations related to the physical and maritime geography, including maritime corridors, in the region. These

¹⁴⁵ Center for Research and Communication of the Philippines, *The Philippines, Facing the Future*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Moro Islamic Liberation Front," 1–2.

historical relationships have provided numerous safe havens for the Moros which limit the effectiveness of the Philippine government, who are unable to track all safe havens.

The Moros are unbounded by the corridors in the maritime geography. On the other hand, the Philippine government remains limited by these corridors due to the maritime geography and physical characteristics of the archipelago vis-à-vis the internationally recognized political boundaries. The Philippines and Malaysia have longstanding political disagreements and border disputes due to the misalignment of the political boundaries compared to the island laydown of the archipelago.¹⁴⁷ The misalignment has further benefited the Moros' ability to exploit the political boundaries of the archipelagos physical space and sustain an unspecified level of autonomy.¹⁴⁸

The archipelagos' geography has made it difficult for previous foreign powers and continues to make it difficult for the Philippine government to achieve maritime superiority within the region. The island chain that integrates the Malaysian and Philippine islands has facilitated the freedom of movement for the Moros throughout the insurgency and has afforded them the ability to elude foreign powers for centuries and the Philippine government.¹⁴⁹ The small island chain has historically facilitated traffic along and throughout the islands. The islands as a whole are also used to shelter insurgents who can move from one island to the next with relative ease. The maritime topography enables the Moros to concentrate their resources at a time and place of their choosing, while the Philippine government must continuously seek the most effective way to permanently control its territory.

As an island nation, the Philippine government must govern their territories across multiple islands in a coherent fashion, which includes exerting power and influence evenly across thousands of islands, whereas the Moros only need to retain their influence in the areas which they levy an ancestral claim upon. The Moros seek to retain their influence in

¹⁴⁷ Yves Boquet, *The Philippine Archipelago*, 1st ed. 2017, Springer Geography (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 30–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51926-5>.

¹⁴⁸ Seraina Rüegger and Heidrun Bohnet, "The Ethnicity of Refugees 2021 Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 1 (2018): 65–88.

¹⁴⁹ Boquet, *The Philippine Archipelago*, 11–15.

locations that they have historically governed, while the Philippine government attempts to extend their influence in locations that they and foreign powers before them have been unable to fully control.

E. SUMMARY

In the case of the Moros, the physical geography of their homelands leaves them isolated from the ethno-religious majority of the greater Philippine society. Che Man asserts that physical geography, ethnicity, the socio-economic class system, culture, and politics have all contributed to various forms of Islamic traditionalism in Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁰ The Moros separate geographic and religious identities further intensify their loyalty to their separatist movement.

The Moro insurgency continues to endure, due to the Philippine government's inability to overcome the geographic advantages that the Moro society and insurgents have successfully leveraged for centuries. Ethnic and religious movements linked to physical geographic and territorial ties have proven to be especially lethal and difficult for the Philippine government to quell. The physical geography of their homeland in the southern Philippines have left the Moros isolated from the ethno-religious majority state population. As a result of this isolation, due in large part to the land and maritime geography, the Moros' sense of identity deepens their loyalty to the insurgency.

¹⁵⁰ W. K. Che Man, *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*, South-East Asian Social Science Monographs (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), 451–52.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHY FOR PEACE

As illustrated in the previous chapters' research, the centuries-old Moro insurgency that emerged in the colonial period and is rooted in the era of the Sultanates in the Southeast Asian archipelago, cannot be understood or dealt with without a recognition of the geographical factors. While the insurgency has extended over centuries of foreign power and modern national domestic rule, it has largely remained centralized to the Mindanao Islands, raising the question of the various facts that have sustained the insurgency. Analyzing the historical and modern Moro Insurgency from the lens of geography offers a unique and dynamic perspective for recommendations to foster an end to the conflict.

Monsoon winds' importance and influence on the islands is a significant geographic factor, which continues to affect the region.¹⁵¹ Historically, the winds along the maritime routes have introduced new religious and economic groups such as Islamic traders and Christian colonizers which have shaped nearly every aspect of social, political, and economic life. The monsoon winds not only facilitated the distribution of trade and commerce, but also the movement of religion.¹⁵² As the merchants moved eastwards through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean seeking new markets and resources, so too did Islam and Christianity from their individual places of origin.¹⁵³ These winds were largely predictable and consistent which enabled the merchants and eventually, colonial powers to depend on them to conduct trade and commerce throughout the archipelago.¹⁵⁴ As shown in Chapter II, in addition to promoting international trade, the monsoon winds also facilitated the spread of Islam to civilizations throughout the archipelago of Southeast Asia, including the island chains of Mindanao, Palawan, and Sulu.¹⁵⁵ Islam would

¹⁵¹ Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 261–65.

¹⁵² Wormser, "The Spread of Islam in Asia through Trade and Sufism," 131.

¹⁵³ Smart, Denny, and Heritage, "Atlas of The World's Religions," 94.

¹⁵⁴ James Chad, Sean McDonald, and Bruce Vaugh, eds., *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia: Geopolitics, Terrorism, and Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011), 26.

¹⁵⁵ Pluvier, "Historical Atlas of South-East Asia," 24.

eventually fully integrate into societies in the southern Mindanao Island Group during the Sultanate era, and Islam would largely become the religion of the Moros.¹⁵⁶

The roots of the Moro insurgency date back to the period of Spanish colonization. Over time, Islam largely integrated into Moro society by way of merchants, the ubiquitous nature of Spanish colonization attempted to rapidly transform society in the Philippine islands. Thus, the actions of the Spanish laid the foundation of the insurgency. Stemming from the declaration of Martial Law by Philippine President Marcos in 1972, the modern-day Moro insurgency began under the banner of the MNLF formed in 1972, followed closely by the MILF, formed in 1977.¹⁵⁷ These considerations reflect the assertion that geography has impacted Moro society for centuries and assisted in their insurgency.¹⁵⁸

In the centuries marked by colonial rule in the Philippine islands, the land and maritime geography continued to make significant impacts on the sustainment of the insurgency as the nature of the maritime and land geography was favorable to the Moros. During the colonial era, the Spanish fleet was not equipped to handle the maritime landscape of the archipelago. The Spanish Fleets were better designed and equipped as ocean-going vessels and less capable in the littorals of the archipelago. The Moros, however, had boats and watercraft that were able to use the littoral waterways to conduct and defend against attacks, transit from island to island, and participate in trade and commerce. During the era of U.S. colonization, American officials consolidated the Moro lands in the southern Philippines into a Moro province.¹⁵⁹ While this consolidation occurred from a nationalist perspective, the Moros maintained their own adjacent socio-political structure. As seen throughout both colonial eras, the impact of both land and maritime geographic factors largely favored the Moros' independence and hindered the complete rule by either Spain or the United States.

¹⁵⁶ Chad, McDonald, and Vaughn, *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia*, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Moro Islamic Liberation Front," 1; Center for International Security and Cooperation, "Moro National Liberation Front," 1.

¹⁵⁸ Joseph Chinyong Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics*, Policy Studies 24 (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2006), 9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06517>.

¹⁵⁹ Liow, 9.

Upon gaining national independence, the Philippine government did not fare much better in integrating the Moros into Filipino society than their colonial predecessors.¹⁶⁰ The Moros were still largely able to use the littoral waterways to defend and attack the Philippine military forces, transit from island to island, and conduct trade and commerce outside the purview of the Philippine government oversight. The Moros' historical relationships to other communities in their immediate surrounding islands remained more significant than that of the Philippine government to the north in Manila.¹⁶¹ The Moros' seafaring roots assisted them in combatting attempts by the Philippine government to quell the insurgency through national military tactics. According to Stark, much of the domestic violence between the Moros and Philippine government continues to stem from the Moros' desire for self-determination, which has been largely absent from their society dating back to the Sultanate era.¹⁶² While self-determination has not been achieved by the Moros for many centuries, the land and maritime geography of their ancestral homeland has enabled them to stave off foreign powers and the Philippine government for the equivalent number of centuries.¹⁶³

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are largely split between domestic considerations for addressing the insurgency in the Philippines and U.S. diplomacy recommendations regarding the same. The geographic factors are rarely considered in the previous literature in identifying solutions for the Philippine government from a U.S. perspective. While the Philippines and United States have had diplomatic ties for centuries, the U.S. recommendations ultimately support the peaceful end to the insurgency which brings stability in the region which is crucial for its Indo-Pacific strategy. The importance of the region to the United States has become an increasingly important driver in global

¹⁶⁰ Jan Stark, "Muslims in the Philippines," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23, no. 1 (April 2003): 196, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000305937>.

¹⁶¹ Stark, 197.

¹⁶² Stark, 200.

¹⁶³ Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics*, 7–9.

politics.¹⁶⁴ From the western United States to the Indian subcontinent, “the region spans two oceans—the Pacific and the Indian—that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy.”¹⁶⁵ At the same time, an equitable integration of the Moros into the larger Philippine society is important for those who are engaged in the modern-day insurgency.

1. State and Society Relations: Recommendations

First, the Philippine government needs to control external support to the Moros which is largely emerging from its geographic proximity to Malaysia. Limiting external support will largely occur via maritime geography as much of the tangible resources supporting the insurgency comes via the maritime domain from countries such as Malaysia. Limiting access of this support can assist in influencing the choices and/or changing the actions of the Moro insurgents.¹⁶⁶ These actions will benefit the Philippine government as it decreases the likelihood of violent conflict between the Moros and Philippine government.¹⁶⁷ The Moros have consistently remained successful at using geography to their advantage against the Philippine government. Support from external groups and countries sympathetic to the Moro insurgency have clearly aided the sustainment of the insurgency into the modern era.

The potential peace dividend brought about from a lasting peace in the Mindanao Island Group would come with substantial benefits, if an appropriate domestic management system was fully implemented as well.¹⁶⁸ The state needs to ensure that unequal distribution of wealth in the Mindanao region when compared to the other

¹⁶⁴ Bruce Vaugh et al., *The Trump Administration’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”: Issues for Congress*, R45396 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018), 75, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45396>.

¹⁶⁵ Bruce Vaugh et al., 75.

¹⁶⁶ Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Headquarters, Department of the Army, and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, FM 3-24, MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, 2014), 4–11, <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>.

¹⁶⁷ Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Headquarters, Department of the Army, and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 4–11.

¹⁶⁸ Salvatore Schiavo-Campo and Mary Judd, “The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend,” *The World Bank, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction Social Development Department*, Social Development Papers, no. 24 (February 2005): 7.

Philippine regions is addressed. The positive effects of a well-coordinated infrastructure development and reconstruction plan on the major islands in the region would support the socio-political investment.¹⁶⁹ The maritime and land geography has a wealth of underdeveloped natural resources such as hydropower, minerals, and agricultural opportunities.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the opportunity to tap into the tourism industry on the islands and interconnected island chains, affords the region a rich opportunity to increase the distribution of wealth throughout the region.¹⁷¹ A lasting peace in Mindanao requires the equitable distribution of wealth and support between the Philippine government and the Mindanao region along with an equitable distribution of wealth within the region itself.

2. Future Steps for the U.S.: Recommendations

A primary goal for U.S. diplomacy is to maintain a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) for trade, commerce, and safe passage throughout the region in order to implement its INDOPACOM objectives. Successive American Administrations have outlined and promoted explicit for FOIP in speeches as well as documents such as the U.S. National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy.¹⁷² The protection of maritime trade routes is integral to establishing and safeguarding U.S. national security and economic interests is an essential element of its objectives.¹⁷³

A significant contributing factor to the safe passage of ships throughout the ocean is the ability for nations to maintain security within their national waters. Concerns over the capacity and staying power of the U.S. as the pre-eminent power in the region has continually sharpened over the years.¹⁷⁴ Further strengthening the bilateral and multilateral partnerships with countries such as the Philippines in the region moving forward will increase the credibility of FOIP in the eyes of U.S. allies and partners in the

¹⁶⁹ Schiavo-Campo and Judd, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Schiavo-Campo and Judd, 8.

¹⁷¹ Schiavo-Campo and Judd, 8.

¹⁷² Bruce Vaughn et al., *Free and Open Indo-Pacific*, 73.

¹⁷³ Scott Jasper, ed., *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2010), 5.

¹⁷⁴ “Reinventing the Indo-Pacific,” *The Economist*, January 7, 2023, 36.

region.¹⁷⁵ The Moros use littoral geography for nefarious economic activities such as piracy. The ability of the Philippine government to maintain a safe environment for international trade and commerce will benefit the United States in its diplomatic and international goals.

The U.S. should continue assisting the Philippine government in training, equipping, and executing counterinsurgency operations. They should do so by increasing the partnership opportunities within the maritime domain while also not losing sight of counterinsurgency and stability operations in the predominantly Moro islands in the southern Philippines. A heavy-handed military response to the insurgency has proved to be unsustainable and counterproductive. Integrating the geographic considerations identified in this thesis provides a fresh perspective on the operational approach that the U.S. should consider utilizing in future planning with the Philippine government.

B. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Three significant areas of research that complement the geographic impact of the Moro insurgency in the southern Philippines need to be integrated with the geographic perspective. First, the research on how geography impact external support needs more investigation: second, the perception that the insurgency is rooted in religion needs to be addressed since it enhances the sense of uniqueness, isolation of island-nation from the central government; and third, further research needs to chart the consequences of internal Moro conflicts and concerns, which have all contributed to the sustainment of the insurgency. The first area of research is the impact of external support to the Moros from communities in northern Malaysia and from external powers funneling support through Malaysia. The second area of research is to geographically map the transition of the Moro insurgency from one that focuses on Moro societal autonomy to that of a religious Jihad, based upon the perception of ISIS taking control of relatively large swathes of the Mindanao Island Region. A third area of research is charting the causality and impact of internal Moro conflicts and its impact on reaching a peaceful resolution to the insurgency.

¹⁷⁵ The Economist, 36.

These internal conflicts often fall along ancestral lines where the geographic location—where your family and community live—figures prominently into whatever sub-set of the Moro community you support.¹⁷⁶

Much of the external support to the Moro insurgency, including financial and supplies, transits through northern Malaysia to reach the Moros thanks largely to the societal bonds dating back to the Sultanate era via maritime corridors. Specific groups in Malaysian society support the Moro insurgency by facilitating the movements of weapons and training support from countries throughout the world, most notably Libya.¹⁷⁷ While the Malaysian government did not openly support the Moro insurgency against the Philippine government, they largely turned a blind eye when it came to Libyan support of the Moros.¹⁷⁸ Modern-day insurgent organizations such as the MNLF benefited from this external support and provided their fighters with foreign weapons and training.¹⁷⁹ A senior MILF official noted that no organization like the MILF could survive without a steady flow of external support to their movement.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, external support to the Moros has proved valuable to the Moro insurgency.

A second avenue for further research is to map the transitions of the insurgency from a conflict over Moro autonomy and defense of their ancestral homeland to that of a religious jihad. Beginning in the 2010s, in the latest iteration of the conflict, the rise of militant Islamic organizations in the archipelago, have largely split from long standing militant organizations in the region by claimed allegiance to ISIS. Without a fundamental understanding of the conflict or a willingness to communicate the entire narrative, a perception of the Moro community pledging allegiance to ISIS and claiming large expanses of the Mindanao Island Region as part of the Islamic Caliphate becomes the perceived reality. As a result, the Moros are perceived to be waging jihad in the Philippines rather

¹⁷⁶ Schiavo-Campo and Judd, “Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend,” 2.

¹⁷⁷ Center for International Security and Cooperation, “Abu Sayyaf Group,” 9.

¹⁷⁸ Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise*, 17.

¹⁷⁹ Morris, 21.

¹⁸⁰ Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines*, 18.

than their original intentions of regaining socio-political autonomy and regaining control of their ancestral homeland.

A final avenue for further research is the effects of internal Moro conflict and their impact on the Moros' ability to resolve the centuries-long conflict. The inability to agree upon a peaceful resolution has not always been due to a conflict between the foreign powers or Philippine government but also due to the lack of social cohesion within the Moro community. At episodic times in the modern era, varied levels of Moro autonomy have been conceded to the southern Philippine provinces. However, the inability of the Moros society to unite, due largely to internal power struggles when levels of autonomy are conceded by the Philippine government, has often led to violent clashes. The Moro community has clashed over ideological differences, political power grabs, and disagreements on the level of autonomy that was conceded to them.¹⁸¹ These clashes have effectively robbed the community of social cohesion and political strength and resulted in the Moros' societal goals remaining largely unattainable.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Schiavo-Campo and Judd, "Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend," 2.

¹⁸² Van der Kroef, *Aquino's Philippines*, 12.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adam, Jeroen. "Bringing Grievances Back In: Towards an Alternative Understanding of the Rise of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines." *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 174, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17401001>.
- Adriano, Fermin, and Thomas Parks. *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance; The Case of Mindanao, Philippines*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Asia Foundation, 2013.
- Bel, Marc, and Peter van der Donck. *An Historical Atlas of Islam*. 2nd rev. ed. Boston: Brill, 2002.
- Biology Dictionary. "Littoral Zone." In *Biology Dictionary*, June 13, 2017. <https://biologydictionary.net/littoral-zone/>.
- Boquet, Yves. *The Philippine Archipelago*. 1st ed. 2017. Springer Geography. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51926-5>.
- Bruce Vaugh, Emma Chanlett-Avery, Ben Dolven, K. Alan Kronstadt, Susan V. Lawrence, Thomas Lum, Wayne M. Morrison, and Ronald O'Rourke. *The Trump Administration's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific": Issues for Congress*. R45396. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45396>.
- Buendia, Rizal. "Bangsamoro Secessionism." In *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 11:427–38. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09592310008423291>.
- Center for International Security and Cooperation. "Abu Sayyaf Group." Center for International Security and Cooperation, August 2018. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/abu-sayyaf-group>.
- . "Moro Islamic Liberation Front." Center for International Security and Cooperation, January 2019. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-islamic-liberation-front>.
- . "Moro National Liberation Front." Center for International Security and Cooperation, May 2019. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-national-liberation-front>.

- Center for Research and Communication of the Philippines, ed. *The Philippines, Facing the Future: An Assessment of the Prospects for the Philippines and for Philippine-American Relations*. Asian Agenda Report 4. New York: Asia Society, 1986.
- Central Intelligence Agency. "Philippines--Country Summary." Central Intelligence Agency, August 15, 2023. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/philippines/summaries>.
- Chad, James, Sean McDonald, and Bruce Vaughn, eds. *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia: Geopolitics, Terrorism, and Globalization*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011.
- Che Man, W. K. *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*. South-East Asian Social Science Monographs. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. First paperback printing. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Cline, Lawrence. "The Islamic Insurgency in the Philippines." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 11, no. 3 (December 1, 2000): 115–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310008423291>.
- Ellis, Earl. *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*. FMFRP 12–46. Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, 1921. <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/ref/AdvBaseOps/index.html>.
- Escribà-Folch, Abel, Covadonga Meseguer, and Joseph Wright. "Remittances and Democratization." *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (September 2015): 571–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12180>.
- Fowler, Mike. "Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy: Then and Now." *Small Wars Journal*, January 18, 2011, 15.
- Headquarters, Department of the Navy, Headquarters, Department of the Army, and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*. FM 3-24, MCWP 3-33.5. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, 2014. <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf>.
- Jasper, Scott, ed. *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2010.
- Kaplan, Robert D. *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*. New York: Random House, 2011.

- . *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*. Ebook. New York: Random House, 2013.
- Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. Reprinted 1988. Great Britain: Unwin Hyman, 1990.
- Liow, Joseph Chinyong. *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics*. Policy Studies 24. Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2006. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06517>.
- Lloyd, Christopher. *Atlas of Maritime History*. New York: Arco Pub. Co, 1975.
- McDoom, Omar Shahabudin, Celia Reyes, Christian Mina, and Ronina Asis. “Between Whom? Patterns, Trends, and Implications of Horizontal Inequality in the Philippines.” *Social Indicators Research* 145, no. 3 (October 2019): 923–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1867-6>.
- McKenna, Thomas M. *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines*. Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 26. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- . “The Origins of the Muslim Separatist Movement in the Philippines.” Asia Society. Accessed November 3, 2021. <https://asiasociety.org/origins-muslim-separatist-movement-philippines>.
- Pluvier, Jan M. *Historical Atlas of South-East Asia*. New York: E.J. Brill, 1995.
- Reference.com. “What Are Some Facts About Spanish Galleon Ships?” In *Reference.Com*, March 25, 2020. <https://www.reference.com/history-geography/spanish-galleon-ships-f50aa61eab222346>.
- Russell, Susan Diana. “The Mindanao Conflict and Prospects for Peace in the Southern Philippines.” In *Mindanao: A Perspective on Youth, Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Conflict Resolution in the Southern Philippines*, 2–12. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies and International Training Office, 2005.
- Schiavo-Campo, Salvatore, and Mary Judd. “The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend.” *The World Bank, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction Social Development Department, Social Development Papers*, no. 24 (February 2005): 23.
- Scupin, Raymond. “Peer Reviewed Article Summary...Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand. By W. K. Che.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 2 (May 1991): 450–52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2057272>.

- Seraina Rüeeggler and Heidrun Bohnet. “The Ethnicity of Refugees 2021 Dataset.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35, no. 1 (2018): 65–88.
- Smart, Ninian, Frederick Mathewson Denny, and Ailsa Heritage. *Atlas of The World’s Religions*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Stark, Jan. “Muslims in the Philippines.” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23, no. 1 (April 2003): 195–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000305937>.
- Steinberg, David Joel. *The Philippines: A Singular and a Plural Place*. 4th ed. Nations of the Modern World. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000.
- The Economist. “Reinventing the Indo-Pacific.” *The Economist*, January 7, 2023, 35–36.
- Tuminez, Astrid S. “This Land Is Our Land: Moro Ancestral Domain and Its Implications for Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines.” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2007): 77–91. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2007.0044>.
- Van der Kroef, Justus Maria. *Aquino’s Philippines: The Deepening Security Crisis*. London, England: The Centre for Security and Conflict Studies, 1988.
- Warren, James Francis. “Review of The Sulu Zone Revisited, by James Francis Warren.” Cambridge University Press on behalf of Department of History, National University of Singapore: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, February 2004. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20072560>.
- Watts, Stephen, Jason H. Campbell, Patrick B. Johnston, Sameer Lalwani, and Sarah H. Bana. “Counterinsurgency in the Philippines.” In *Countering Others’ Insurgencies: Understanding U.S. Small-Footprint Interventions in Local Context*, 63–110. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5vjvmm.12>.
- World Bank. “Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP)-Philippines.” World Bank. Accessed October 19, 2021. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?contextual=default&end=2020&locations=PH&most_recent_value_desc=true&start=1977&view=chart.
- Wormser, Paul. “The Spread of Islam in Asia through Trade and Sufism (Nine-Nineteenth Centuries).” In *Routledge Handbook of Religions in Asia*, edited by Bryan S. Turner and Oscar Salemink. London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia
2. Dudley Knox Library
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California



DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

WWW.NPS.EDU

WHERE SCIENCE MEETS THE ART OF WARFARE