Philippines: Diaspora and Homeland Conflict. Locating the Moro Diaspora in the Mindanao Insurgency

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Abstract: An ever-expanding body of literature suggests the possible link between diasporas and the exacerbation of civil wars in their home countries. One of the most notable findings on the link between diaspora and armed conflict is derived from a set of arguments known as the Greed and Grievances Thesis. According to the said framework, a higher diasporic support to a homeland conflict is positively correlated with a higher incidence of civil war intractability. Applying this framework to the data on external support to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) insurgency from 1990–2008, the study notes that there is a lack of support from the Moro diaspora which forced the MILF to secure peace with the Philippine government. On the contrary, the increase in conflict activities during the insurgency can be qualitatively attributed to the economic and political support from hostile states and international terrorist networks that support the Moro insurgents against the Philippine government. The study concludes that there is an absence of substantial evidence on the role of the Moro diaspora in funding the insurgents due to other factors such as internal financing for the rebellion and the role of international actors in prolonging the Moro conflict.

Keywords: *Moro Muslims, diaspora, civil war, homeland conflict, the Philippines*.

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Conflict Studies Quarterly
Issue 46, January 2024, pp. 55–69

DOI: 10.24193/csq.46.4
Published First Online: January 05 / 2024

Introduction

At the end of the Cold War, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue that conflicts in the twenty-first century are often intrastate in nature. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2002), 15 out of the major conflicts in 2001 alone were all internal conflicts. Internal

conflicts, also known as civil wars or '*small-scale'* insurgencies, are defined as armed combats taking place within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties that are subject to a common authority at the outset of hostilities (Kalyvas, 2009). Quantitatively speaking, a civil war is empirically defined as an internal conflict with at least 1,000 combatant deaths per year (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006).

One of the most notable findings in the literature on civil wars is that diaspora support is positively correlated with a higher incidence of civil war casualties in war-torn insurgencies. This assumption is based on the various empirical studies that were conducted on the possible relationship between diasporas and internal conflict (Angoustures & Pascal, 1996; Mariani *et al*., 2018; Féron & Lefort, 2019). Most of them argue that diaspora support, often financial, causes the exacerbation of civil war due to a variety of reasons. Among the various reasons cited are: (1) the need to buy more weapons and equipment for the war; (2) the recruitment of more insurgents who will fight in the name of the insurgency; and (3) incentives for local elites to prolong the conflict due to economic benefits gained in the duration of war (Collier, 2000; Berdal, 2005, Kaldor, 2012). Some notable examples of this phenomenon are the Tamil diaspora in the Sri Lankan civil war (Angoustures & Pascal, 1996) and the Irish diaspora during the Troubles in Northern Ireland (Cochrane, 2007). Despite the rich literature on the topic, the lack of comprehensive studies detailing the theory's testability is still evident since it has yet to be empirically tested in various insurgencies taking place around the world.

Consequently, this correlation is yet to be theoretically tested in the decades-old Moro conflict between the Christian-dominated Philippine government and the Muslim Moros in the southern Philippines. Despite the fact that the Moro conflict falls into the empirical definition of a civil war, it remains to be validated whether the link between Moro diasporic support and the intractability of the Mindanao insurgency is positively correlated or not.

Research Problem and Variables

As mentioned earlier, the primary research problem that this study attempts to address is to explain whether or not the presence of Moro diaspora support is exacerbating the conflict in Mindanao. Using the Moro diasporic support as the independent variable, this research proposes to establish a link on whether such a variable can be related to the exacerbation of the Mindanao conflict which will then be its dependent variable.

Hence, the study hypothesizes that support by the Moro diaspora is causing the Mindanao insurgency to be intractable. This assumption is based on the various studies that argue for the potency of conflict-driven diasporas to be mobilized in supporting insurgents in their homelands (Angoustures & Pascal, 1996; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Ross, 2004).

The study is structured as follows. First, the study provides an overview of the nexus between diaspora and civil war. This will then be scrutinized in the context of the Moro insurgency that has plagued the southern Philippines for decades where the study will review the existing literature on the existence of the Moro diaspora as a potent force in the Mindanao insurgency. The absence or presence of such a diaspora can provide more theoretical evidence in establishing the possibility that the explanatory independent variable is related to the dependent variable which is the Mindanao conflict.

Second, by utilizing the salient arguments of the Greed and Grievances Thesis, the study employs the application of these arguments in creating a theoretical framework that will attempt to establish a link between the study's two explanatory variables.

Third, the data and method that was used are explained in the results and discussion section of this article. After building an argument on the literature between diaspora and conflict, the study then highlighted certain empirical and theoretical findings that are crucial in establishing a link between the two variables. Using the Uppsala Conflict Program Dataset on External Support (2020), the study attempted to establish observations generated from the dataset. Drawing explanations from various studies on conflict resolution and management, the discussion part will highlight alternative interpretations of why different explanatory variables have emerged upon analyzing the dataset. A conclusion will then summarize the findings and recommendations of the study.

Literature Review

Background on the Diaspora-Conflict Nexus

Less developed countries often bear the brunt of endless civil wars where development is felt least. Moreover, these conflicts often cause sizable migration flows that often lead to the creation of conflict-created diasporas to escape repression and violence from the home country (Koinova, 2018). Since the home country cannot provide security to its citizens, these eventually create diasporic migrants who are forced to live in countries where economic opportunities are abundant. Even though these diasporas live in various countries away from their homeland, there is adequate evidence that they can play a major role in the evolution and duration of the conflict in their home country such as political lobbying, financial support to the insurgency, or direct involvement in the fighting (Mariani *et al*., 2018).

The role of diasporas in conflict has gained attraction from scholars in various disciplines such as political science, international relations, sociology, and history, to name a few. In addition, these studies have triggered numerous debates on the relationship between diasporic support and civil wars. However, most of them remain inconclusive. For this reason, one of the most notable ontological issues that emerged from these debates is whether to consider diasporas as unitary or multiple actors which resulted in the epistemological divide in the study of diasporic studies and conflict.

Collier and Hoeffler (2004) primarily consider diasporas as unitary actors in terms of their ability to provide financial remittances to insurgents in their homeland which can be measured in terms of quantifiable parameters. On the other hand, Keen (2012) and Abramson (2017) attempted to explain diasporas as a product of constructivist processes caused by long-term grievances or identity formation. Therefore, it is necessary to harness these debates in order to provide better explanations for predicting how diasporas mobilize in homeland civil wars.

The relationship between diaspora and their role in an internal conflict is divided into two fundamental arguments. Smith and Stares (2007) have pondered on the question of whether diasporas could either be *peace-wreckers* or *peace-makers*. They found out that they could act as both, depending on the social and political context of their homeland countries. This was supported by Féron and Lefort (2019) by citing the case of the Irish Americans as a diaspora that was actively involved in the peace negotiations in the Northern Ireland conflict during the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. On the other hand, Angoustures and Pascal (1996) argued that the mobilization of the Tamil diaspora in providing financial remittances to support the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) paved the way for it to become one of the most feared guerilla forces in the world until its defeat by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 2009. Such contradiction between the two examples is a testament to how a diaspora can be mobilized violently or peacefully depending on the domestic and international factors at hand.

Is there a Moro Diaspora?

As mentioned earlier, among the most important causal variables commonly attributed to civil war onset is the strength of a diaspora to mobilize resources and garner international support. Koinova (2018) argues that the ability of a diaspora to become engaged in the civil wars of their homelands is a necessary factor if such conflict can worsen or not. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the concept of diaspora has never been conceptualized in ethno-nationalist terms at its initial stages in academia.

The etymology of the term '*diaspora*' is commonly attributed to the Greeks. Initially, the term was first documented in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In contrast to popular knowledge, the term diaspora initially referred to the Jewish people in a religious sense where the Hebrew God had dispersed the Jews since they did not follow God's commandments. According to Liberatore and Fesenmyer (2018), the diaspora eventually became an ethno-nationalist concept upon the rise of the modern nation-state. In the 1990s, postcolonial and postmodern approaches have problematized the relationship between a diaspora and their homeland origins where the line between religion, ethnicity, and diaspora are distinguished. These homeland connections for diasporas around the world yielded an alternative explanation that the civil wars occurring in various parts of the world can be attributed to

the rise of political and financial participation of diasporas as '*transnational actors*' in a globalized world.

In this study, an important theoretical point of departure is to establish a possible link between diaspora and conflict using the Moro diaspora as a case study. Theoretically speaking, the presence of a Moro diaspora has been debated by various scholars throughout the existence of the Moro conflict. An initial issue that most scholars debated on the Moro diaspora is whether or not it exists. According to Wilson (2009), the existence of a Moro diaspora is evident in their notable presence in the Middle East, Australia, and Europe, where they have provided financial support to the Moro insurgency. An example of such support was documented in the transfer of financial remittances to the MILF insurgency through bank transfers in the United Arab Emirates in 2001 (Wilson, 2009). Even so, this form of support from the diaspora is seen as an outlier from the typical financing that the MILF receives from other sources.

However, other scholars argue that the role of the Moro diaspora in the Mindanao conflict is a weak one compared to other diasporic-driven insurgencies around the world. According to Huang *et al*. (2012), the lack of continuous support by the Moro diaspora can be attributed to why the MILF was forced to eventually sign a peace agreement after international support was withdrawn by Malaysia due to political pressure from the Philippine government to cripple the MILF leadership into surrendering its armed struggle in favor of autonomy. This is further supported by the Uppsala Data Conflict Program (2020) which claims the lack of a Moro diaspora to financially support the Moro insurgency since the conflict itself is primarily funded by hostile states like Malaysia and international terrorist networks such as Jemaah Islamiyah from its establishment in the 1990s until today.

Another issue that is being debated by several scholars is whether or not the international Moro diaspora is a force to be reckoned with since most Moros were only dispersed locally during the Moro civil war. According to Ringuet (2002), the Moros were displaced from their homeland in Mindanao during the conflict in the 1970s under martial law by the Ferdinand Marcos administration. The conflict has forced the Moros to migrate to various parts of the Philippines resulting in the creation of Moro communities in Christian-dominated cities such as Manila, Cebu, and Davao, with the *Maranao*-dominated Muslim Town in Quiapo, Manila as one of the most notable. Thus, the lack of a strong international Moro diaspora is often invoked by some scholars when discussing its role in the Mindanao conflict (Ringuet, 2002).

In sum, the lack of compelling evidence except for Wilson's (2009) claim on the existence of a Moro diaspora provides a perfect springboard for discussion on whether or not the Moro diaspora can financially or politically support an insurgency despite the existence of various domestic and international factors that hinder it. This point of departure will be thoroughly discussed in the latter part of this study.

Greed and Grievances as a theoretical framework

This study attempted to replicate the methods employed in the greed and grievances thesis employed by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Keen (2012). According to Keen (2000), conflicts are often exacerbated when there is support for it in financial and political aspects. On the other hand, Collier & and Hoeffler (2004) emphasize the economic capability of insurgents to blackmail diasporas in mobilizing support to provide financial remittances at the expense of their families who are caught in the middle of the insurgency.

Applying the greed and grievances debate on the Moro insurgency, the study attempts to provide an empirical and theoretical explanation of why civil wars are often caused by the interaction of horizontal and vertical inequalities in the onset and duration of the conflict. Using diaspora support as an independent variable, the study employs the premise that economic oppression fostered in civil wars often creates 'vertical inequalities' which are defined in terms of economic inequalities between individuals in a society (Collier, 2000). These inequalities are often mobilized by ethnic entrepreneurs to recruit more fighters to wage an insurgency that will challenge the dominant nation-state. Hence, the presence of financial support from a diaspora to a civil war therefore causes the elites in ethnic armed groups to act based on their self-interests since the benefits of conflict tend to outweigh the costs of the conflict in general.

Throughout the study of intrastate conflicts in the post-Cold War world, the debate on whether civil wars are caused by either "greed" or "grievance" has engaged conflict scholars across several disciplines in explaining the factors of how insurgents are mobilized to challenge the nation-state. Kaldor (2012) argues that these civil wars can be classified in an umbrella term known as '*new wars'* where the causes of warfare have shifted from an ideological struggle into a case of ethnic grievances from an insurgent group. Previously, civil wars were only explained as a consequence of irrationality and inexplicably primordial qualities of human beings (Berdal, 2005). Thus, the blur between state and non-state forces is more evident in less developed countries where state failure is almost inevitable.

At the onset of the twenty-first century, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have presented statistical findings that argue that the economic incentives to challenge the authority of the nation-state are the primary reason why insurgents often pursue violence in civil wars. This debate whether economic reasons precede ethnic or socio-political reasons in civil wars gave rise to the '*greed*' argument in the debate of civil war onset and duration. On the other hand, Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Keen (2012) have provided criticisms that it is virtually impossible to create generalizations on the causes of civil wars since they have to be studied on a case-to-case basis. This led to the rise of the '*grievance*' argument where civil wars are caused by complex ethnic and social processes that heavily depend on the historical and political context of the countries

involved. Thus, the case of the Moro conflict provides an excellent opportunity to test these arguments on a civil war that has plagued a country for decades.

Methodology

Data and Method

The study has utilized the data from the Uppsala Conflict Program (2020) dataset on External Support. In particular, the study used the data on MILF support against the government of the Philippines from 1990-2008. According to the dataset, there were 19 observations (N = 19) on MILF support from external actors in its campaign against the Philippine government. Due to the fact that the total number of observations in the dataset did not reach the minimum number of observations for regression analysis (N < 30), the study only employed descriptive statistics in explaining the observations from the dataset.

In analyzing the data, the study generated a separate dataset that lists the observations documented in the large-N dataset on external support for the MILF. Since the study's independent variable is Moro diasporic support, the generated observations were initially classified as *diasporic* (D) and *non-diasporic* (ND) to distinguish the observations regarding diasporic support.

Moreover, the study wanted to replicate the methods used by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) in proving the greed and grievance framework as a primary explanation of the relationship between diaspora and conflict. According to the framework, diasporic support increases the risk of conflict by providing political and financial support to rebels in their respective homelands.

Consequently, this assumption was empirically tested by Mariani *et al*. (2018) by providing a simple model of conflict by simulating how a diaspora can support a rebellion using model building in regression analysis using the cases of the Sri Lankan, Irish, Somalian, Croatian, and Cuban diasporas' involvement in their respective homeland conflicts. On the other hand, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have proposed a caveat in this assumption that although there is substantial evidence that diasporas can cause a conflict to endure, it does not represent a truism that all conflicts are caused primarily by diasporic support since there are other factors that might cause the conduct to endure for a longer period.

Results and Discussion

Upon the initial coding of the observations generated from the dataset, the study found a notable finding. It can be observed that most of the funding and support come from non-diasporic sources such as hostile states and international terrorist networks.

By using frequency analysis to illustrate this, most of the funding that the MILF received in its insurgency came from other international sources. These sources can be categorized into three: (1) states supporting the insurgency; (2) international terrorist networks; and (3) international non-governmental organizations. Initially, the study attempted to distinguish the financial sources of the MILF rebellion on the presence and absence of diasporic support. This can be summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Category of Funding to the MILF

(N=19)

Category of Funding	Observations (total)	Percentage
Diasporic (D)	0	0
Non-diasporic (ND)	18	94.74
Others	1	5.26
Total	**19**	**100**

It can be observed from the table that an absence of diasporic support is present in the dataset. Most observations can be derived from the fact that the sources of financial support to the Moro insurgency emanate from international sources that are not diasporic. For example, Abuza (2005) cites the case of Malaysian and Libyan support for the MILF in the 1990s as a part of a wider campaign of Islamic states to support Islamic-led secessionist movements. Nonetheless, Malaysian support for the MILF waned in the early 2000s due to the latter's relationship with terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah as its primary benefactors in its campaign against the Philippine government (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, it can be inferred that the rise of radical Islamist groups has increased their support for the MILF after the 9/11 attacks. The launching of counterinsurgency programs by the Philippine government can be credited to the rise of extremist groups in Mindanao such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Maute group (Perez, 2020). Such a trend is well documented in the dataset where military and financial support was present in the MILF insurgency from 1990 until 2008 when the Philippine government and the MILF were about to sign the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD). This was eventually declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court due to its 'secessionist tone' in creating a separate ancestral domain for the Moros (Candelaria, 2018).

Prior to the signing of the MOA-AD, most financial support to the MILF came from radical Islamist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda with strongholds in Malaysia and Indonesia. Based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2020), the MILF received mostly financial and logistical support from these Islamist groups ranging from financial/economic support, access to military and intelligence infrastructure, to the training of combatants on guerilla warfare. This can be summarized in the table below.

Table 2. Distribution of External Support to the MILF (N=19)

External Supporter	Observations (total)	Percentage
Jemaah Islamiyah	7	36.84
Al-Qaida	6	31.58
IIRO	5	26.32
CPP	1	5.26
Total	**19**	**100**

From the total observations in the dataset, more than half of the funding to the MILF insurgency is from international terrorist networks such as the Al Qaeda group and Jemaah Islamiyah. The former is alleged to have links with Osama bin Laden after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. According to Banlaoi (2006), the Al Qaeda group in the Middle East was able to establish links in Southeast Asia by providing funding schemes to separatist movements in the MILF and terrorist activities in the ASG, with the latter forming a terrorist group out of their disgruntlement on the developments of the MILF peace process. In contrast, the Jemaah Islamiyah is notorious for providing support to Islamic terrorists in the establishment of an Islamic state in Southeast Asia (Ressa, 2011).

Another notable finding in the dataset is the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in funding the Moro insurgency. According to the dataset, most funding in the MILF came from a Saudi Arabia-based NGO known as International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). According to Abuza (2003), Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, one of Osama bin Laden's brothers-in-law, established several Islamic organizations and charities in the Philippines for charity work but channeled money to separatist and terrorist groups. Thus, this explains how the MILF was able to create a web of funding sources from both legitimate and illegitimate sources to sustain its rebellion against the Philippine government.

Unfortunately, it can be observed that the dataset does not even highlight the role of the Moro diaspora in the conflict. Despite various claims that the Moro diaspora made some attempt to provide support to the ongoing Bangsamoro conflict, it has not played a prominent role in ultimately determining the outcome of the Moro conflict that led to the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) last 2011. In sum, a brief summarization of the variables analyzed in this study is explained in the table below:

Deducing from the table, MILF support is not primarily ascribed to the Moro diaspora abroad. This can be attributed to two possible explanatory variables: (1) the presence of hostile states and radical groups who are motivated to support the insurgents to pursue their self-interests; and (2) internal funding from illicit activities and shadow economies.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Category of Funding & External Support)

(N=19)

Variable	Observations (total)	Percentage
Category of Funding	19	100
Diasporic	0	0
Non-diasporic	18	94.74
Others	1	5.26
External Supporter	19	100
Jemaah	7	36.84
Al-Qaida	6	31.58
IIRO	5	26.32
CPP	1	5.26

According to Franco (2016), due to the lack of Moro support abroad, the MILF had no choice but to engage itself in illicit activities such as shadow economies and by introducing the concept of *zakat*- a revenue-generating scheme levied on MILF-supporting peasants which make up almost two percent of the total MILF revenue stream.

Moreover, Lara (2016) provides a compelling explanation on how the Moro clans in Muslim Mindanao generate their income from shadow economies where local clans have created an underground economy ranging from the smuggling of illegal goods coming from Sabah, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Taiwan to the illegal trade of drugs and narcotics where Mindanao served as a transit route for the drug trade in Southeast Asia. These shadow economies have given the Moro clans more power in generating funds for their electoral campaigns on various election periods in Muslim Mindanao. Moreover, these clans who are usually affiliated with the MILF, also provide security to MILF insurgents in Mindanao as manifested in the 2015 Mamasapano attacks that resulted in the deaths of 44 policemen from the Special Action Force (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

To put it briefly, we can infer that there are three possible reasons why the MILF has been successful in prolonging the conflict until the signing of a peace agreement in 2014 under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). One is the increased role of international organizations and hostile states against the Philippine government that provided the MILF with weapons, financial assistance, and training of combatants. Second, the ability of the MILF to generate income from illicit economic activities such as shadow economies and illegitimate tax schemes for its supporters. Finally, the MILF's ability to gather funds from legitimate sources and use it for its insurgency is also notable in the case of the IIRO.

Although there were instances when the Moro diaspora was mobilized to provide support to the insurgency (Wilson, 2009), there is no adequate evidence proving its decisive role in contributing to the MILF's success in prolonging its insurgency against the Philippine government. Drawing from Keen's (2012) premise that civil wars are not primarily motivated by economic incentives alone, the following arguments can be inferred based on the results generated in the dataset. These interpretations can provide alternative justifications for the research problem raised in this study.

First, based on the dataset, neighboring countries such as Malaysia and other Islamic countries such as Libya have interests in supporting the MILF due to the international campaign of supporting their fellow Muslims against a Christian-dominated government in Manila. Furthermore, it can be theorized that if the Bangsamoro is successful in seceding itself from the Philippines, then it can be the latest addition to the *ummah* of Muslim-dominated states in Southeast Asia. This phenomenon is best captured in the *bad neighbor's theory* proposed by Weiner (1996) where an ethnic group aiming for secession can produce more refugees and create more instability in the region. These refugee flows eventually provide opportunities for other states to intervene in the conflict. Citing the case of the Moros in Mindanao, Weiner (1996) explains that territorial ethnic conflicts give neighboring states more reason to interfere in the internal affairs of the dominant state since the mobilized ethnic group can retaliate against the dominant state's repressive policy of preventing the rebellion. In response, this can force a neighboring state to participate in the conflict for the conflict not to spill within its borders (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2002). This phenomenon can be observed from Malaysian support to the MILF in the 1990s which sought to prevent the expansion of the MILF's conflict activities in Malaysia as a consequence of the Moro civil war (Franco, 2016).

Second, rebel groups can generate illegitimate funds despite the state's ability to prevent it from acquiring financial assistance from legal sources. Lara (2016) argues that shadow economies are often established in conflict regions as a response to the state's inability to provide economic security to discriminated ethnic groups. Eventually, local clans and insurgent groups like the MILF fill in the power vacuum by creating income-generating collection schemes for their armed struggle in exchange for security for the civilians living in these disputed territories. Consequently, a weak state such as the Philippines ultimately evolves into a 'warlord state' where elite control becomes a key component of state control (Sidel, 1989; Lara, 2016).

Finally, the ability to channel legal sources of funding into terrorist activities is also an emerging causal variable on how ethnic conflicts can endure over time. Citing the case of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionares de Colombia* (FARC) in the Colombian civil war, Saab and Taylor (2009) explain how the insurgent group was able to launder money obtained from the illegal drug trafficking of narcotics in Colombia by transferring it to offshore accounts. Additionally, the FARC can recruit members who provided contributions to its

armed struggle against the Colombian government in return for higher salaries. Thus, the similar abilities of both the FARC and MILF are a manifestation that insurgents can mobilize legitimate funds into illegal activities to reap the benefits of waging long-term civil wars for their benefit.

Despite the study's initial hypothesis on the role of the Moro diaspora in the Mindanao conflict, the results eventually gave rise to other possible explanations. These explanations can be useful in providing policy solutions in determining possible causal variables that motivate insurgents in waging long-term wars. Moreover, the study affirms the caveat proposed by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) that some civil wars may not be diasporic in nature, thus, it is prudent for scholars of conflict studies not to generalize that the onset and duration of civil wars are more likely caused by the mobilization of a diaspora.

Conclusion

To sum up, there are two notable contributions generated from the study. Despite the initial assumption that a Moro diaspora is exacerbating the Mindanao conflict, other notable variables have emerged upon analyzing the Uppsala Conflict Dataset (2020) such as terrorist networks, hostile states, and NGOs. Moreover, the presence of internal financing within a rebellion is also highlighted as an alternative form of financial support to prolong an insurgency.

First, a major contribution that this study has provided is the viability of the greed and grievances argument to explain why civil wars continue to plague less developed countries such as the Philippines. Utilizing the presence or absence of a diaspora as an explanatory variable, the study has provided an empirical and theoretical explanation that affirms an important finding in the greed and grievances framework that some civil wars are not only motivated by economic incentives alone but also by historical and social realities that continue to shape an insurgency's existence over time.

Finally, the onset and duration of a civil war as an explanatory dependent variable can be caused by a multitude of variables that can serve as a starting point for future studies. The emergence of alternative variables that might have caused the MILF insurgency provides practical policy directions in finally addressing the root causes of the conflict.

Thus, there are two major issues that the study has raised for future studies. One is a possible explanation for why the Moro diaspora was not able to fully mobilize in supporting its homeland insurgents, unlike other diasporic-driven insurgencies around the world. Lastly, the existence of a coherent Moro diaspora should also be scrutinized in the context of why the other explanatory variables can provide more compelling reasons why the Moro insurgency has endured over time. Nonetheless, diasporic mobilization, illegitimate sources of funding, and international actors are valuable explanatory tools in understanding why ethnic conflicts have motivated key conflict actors to pursue intractable insurgencies.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank John Raymond Jison at the Division of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Visayas and Noel Christian Moratilla at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman for their constructive comments in the writing of this research article. Moreover, I would also like to thank my colleagues and mentors in the UP Manila Department of Social Sciences and UP Department of Political Science for their constant support and assistance.

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