REGIONAL AUTONOMY AS A COUNTERINSURGENCY TOOL FOR DEMOCRATIZING STATES: CASE STUDIES FROM ACEH, PAPUA, AND MINDANAO

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ABSTRACT

Democratizing states, especially those with less wealth, suffer from institutional weaknesses that make it difficult to combat secessionist insurgencies within their territories. A possible counterinsurgency tool for these states is to offer regional autonomy to the secessionist areas as a means to accommodate some of the grievances of the insurgent group's constituents while still maintaining the state's territorial integrity. To determine whether regional autonomy is successful in curbing insurgent violence, the paper looks at three case studies in Indonesia and the Philippines. The findings demonstrate that regional autonomy is a viable tool in decreasing levels of insurgent violence, but is more successful under a certain set of conditions. The conditions under which a regional autonomy arrangement contributes to decreased levels of insurgent violence are: consultation with insurgent groups, military superiority of the state's security apparatus, and the presence of a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process. A less wealthy democratizing state operating under these conditions will likely produce lower levels of violence when employing a regional autonomy arrangement as a counterinsurgency tool.
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

Fifty countries considered “flawed democracies” are approaching a level of consolidated
democratic governance, but still struggle to build the institutions necessary to maintain a system
that is based upon principles of human and civil rights.\(^1\) Of those fifty countries, at least thirteen
suffer from significant and often, violent internal conflict, ranging from frequent rioting to brutal
insurgency.\(^2\) These conflicts stress the state institutions and, in the case of insurgency, can
erode popular support for the national government.\(^3\) A democratizing state's government must
put forth great effort to end conflict while maintaining or expanding its legitimacy in the eyes of
the target population, since an individual cannot be subject to a political entity without that
individual's consent.\(^4\) A failure to resolve conflict without retaining at least tacit consent of the
population may result in the disintegration of the democratic system. While some democratizing
countries may have the resources to end conflict swiftly and with great ease, other less wealthy
states may find the endeavor difficult.

Indeed one of the most significant factors associated with the onset of insurgency in a
given country is its wealth.\(^5\) A poorer country, even a democratizing one, has a greater
likelihood of facing an insurgency because it lacks the institutions and resources to maintain
stability. When faced with a violent secessionist movement, what counterinsurgency measures
are available to a poor democratizing country that allows it to maintain both the consent of the
governed population and security while respecting democratic values and human rights? This is
the central question of this thesis.

\(^1\) Economist Intelligence Unit. "The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Index of Democracy 2008." The
\(^2\) The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “Conflict List.” Armed Conflict Database http://0-
acd.iiss.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/armedconflict/MainPages/dsp_ConflictList.asp (Accessed
March 13, 2010).
\(^3\) Zachary Elkins and John Sides. “Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States?” American Political
VIII, Sec. 95
\(^5\) This and the following sentence draw on findings from James Fearon and David Laitin. “Ethnicity,
Hypothesis and Sub-hypotheses

The hypothesis of this paper is that regional autonomy arrangements are valuable counterinsurgency tools for less wealthy democratizing countries facing secessionist insurgency situations. However, regional autonomy has a greater likelihood of reducing insurgent violence and decreasing demands for secession under a certain set of conditions, which I present as a series of supporting sub-hypothesis. First, the arrangement must be created through consultation with the insurgent/secessionist leadership and not through a unilateral decision by the national government. Second, the state government must be in a position to put significant military pressure on the insurgent group to agree to a settlement. Third, a mechanism for demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of insurgents must accompany the establishment of the autonomy arrangement.

Contribution

Classical counterinsurgency theory lacks a thorough enumeration of the ways in which a state can apply an atypical political arrangement such as regional autonomy, and this paper aims to fill that void. While conflict resolution specialists acknowledge the value of regional autonomy arrangements for addressing minority group grievances, little is written about how such arrangements and counterinsurgency efforts can mutually reinforce each other. Many insurgencies today are protracted in nature, meaning that the state has failed to completely overcome the insurgent group and therefore has allowed the conflict to continue unabated. These long-lasting conflicts may persist simply because the state is not strong enough to end the conflict unilaterally and has not exhausted all possible means to overcome the insurgents.

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6 See several secondary sources in the bibliography. Conflict resolution literature acknowledges the value of regional autonomy as a way of addressing a party's grievances, but does not show how military operations, especially counterinsurgency operations, can alleviate violence and restore support of the state. On the other hand, counterinsurgency theory focuses primarily on the military operations needed to establish peace without a discussion of how those can be reinforced with political compromises such as regional autonomy.

Regional autonomy, while a sort of compromise of powers for the state, may provide the alternative strategy necessary for less wealthy democratizing countries to overcome an insurgency within their borders.

**Outline**

To demonstrate the hypothesis that under these facilitating conditions a less wealthy democratizing country can better decrease insurgent violence, I examine and analyze three case studies from two lower-middle income flawed democracies that are facing secessionist insurgencies within their territories. The case of Aceh, Indonesia represents the most successful implementation of regional autonomy as a vital component of counterinsurgency while the cases of Mindanao in the Philippines and Papua in Indonesia demonstrate less successful application of the measure.

After outlining the pertinent analytical definitions, I assess the successes or failures of the regional autonomy arrangements as parts of the respective counterinsurgency campaigns. I then assess the presence or absence of the facilitating conditions in each of the cases to determine how that result affected the counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, I address alternative explanations to the success or failures of counterinsurgency in these three cases and offer policy recommendations for how the case countries and other democratizing states can employ regional autonomy to decrease insurgent violence.

**Assumptions**

This paper contains five assumptions focusing primarily on the goals and actions carried out by poorer democratizing countries facing counterinsurgency. Each assumption is grounded in counterinsurgency and comparative politics literature as cited in the footnotes:

- Assumption 1: Every state has an immutable desire to maintain its territorial integrity and
benefit from the resources provided within that territory.  

- Assumption 2: A democratizing state is hesitant to use brutal repression against its population or the target constituency of the secessionist movement, as this will erode support for the national government.  

- Assumption 3: States face institutional and resource limitations and must therefore find measures in addition to military operations to end secessionist insurgency.  

- Assumption 4: The goals of insurgents are flexible and subject to change given limitations and other political circumstances.  

- Assumption 5: Levels of conflict-related fatalities are a good indication of success or failure against an insurgency since in guerrilla warfare, the insurgents typically choose when to engage in hostilities.  

Case Selection: Aceh, Papua, and Mindanao

In order to validate the hypothesis that regional autonomy is a useful counterinsurgency tool for poorer democratizing states along with demonstrating the five supporting sub-hypotheses, I will examine the three counterinsurgency campaigns that employed regional autonomy: Aceh and Papua in Indonesia and Mindanao in the Philippines. Only one, Aceh, was associated with a very large decrease in insurgent violence. Determining why one was more successful than the other two will provide insight to counterinsurgency practitioners on how to properly apply such an arrangement to bring about the greatest level of success.

The cases for this analysis draw from two poorer democratizing countries (Indonesia

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9 Ibid  
11 Galula, 15-16.  
12 Ibid, 3.
and the Philippines) both of which have many aspects in common, providing moderately strong control variables. First, the countries fulfill several of the conditions for the onset of insurgency posited by James Fearon and David Laitin in their work “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” According to their analysis, insurgency most often occurs in poorer, highly populated, and geographically rugged countries. Indonesia and the Philippines are both considered lower middle income countries with very similar GDP per capita at $3,830 and $3,900 respectively. This serves as a proxy value to demonstrate strength of the state, with the assumption that a poorer state has weaker institutions. Their populations are also quite large given their areas, with population densities of around 123/km$^2$ in Indonesia and 295/km$^2$ in the Philippines. Their large populations are spread out through two sprawling archipelagos consisting of thousands of islands covered in jungle, swamp, mountains, grasslands, dense urban areas, and agricultural production. Because these two countries fulfill the conditions for the onset of insurgency, it is especially important to understand how these types of countries can overcome insurgency with their limited resources.

Second, both countries have similar histories and demographics that help to explain how they arrived at states of protracted conflict. Both countries are the products of colonialism in which their colonial patrons (the Dutch in Indonesia and the Spanish and Americans in the Philippines) forced hundreds of different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups under one political system. Upon independence, these two countries had to forge a strong sense of nationalism to unite the disparate ethnic groups. Some ethnicities acquiesced to the nationalist projects, while others including the Achenese and Papuans in Indonesia and the Moros in the

13 James Fearon and David Laitin. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003): 75. For the purposes of this analysis, these conditions are given and are considered true. An explanation on why these conditions favor insurgency is beyond the scope of this paper.
15 Fearon & Laitin, 75.
Philippines, rejected the efforts and desired self-determination. In addition to that complicating factor, both countries suffered decades of rule by authoritarian governments that used coercion to stabilize the country. This authoritarianism had negative effect on the minority ethnic groups that sought their independence. Since the 1980s and the 1990s, however, both countries moved away from authoritarianism to democracy, albeit a democracy riddled with faults and corruption. These factors demonstrate yet another set of limitations for Indonesia and the Philippines: as democratizing countries with hundreds of minorities, it is necessary for the government to uphold democratic values and human rights to maintain the consent of the governed. As such, the governments cannot continue violent oppressive measures against the secessionist constituency, making alternative forms of counterinsurgency, like those that employ regional autonomy, more important for the successful resolution of the conflict.

The similarities between the two countries, in a very loose sense, serve as control variables that demonstrate the limitations placed on these two countries when battling a secessionist insurgency. This is useful for an analysis of the conditions that lead to the successful application of regional autonomy within a greater counterinsurgency framework because it limits the independent variables that could complicate the analysis. To better understand the nuances of the counterinsurgency campaigns, brief backgrounds of the cases are found in the appendix.

Cases are limited to the violent activities of the three insurgent groups from 2000 to 2009. The groups are the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Aceh, the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in Papua, and the Moro Independence Liberation Front (MILF). The dates of focus for these three cases were chosen for the following reasons: 1) the most recent laws on regional autonomy arrangements for each case occurred within that time frame, and 2) available fatality counts (which are used to determine the degree of insurgent violence) fall largely within this time period.
The analysis examines the association between the most recent forms of autonomy legislation established in the three regions and the levels of insurgent violence. Looking at past failures of regional autonomy may aid in understanding how the governments have arrived at the current forms of legislation and conflict situations. However, the past attempts generally were failures or deemed not comprehensive enough to accommodate grievances and stifle violence. Otherwise subsequent versions of autonomy would not have been necessary.

Excluded Cases

Other cases of the confluence of regional autonomy and insurgency also exist, notably in China, Russia, Sudan, India, and Papua New Guinea. However, apart from issues of time and resources, these were excluded because not all of them fit the framework of democratizing countries. Russia, China, and Sudan are considered to continue as authoritarian regimes with only nominal democracy in the country. This authoritarian nature also makes it difficult to find the necessary data to properly analyze the regional autonomy as a counterinsurgency tool. India is a democratizing country, but the types of autonomy that have been implemented do not conform to an entire territory, but rather to specific ethnic groups functioning in parallel to a state government. The autonomy established in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea is a useful comparison, but the strength of the country's institutions is significantly less than those of Indonesia and the Philippines. Thus, for greater uniformity of the control variables and readily available data, I limit my analysis to Aceh, Papua, and Mindanao.

Methodology – Assessment of Levels of Violence

The first task of the analysis is to demonstrate that one regional autonomy case is more successful in reinforcing counterinsurgency than the other cases. Success can be a difficult concept to measure, especially in the context of insurgency which generally has fluctuations in
levels of violence. For the purposes of this analysis, success is determined by a marked trend in decreased armed conflict between the insurgent group and the state.\textsuperscript{17} I measure trends in violence by looking at the percentage change in the number of conflict-related fatalities from the year before the most recent implementation of the regional autonomy arrangement until the year for which the most recent data is available.\textsuperscript{18} The case whose percentage change is the lowest value is the most successful case while that with the highest value is the least successful case with the third case fitting in somewhere along that spectrum.

This paper uses the number of conflict-related fatalities as a proxy for levels of violence, under the assumption that the insurgents are usually the ones who initiate battles in guerrilla warfare.\textsuperscript{19} These trends must be marked against a baseline year in which the most recent autonomy arrangement was not a factor. Thus, the baseline years for which we assess changes in violence correspond to the year immediately preceding the implementation of the most recent act or vote within the country on the establishment of the autonomy arrangement.

To determine what aspects of counterinsurgency contributed to decreases in violence the paper tests several conditions for successful insurgency, discussed later in the theoretical framework section. These conditions include: the insurgent group’s cause, the weakness of the counter-insurgent, favorable geography, and outside support. Identifying how these conditions affected each of the insurrections can give insight on to what extent regional autonomy was an independent variable related to decreased violence.


\textsuperscript{18} This process first determines the average number of fatalities for the years after and including the establishment of the autonomy arrangement. Then I determine the percentage change between this number and the number of fatalities for the year before the implementation of the arrangement. Available data is only listed by year, and while it is an imperfect calculation of the trend in violence, it does give us a rough estimate for deciding which is more successful.

\textsuperscript{19} See footnote 20
Methodology – Testing the Sub-hypotheses

The fulfillment of the conditions of the three sub-hypotheses in the most successful case will aid in demonstrating under what circumstances a regional autonomy arrangement is associated with a greater decrease in insurgent violence. The conditions that are present in the most successful case will demonstrate how best a regional autonomy arrangement can augment and reinforce counterinsurgency efforts. However, if there is no perceived relationship between success and the sub-hypotheses, then those conditions are either not necessary for autonomy to have an effect in the counterinsurgency campaign or there is not a clear association between the arrangement and the levels of insurgent violence.

In order for regional autonomy to contribute to a greater decrease in insurgent violence, the counter-insurgent government must create the arrangement in consultation with insurgent leadership, usually through negotiations. A regional autonomy arrangement created without such consultation will likely lack legitimacy in the eyes of the insurgent group. Regional autonomy in itself is a compromise when facing a secessionist threat, and a state that unilaterally makes such a compromise may appear desperate to the insurgent group, emboldening its fighters to continue their struggle. The assumption behind this sub-hypothesis is that when an insurgent group is inside of the process for creating an autonomous region, at least some of its grievances may be satisfied, thus tempering violence. In contrast, insurgent groups outside of the process may not be satisfied and may continue carrying out violent acts.\textsuperscript{20}

To test how this variable contributes to a significant decrease in insurgent violence, the paper looks at how the autonomy arrangement came about in each case, noting the position of the insurgent group inside or outside of the process. For cases in which the insurgent group was inside the process, one would expect a larger decrease in violence, while for cases in which the insurgent group was outside the process, one would expect a smaller decrease in

violence. When outside of the process, the insurgents have little incentive to come to end
attacks and come to a compromise with the government since there is no guarantee their
interests will be represented.

The discussion of the regional autonomy arrangement with the insurgent group cannot
feasibly occur, however, if the state security apparatus is not in a strong bargaining position to
convince the insurgents to move away from violence and accept autonomy. The analysis tests
the second hypothesis by looking at numbers of military and police personnel in the area of
insurgency as well as what counterinsurgency strategies and tactics are employed. Insurgents
will continue their struggle if they perceive that victory is still within reach and that independence
will come as a result. So if the security apparatus is properly controlling the area with a large
number of personnel and uses them in effective counterinsurgency operations appropriate to
the level of threat, that would indicate a superior position. The sub-hypothesis is supported if
the case with the largest decrease in violence is associated with a security apparatus in a
superior position relative to the insurgents. However, if the superiority is present in the less
successful cases, the sub-hypothesis is not supported.

The third sub-hypothesis, concerning a DDR process, operates under the assumption
that if most of the weapons are confiscated, violence levels will be low even if the constituents
become dissatisfied with the results of the regional autonomy arrangement. The analysis tests
this sub-hypothesis by noting the occurrence of a DDR process associated with the regional
autonomy arrangement and to what extent the process was successfully carried out. One
would expect that the situation with the largest decrease in levels of violence is accompanied by
a successful DDR process. If a DDR process is present in the least successful cases, the sub-
hypothesis is not supported.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Definitions and Framework

Theoretical Definition 1: Insurgency

The operating definition of insurgency in this paper is that posited by Bard O'Neill in his work *Insurgency and Terrorism*:

“a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses political resources... and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.”

Legitimacy in politics is directly tied to the previously mentioned concept of consent of the governed. When an individual (in this case an insurgent) views a certain political system or leadership as illegitimate, he may cease to offer consent to that ruling group. Insurgents retract consent by seeking to overthrow the existing order to achieve an acceptable situation that reflects the fundamentals of their ideology, credo, religion, or some other politically significant symbol. As such, a secessionist insurgency consists of insurgents who “renounce and seek to withdraw from the political community (state) of which they are formally a part.” This type of insurgency usually centers around the independence of a discrete geographical territory that corresponds with a group of people sharing a common identity.

Theoretical Definition 2: Counterinsurgency

Counterinsurgency is a politico-military strategy that seeks to prevent the insurgent group from achieving its goal. The counter-insurgent force is typically the ruling group and, in the case of secessionist war, is most often the state and/or the state's allies. This leads to one of the operating assumptions in this paper: states seek to retain their territorial integrity and will therefore engage in counterinsurgency operations to the best of their ability to defeat an insurgent group. Although the insurgent and the counter-insurgent may have different visions concerning the nature of the end-state of conflict, they both have the same fundamental

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objective of winning or retaining the support of the local population or target constituency.\textsuperscript{23} Without the support of the population neither adversary can claim legitimate political leadership. The population, especially in a democracy or democratizing state, must furnish consent to the ruling group. If the insurgent loses this consent, the project will fail. If the counter-insurgents lose this consent, the political system will likely change according to the desires of the insurgents and their constituency.

**Theoretical Framework: The Conditions for Successful Insurgency**

Counterinsurgency theory posits several necessary conditions that contribute to an insurgency's success and several maxims that should guide the understanding of a counter-insurgent. David Galula, in his work *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964) outlines four conditions necessary for an insurgency to achieve success. The first condition is that the insurgent group must present a cause that they can use to rally popular support for their campaign. Secondly, the counter-insurgent government must be weak. Thirdly, the country must have rugged geographic conditions. Finally, there must be some level of outside support.

**Condition 1:** The ability for an insurgent to continue his struggle hinges on support provided by the local population, since through that support he is able to re-supply, evade the security apparatus, gather intelligence, and/or recruit more fighters for the cause. The insurgent's cause is the element of the insurgency that enables the group to draw the support of the local population.\textsuperscript{24} If the constituency does not find the cause worthy enough or if the insurgent changes the way that he seeks to achieve his goal, the population will likely cut support and make it very difficult for the insurgent group to carry out guerrilla attacks.

In the case of secession, potential insurgent constituencies must approach the conflict in terms of costs and benefits of both independence and continued state membership. Thus, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Galula, 13.
\end{itemize}
locals must perceive that the insurgent goal of independence has more benefits and less costs relative to continuing as part of the state.\textsuperscript{25} The insurgent convinces his constituents of the benefits of supporting the cause through propaganda and symbolic guerrilla attacks directed against the state that frame the conflict as one upon which the survival of whole community (that shares a perceived common identity with the insurgents) rests.\textsuperscript{26} However, the counter-insurgent force can employ propaganda and attacks against the insurgent to convince the local population otherwise. It is this dynamic that we must identify within each of the conflicts in question, as local popular support is the fuel through which the insurgent machine operates.

**Condition 2:** Apart from the necessity of a cause, a secessionist insurgent group has a greater chance of success when the government of the counter-insurgent state is extremely unstable or weak.\textsuperscript{27} This weakness can come in the form of an incompetent security apparatus, entrenched corruption, or drastic negative changes in the regime. Government weakness proves favorable to the insurgent because it provides a less capable adversary on the battlefield. It also gives the local population little reason to oppose the insurgents, since the government is too weak to furnish the social goods demanded by the constituents. While this study focuses on institutionally weak states, we are only interested in how those states could have become weaker or stronger when implementing autonomy. With a weaker state we would expect violence to increase over time and with a stronger state we would expect violence to decrease over time.

**Condition 3:** Rugged geography such as mountains and forests that are conducive to lightly armed mobile units for the purpose of evading counter-insurgent forces, greatly favor the insurgent group. Cover provided by thick vegetation and rocky terrain allow the insurgent to stage surprise attacks and retreat when necessary. Foot-based movement is the prime means

\textsuperscript{27} Galula, 13.
of transportation for insurgents, and an environment in which that type of movement is more feasible will naturally favor the insurgents. Areas in which the counter-insurgent cannot easily moves mechanized transportation such as tanks, trucks, and aircraft will diminish its effectiveness to some extent.

**Condition 4:** Outside support of insurgents from sympathizers or simply opportunistic arms dealers can greatly increase the groups chances of success. While within a territory the counter-insurgent government can restrict how the group receives fundings and stores its armaments, it can do little to stop the movement of goods outside of the state's borders. An insurgent group with outside support can better operate because it is not as limited in its resources as a group with no outside support.

Even if these conditions are present, the counter-insurgent can still overcome the insurgency by adhering to a set of laws: 1) constituency support is the key to victory, 2) that support is gained through an active minority, 3) constituency support is conditional, and 4) the counter-insurgent must draw on a wide range of means applied with great intensity to successfully execute the campaign.\(^{28}\) As such, counterinsurgency is a vigorous political endeavor that is supported by the use of force when necessary.

Galula's fourth law and the second necessary condition for successful insurgency, however, present a difficult dilemma for the poorer democratizing state that lacks strong political and security institutions necessary for maintaining the consent of the population and the stability of the state. The lack of wealth and institutional strength, as well as efforts to eschew authoritarian tendencies greatly limit the amount of resources available to the counter-insurgent. The political system may not be effective enough to promote affinity to the state, and the security apparatus may not be capable of using primarily coercive means to defeat the insurgents. Even if the military could use a great deal of repression against a secessionist region, this could cause the local population to further reject the state institutions and gravitate

\(^{28}\) Ibid, 52-55.
towards the insurgent group.

The country must therefore make a choice based on trade-offs. This requires the democratizing state to strike a balance between repression and the devolution of powers to the secessionist region in order to maintain the consent of the population in the territory in question. Regional autonomy is one method of power devolution that can potentially lead to a democratizing state’s victory in a counterinsurgency campaign. It does this by presenting the insurgent's target constituency another option besides secession or perceived acquiescent subjection to the state.

**Theoretical Definition 3: Regional Autonomy**

For the purposes of this analysis, regional autonomy is “an arrangement aimed at granting a certain degree of self-identification to a group that differs from the majority of the population in the state, and yet constitutes the majority in a specific region.” The autonomous region typically will take on certain powers previously under the domain of the central government to allow the self-identifying group greater freedom to manage its social structures and available resources. While previously thought to be a facilitating step towards independence, many countries now consider regional autonomy a useful mechanism to accommodate secessionist groups while maintaining the state's territorial integrity. Thus, a poorer democratizing state that lacks a wide range of means and resources for conducting a counterinsurgency campaign can utilize regional autonomy to win over the target population and

29 This idea is adapted from the ideas found in Lustick, Ian, Dan Miodownik, and Roy J. Eidelson. “Secessionism in Multicultural States: Does Sharing Power Prevent or Encourage It?” American Political Science Review 98.2 (2004): 209-29.
30 Ibid.
32 Ibid, 175.
also decrease insurgent violence.

Chapter 3: Assessment of Insurgent Violence

This chapter determines to what extent violence decreased in each region after the establishment of regional autonomy to come to a conclusion on which was the more successful case. The assessment of the levels of violence is placed in the context of which of Galula's conditions for successful insurgency were present in each case. By looking at these aspects, we can determine to what extent regional autonomy was a significant independent variable.

The assessment of violence begins with a look at yearly trends of violence in each of the conflicts. For Aceh, the baseline year for violence is 2005, the year before the Indonesian parliament passed Law 11/2006. There were 160 recorded fatalities that year. The baseline year for Papua is 2000 before the Indonesian parliament passed Law 21/2001. That year recorded 100 fatalities. Finally, the baseline year for Mindanao is 2000, before the plebiscite that ratified the Republic Act 9054 and expanded the ARMM. There were 500 fatalities recorded in that year. The following table displays the number of conflict-related fatalities per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aceh</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindanao</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers demonstrate a significant decrease of violence in all cases from the year

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35 Refer to footnote 17 for details on the calculation of this percentage change in fatalities. All percentages are rounded to the nearest 5% because the data between 2000 and 2005 is not as precise as the remaining years. This may reflect a change methodology on the part of the database creators.
before the formal recognition of autonomy in the region until the most recent year of available data. Aceh experienced an almost complete drop in the amount of fatalities from 2005 at an approximately 95% decrease, indicating that, at a very superficial level, its autonomy arrangement was associated with the most success in decreasing insurgent violence while Mindanao’s autonomy arrangement was associated with the least success in decreasing insurgent violence.

However, numbers in themselves do not tell the whole story of the circumstances associated with decreases in the levels of violence and at times may prove misleading. For example, in Mindanao, there appears to be an increase in conflict-related fatalities between 2006 and 2008, while in Papua there was a significant spike in fatalities between 2008 and 2009. Do these show a reversal in the trends of violence levels or are they merely a product of the protracted nature of these insurgencies? These fluctuations are important to the entire narrative of each conflict, as other factors may have been at work that either reinforced the autonomy arrangement or hindered its implementation. To examine this data within the proper context, we must refer to Galula’s necessary conditions for successful insurgency and determine whether any or all of those conditions changed in such a way as to favor the counter-insurgent, and consequentially led to decreased violence.

**Condition 1: The Insurgent Group’s Cause**

In Aceh, GAM fighters and their leadership wholly committed to ending its armed struggle and accepted the regional autonomy arrangement.36 This supports the trends in the levels of violence as they have dropped to levels unseen in any year prior to the establishment of autonomy. Since GAM dropped its cause in favor of the compromise with the government, there was no alternative cause that the local population could support, so they naturally

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36 “Rebels say armed fight is over.” *The Herald Sun (Australia)*, December 28, 2005, p. 34.
supported autonomy as well. In this case, the counter-insurgent and the insurgent agreed on
the same cause and drastically reduced violence, the remnants of which were carried out by
defectors of GAM.\textsuperscript{37}

The OPM, however, continued the calls for independence, but strategically placed its
own supporters within certain positions of the new autonomy arrangement.\textsuperscript{38} It appears as
though they hedged their bets, not wishing to miss out in case the local population fully
accepted autonomy, but also not wanting to appear as traitors if the locals rejected the
agreement. The locals, in fact, have shown a strong tendency to reject autonomy as seen
through frequent mass protests and symbolic displays of defiance such as waving the flag of
Papua.\textsuperscript{39} A great number of locals appear to still call for independence, thus still supporting the
cause of OPM. As a result, the insurgent organization has continued with this same cause with
renewed vigor in recent years.

The MILF has since altered its cause to advocate peaceful means to achieve
independence, but paradoxically, advocates violent means to expand the territory of the ARMM
and create a new federal state.\textsuperscript{40} This stance mirrors that of the OPM, but operated in a manner
that would expand the benefits of autonomy to its Moro constituents that were outside of the
ARMM. This cause has gained support from much of the local population in those areas in

\textsuperscript{37} International Crisis Group. “Pre-Election Anxieties in Aceh.” \textit{Crisis Group Asia Briefing}, No. 81
\textsuperscript{38} Jane’s Information Group. “Organisasi Papua Merdeka.” \textit{Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism
\textsuperscript{39} Makur, Markus. “18 Papuans Detained for Hoisting ‘Morning Star.’” \textit{The Jakarta Post}, September 23,
\textsuperscript{40} Jane’s Information Group. “Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).” \textit{Jane’s World Insurgency and
question, as evidenced by MILF's ever-expanding guerrilla support bases throughout the region. 41

Thus, we see that when the end-goals of the insurgents and the state coincide, as was the case in Aceh, the cause for insurgency becomes unsustainable and the local population has only one viable option to follow, contributing to the decrease in levels of violence. The OPM demonstrated that insurgents can wait out changes in the political situation before committing wholly in one direction, allowing them to revert to a struggle for independence when the sentiments of the local population soured against autonomy. This strategy of fence-riding helps explain the drop in fatalities in the first few years after the establishment of autonomy and the subsequent spike in the most recent years. The MILF demonstrated the utility of creating an entirely new cause that rejected the status quo of autonomy, wishing to see improvements in that structure or the creation of a new federal province. Fatalities in Mindanao dropped substantially in 2002 only to increase ten-fold in 2003 and continue to increase in recent years, reflecting the MILF's commitment to its new goal.

Condition 2: Weakness of the Counter-insurgent Government

This paper uses data from the World Governance Indicators project to determine a numerical score for the counter-insurgent government's strength for each year included in Table 1. The score combines six different indicators: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. 42 The numerical scores run a range between -15 and 15, with the lower values representing a weaker state and higher values representing a stronger state. For each of the years from which there is available data (2000, 2002-2008) I will determine a positive or negative change in the score of the country's strength and note any correlation with increases or

41 Ibid.
decreases in violence. If there is a negative relationship between the numerical score and the number of fatalities (i.e. higher state strength score and fewer fatalities), we can assume that the state’s relative strength or weakness had an effect on the level of violence in a given year. If no relationship is discernible, this may indicate that insurgent violence in those cases is not necessarily tied to the strength or weaknesses of the state.

Table 2: Strength of States (2000-2008)\(^{43}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indonesia Strength</strong></td>
<td>-4.69</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-5.49</td>
<td>-5.54</td>
<td>-4.62</td>
<td>-4.08</td>
<td>-3.57</td>
<td>-3.31</td>
<td>-3.01</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aceh Fatalities</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Papua Fatalities</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philippines Strength</strong></td>
<td>-1.68</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
<td>-2.43</td>
<td>-2.95</td>
<td>-2.23</td>
<td>-2.82</td>
<td>-2.97</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mindanao Fatalities</strong></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (-) indicates a decrease in state strength or a decrease in fatalities. (+) indicates an increase in state strength or an increase in fatalities. A negative relationship (+ and -) demonstrates an association between violence levels and state strength.

The results in Table 2 demonstrate the extent to which insurgent violence changed based on the strength of the state. If Galula's theory holds true in these cases, the decrease in state strength should correlate with an increase in violence (conflict-related fatalities) and vice versa. The findings are surprising. Aceh appears to be the only case in which this negative relationship is demonstrated, except for 2008. However, the number of fatalities in Aceh drops so low after 2005, that increases and decreases in fatalities are almost negligible in that conflict and almost negate the need to note fluctuations after 2005. Papua showed a positive relationship every year except for 2005 and 2008, indicating that for the most part, insurgent activity is independent of the state's strength. Mindanao showed mixed results with four years demonstrating positive relationships and three years demonstrating negative relationships. This

\(^{43}\) The numerical scores in this table are aggregates of the six indicators for each country in a given year.
result is difficult to interpret, but it is there does not appear to be a strong relationship between state strength and insurgent violence in Mindanao.

These findings demonstrate that the strength of the counter-insurgent government as an intervening variable has little direct effect on insurgent violence in two of the three cases of this analysis. Those two cases also display the lower percentage change in conflict-related fatalities. The low numbers of fatalities in Aceh after 2005 contrast with significant fluctuations in Papua, despite a steady improvement in Indonesia's state strength. This variability shows that the strength of the counter-insurgent government is not a cause of success or failure in either of those insurgencies. Mindanao, as a single case measured against the Philippines government, also demonstrates a lack of a causal relationship.

Conditions 3 and 4: Favorable Geography and Outside Support

When Galula spoke of geography favorable to insurgency operations, he framed it in terms of geographic features that were conducive to mobile guerrilla operations. The favorable geography could allow a foot-based force to swiftly evade counter-insurgent forces, wait outside of population centers undetected, and move in for key strikes when deemed appropriate. The best terrains for these types of operations are hilly or mountainous jungles and forests that provide cover for the insurgent fighters. As long as an insurgent force can remain in such an area, the group may be able to survive for quite some time. Fortunately for the insurgents in this study, their geographic sphere of operations remained the same except in the case of Aceh.

In December 2004, a tsunami struck the coast of Aceh, destroying towns and infrastructure and ultimately causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Acehnese. GAM support was effectively destroyed in many areas, greatly hindering future operations. This change is reflected in Table 1 as conflict-related fatalities in Aceh dropped by a substantial 36% from 2004 to 2005. This proved to be the only change in geographic conditions for all of the

44 O'Neill, 71-76.
cases, but does not appear to be the silver bullet that brought down the insurgency. Despite the tsunami's effects, at least some members of GAM continued attacks throughout 2005 and a dramatic shift in fatalities does not occur until the following year. As such, geography does not appear to act as a significant variable in decreases or increases in insurgent violence.

Concerning outside support, little to nothing changed in the manner in which the insurgent groups received funding and armaments. This variable had a negligible effect on the trends of violence in all three cases.

Assessment of the Conditions

The conditions of successful insurgency as intervening variables demonstrate the extent to which the regional autonomy had more of a direct effect on the levels of violence in each of the counterinsurgency campaigns. Only one of the four conditions, the insurgents' cause, shows a strong association with levels of insurgent violence. The remaining variables produced mixed results that fail to explain fluctuations in levels of insurgent violence. The first condition demonstrates that an insurgent group can be flexible with its cause, either maintaining the original cause (OPM), accepting the offer of autonomy without modifications (GAM) or creating a new cause when terms offered by the government were unsatisfactory (MILF). This is a significant finding since in all three cases the insurgent group's cause either changed or stayed the same based on the nature of the autonomy arrangement and the conditions surrounding its implementation.

Overall, an assessment of Galula's conditions for a successful insurgency point to the same findings as the trends in the percentage change of conflict-related fatalities. The combination of the counterinsurgency campaign and regional autonomy arrangement in Aceh was associated with the most success in decreasing the level of insurgent violence. Fatalities decreased after the establishment of the autonomy arrangement, and GAM eschewed its former
cause of independence in favor of political compromise. The next part of the analysis tests the previously enumerated sub-hypotheses or possible factors that contribute to the most successful application of regional autonomy within a counterinsurgency context.

Chapter 4: Sub-Hypothesis 1 is Supported - The arrangement must be created through consultation with insurgents

Consultation with insurgents did not occur in Papua

On December 22, 2001, the Indonesian president Megawati Sukarnoputri signed a bill that created Law 21/2001 granting “special autonomy” to the far easternmost province of Papua.45 While lauded by some local religious leaders, many Papuans opposed the creation of the arrangement, including a local political activist group, the Papuan Presidium Council (PDP) and OPM.46 The PDP is the arm of the Papuan insurgency that aims to subvert the status quo through legal means such as petition, while maintaining a relationship with OPM. While not actively engaging in guerrilla warfare, PDP’s primary goal for Papua is independence from the Indonesian state.47 Leading up to the passing of the Law 21/2001, the PDP requested dialogue with the central government to resolve the conflict, only to be ignored. In fact, the signing of the bill was termed as a “Christmas gift” to the Papuan people from the Indonesian president.48 The drafting of the legislation came solely from pro-Indonesia factions in Papua working within the House of Representatives (DPR).

The exclusion of both the OPM and the PDP, the two major entities in Papua that advocated secession, demonstrates the central government's unwillingness to give a voice to the insurgents and reach a mutually beneficial compromise. Furthermore, the Indonesian

46 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
government has never offered so much as a cessation of hostilities agreement with the Papuan insurgents. As a result, OPM continued with its original cause of independence. Violence has decreased overall by 75% since the passing of the legislation. A recent spike in conflict-related fatalities in 2009 may indicate a resurgence of opposition to autonomy, however. By decision of the Indonesian government, OPM was effectively outside of the decision to create special autonomy in Papua in order to downplay the group's importance.

Consultation with insurgents occurred in Aceh

Unlike its experience in creating Law 21/2001, in 2005, the Indonesian government actively approached local Acehnese and GAM leadership to host a series of negotiations to arrive at a solution to the protracted conflict, since the previous attempts proved ineffective. That January, representatives from the government met with leaders from GAM in Helsinki, Finland to discuss a political settlement. In the beginning stages of the peace talks, GAM leaders claimed to reject the offer of special autonomy, arguing that a half-hearted attempt at it in 2001 did not produce desired results. However, after several rounds of peace negotiations, GAM and the Indonesian government came to a compromise in which GAM accepted a form of regional autonomy as part of a peace deal that addressed many of their grievances and guaranteed the inclusion of insurgents in civil society upon the signing of the peace agreement.

After the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 15, 2005, the Indonesian parliament began drafting a regional autonomy bill corresponding to the points of the peace accord. The consultative process, however, did not end with the signing of


the MoU. In fact, GAM leaders were given the opportunity to monitor the contents of the bill to ensure that it reflected the terms of the August 15 agreement.\textsuperscript{51} While GAM could not directly take part in the legislative process that created Law 11/2006, the likelihood was strong that the DPR would create a bill that reflected the terms of the MoU. If the legislation did not meet most of those requirements, GAM could simply renege on the agreement as it had done twice before on cessation of hostilities agreements in 2000 and 2002.\textsuperscript{52} This was a useful caveat to ensure that the DPR followers adhered to the MoU, since a recommencement of hostilities was not in the government's interest.

As a result, Law 11/2006, while not addressing all points of the MoU, satisfied GAM's most important grievances because the insurgent group had the opportunity to take part in a dialogue to create a political compromise. The Indonesian government likely learned from past mistakes of not giving insurgents a voice in the 2001 law on special autonomy for Aceh, prompting officials to create an arrangement that better satisfied insurgent leadership. GAM thus matched the criteria of a group that was \textit{inside} of the decision to implement autonomy.

Consultation with insurgents occurred in Mindanao, but not concerning autonomy

The government of the Philippines employed parts from both of the processes in Papua and Aceh, but ultimately failed to include the MILF as an inside participant in the decision-making process for the establishment of regional autonomy. Both the insurgent group and the government engaged in a series of talks in 2000, but as of 2001 when Republic Act 9054 that expanded the areas of ARMM was passed, MILF was never consulted on the terms of regional autonomy. In fact, while President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo believed in 2001 that the MILF


would abandon its bid for secession in favor of autonomy, insurgent leaders claimed that
discussion on that matter did not occur. A plebiscite took place on August 14, 2001 to define
the areas that would be affected by Republic Act 9054, but he MILF boycotted the vote.

The MILF was not consulted on the contents of the law and its members did not take
part in the voting process to ratify the new measures of autonomy. While several closed talks
on either a cease-fire or peace agreement did occur leading up to the creation of the law, the
government never included MILF leadership on forming aspects of a new autonomy law. As
such, the MILF continued its struggle for independence despite calls by its co-ethnic group
MNLF to accept autonomy. The intransigence of the MILF contributed to the group’s exclusion
from the process to create new autonomy legislation. Ultimately, however, the government
failed to address enough of the MILF’s grievances, thereby pushing the group out of any
productive dialogue. In this manner, the MILF was outside of the autonomy legislation process.

Consultation with insurgents is associated with lower levels of violence

An explanation of how insurgent groups were included or excluded from the autonomy
legislation creation process leads us to the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of Insurgent</th>
<th>Success in Decreasing Insurgent Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aceh</td>
<td>Inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua</td>
<td>Outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindanao</td>
<td>Outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Least successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The insurgent group was inside of the autonomy creation process in the Aceh case and the insurgent groups in Papua and Mindanao were outside of such a process. The Aceh counterinsurgency campaign was the most successful at curbing insurgent violence while the campaigns in Papua and Mindanao were less successful. Thus, there is an association between the position of the insurgent to the legislation-creation process and the degree to which insurgent violence decreased.

Chapter 5: Sub-Hypothesis 2 is supported - The state security apparatus must have a superior position relative to the insurgents

According to Galula's theory, successful counterinsurgency operations often include a heavy military and police offensive to greatly weaken or, if possible, destroy the fighting capabilities of the insurgent group.\(^{55}\) This physical offensive against the insurgents is not required, but tends to be extremely helpful in gaining control of the situation. One must remember that this should not be the primary focus of the campaign, but instead is a major step in laying the foundation for the political aspects of counterinsurgency.\(^{56}\) This offensive can result in the superiority of the counter-insurgent security apparatus over the insurgents, allowing for the state to act with more bargaining power in the creation of political arrangements. Thus, in order for regional autonomy to be applied within a counterinsurgency campaign, the state security apparatus should be in a superior position so that the government can pressure the insurgent leadership into a compromise. This part of the analysis gauges the extent to which the counter-insurgent security forces held a superior advantage over the insurgents and notes the extent to which that had any association with decreased levels of violence after the establishment of the regional autonomy arrangement.

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55 Galula, 75.
56 Ibid.
The Indonesian security forces were in a superior position in Aceh

The Indonesian military (TNI) was always much stronger in terms of numbers compared to the insurgent groups within its borders, but the campaigns differed greatly in terms of use of force. In May 2003, the government began a heavy military offensive against GAM insurgents in Aceh despite a 2002 cessation of hostilities agreement. The offensive involved the use of over 30,000 troops who, in the words of the commanding general of the operation, were to fight until "the last drop of blood." Furthermore, the military was authorized to enact martial law in the province for up to six months as they continued their battle against the nearly 5,000 GAM insurgents. The asymmetry in numbers in this case is impressive. With six Indonesian soldiers to every insurgent (not to mention the police forces already active in the province), it became very difficult for GAM fighters to evade troops.

To make matters worse for GAM, the TNI made their bases of operations in villages and other civilian areas instead of repeating past mistakes of focusing on patrols in the forests and fields. This action made it difficult for the insurgents to continue receiving support from the population in the villages and it also caused GAM to launch a counter-offensive to take back those areas and "protect" their population. One need only to imagine the difficulties that a group of 5,000 lightly armed rebels had when attacking 30,000 heavily armed soldiers that were embedded within the key populations centers. As demonstrated in Table 1, there were 2000 conflict-related casualties, reflecting an insurgent willingness to engage in combat. The following year, however, the number dropped to 250 fatalities, reflecting a decline in GAM's fighting capabilities.

The 2003 offensive alone did not ensure that the TNI would gain a superior position in

57 AP. "Indonesia guns down insurgents: Jakarta urged to restart talks. General directs troops to fight to 'last drop of blood' of rebels in Acehnese province." The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec), May 21, 2003, p. A21.
58 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
the conflict. The far more indiscriminate and dispassionate force of the tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004 was the coup de grâce that helped TNI gain the upper hand against GAM. The devastation of the wave was pervasive in Aceh, destroying coastal towns and killing tens of thousands of people. The tsunami caused GAM to unilaterally declare a cease-fire after learning that the government would restrict the arrival of aid to areas outside of the major urban centers for fear that foreign workers might be kidnapped or attacked by the insurgents. Even if the government's fears turned out to be false, the local affected population would perceive GAM to blame for not permitting aid to reach those in need. Such a perception forced the insurgent group to yield to the power of the state in the hope of maintaining any remnants of popular support for their cause. While fatalities continued in 2005 either in some areas not affected by the tsunami or as a result of insubordinate GAM fighters, the number decreased even more to 160. Consequently, by the time peace talks began, the state was in a far superior military position relative to GAM.

The symbolic resistance of the OPM remained strong

Indonesian security forces in Papua never matched the magnitude of operations carried out in Aceh, but they were still much stronger than the OPM contingents. In the years leading up to the 2001 autonomy legislation, indeed since the beginning of the conflict in the 1960s, the OPM never had more than several hundred fighters. Furthermore, OPM fighters were very short on powerful armaments, forced to employ bows and arrows, machetes, spears, M-16 rifles, and homemade guns. Even when protests advocating independence in 2000 drew in 3,000 young men to join the ranks of OPM, the leadership claimed to only have around two dozen “modern weapons” for effective use against the security forces. As those protests

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63 “Guns or not, West Papua's guerrillas want to fight.” Canberra Times (Australia), November 23, 2000, p. A9.
escalated, however, the national government responded by sending around 10,000 riot police and troops to Papua, resulting in many arrests and shoot-outs with independence advocates. Asymmetry in this situation is even more pronounced compared to the conflict in Aceh, and by sheer numbers alone, it appears as though the security forces were in a superior position.

However, the nature of OPM since its inception in 1964 was never that of a military threat to the Indonesian state. The conflict-related fatalities generally did not exceed 100 in a given year. This was because the Papuan secessionists lacked money to buy arms, were based in isolated rural areas, and did not enjoy a large population size from which to entice young men as recruits to their cause. Yet OPM has understood this dynamic and has accepted a dual-role as a nuisance to the state and a powerful symbol to the Papuan population. The additional troops and police in 2000 did not produce the desired effect on the insurgent force. In fact, according to PDP spokesman Clemens Runaweri, the addition of troops was only meant to intimidate the local people, not to quash the OPM.

The OPM never felt pressured or coerced by the security forces simply because their small numbers and extremely covert presence allowed them to continue on with attacks that, while limited in scope, served as symbolic resistance. While TNI forces were superior in numbers, they were not in a militarily superior position relative to OPM as the insurgent group never relied on intense combat operations to advocate its cause. Even with the addition of thousands more security personnel, the OPM could still carry out some limited attacks on government facilities, much as it had done for the past several decades.

The Philippines security forces were not in a superior position

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had put forth a vigorous effort to end the

64 Lindsay Murdoch. “Crackdown scatters West Papuans.” The Age (Melbourne, Australia), December 4, 2000, p. 11.
insurgency through military means, but was impeded by MILF ties with other armed groups and government's premature attempts at peace negotiations. The AFP deployed around 66,000 troops, nearly 60% of its total number, to Mindanao to fight the MILF the year before the 2001 autonomy legislation. The strategy was aimed at taking territory back from the MILF and holding it with around 7,000 civilian personnel from the Citizen's Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU). This strategy follows good practices in counterinsurgency warfare, as it aims at ensuring that insurgents do not regain a foothold in their former territories and usurp government efforts at winning over the population. However, the MILF simply shifted to even more elusive guerrilla tactics when confronting security personnel as a result and the CAFGU personnel likely did not provide the necessary numbers to maintain control.

The shift in the MILF tactics also involved an extension of the conflict outside of Mindanao by forging links with other armed groups in the Philippines. The most interesting development in this regard was the establishment of an alliance between the MILF and the leftist National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The latter armed group agreed to step up attacks elsewhere in the country as the AFP focused on its counterinsurgency operations in Mindanao as a means of thinly stretching the security apparatus resources. This greatly complicated the ability with which the AFP could combat the insurgency as personnel from both armed groups could seek sanctuary and aid from one another.

The action that may have damaged the AFP’s military position the most was the insistence by the government to continue to press for peace talks even though security operations had yet been completed. The AFP began shelling strategic MILF positions in Mindanao a matter of days before scheduled peace talks were to begin in May 2000. This

68 Ibid.
demonstrated to the MILF that the AFP still considered the armed group a viable threat and that
the government did not have a bargaining position that could be militarily reinforced when it
came time to begin negotiations. This same mistake was repeated frequently in later years of
the insurgency, emboldening the MILF to continue its fight rather than to voluntarily accept its
own defeat. Consequently, the AFP found itself in a weak position militarily because of its
overstretched resources, the government's ill-timed efforts at peace negotiations, and the
MILF's diversification of tactics and strategies.

Military superiority is associated with lower levels of violence

In order for regional autonomy to result in lower levels of violence, the formulation and
establishment of the arrangement must go in tandem with superior military forces and
capabilities on the part of the state. This does not just imply greater numbers of military
personnel or better armaments and equipment, but more importantly, properly executed
counterinsurgency operations and tactics. The TNI in Aceh had greater numbers and placed
their units within villages so that the insurgent groups would be further isolated from their
constituents. However, the same security apparatus in Papua used tactics that were largely
coercive and that were not in line with the threat presented by the OPM. Likewise, the presence
of state-sanctioned militias in Mindanao have worsened hostilities amongst the numerous
armed groups in the region, especially the MILF. Aceh's regional autonomy arrangement in
conjunction with military superiority contributed to lower levels of violence.

Chapter 6: Sub-Hypothesis 3 is supported- A DDR process must accompany the
arrangement

Conflicts that have been “resolved” peaceably by political settlements can still

71 Rey Luis Banagudos. “MILF to remain out of talks, vows to resist AFP attacks.” Businessworld
(Philippines), February 14, 2003, p. 12.
experience a significant degree of violence on the part of sub-state armed groups that were in some way not satisfied with the settlement. Even so, there are ways to limit the actions of those groups by understanding their role in the political settlement.⁷² One of the most effective ways to ensure that residual violence does not occur after creation of a political settlement – in this study, regional autonomy – is the initiation of a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process (DDR) in which the insurgent groups turn in their arms, disband their units, and are socially and economically incorporated into the constituent community.⁷³ This typically reinforces the post-conflict peace process, as it removes the ability of insurgents or other combatants to continue with violence. In cases of the application of regional autonomy to address insurgency, one would expect the promotion of such a process to keep dissatisfied insurgents from continuing with attacks on state entities. This section of the paper will identify the extent to which there was a DDR process in each of the three case studies.

**DDR occurred in Aceh**

The MoU between GAM and the Republic of Indonesia explicitly included a DDR process. The MoU stipulated that the government extend amnesty to all GAM members and release political prisoners within 15 days of the signing of the agreement in exchange for GAM members ceasing to use or carry weapons.⁷⁴ GAM was also required to demobilize 3,000 fighters and hand over 840 weapons, while the Indonesian government promised to scale back the number of security personnel to 14,700 soldiers and 9,100 police.⁷⁵ This mutual scale-back was to occur simultaneously and was further reinforced by the presence of international

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⁷⁴ Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, August 15, 2005: Sec. 3.1
⁷⁵ Ibid, Sec. 4.2, 4.3, 4.7
observers from the European Union in the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM).\textsuperscript{76} As of December 15, 2006, when the AMM ended its mandate, they had declared all of their goals (including the DDR process) accomplished.\textsuperscript{77} Law 11/2006 for the establishment of regional autonomy in Aceh was passed during the AMM mandate and was accompanied by this DDR process.

**DDR did not occur in Papua**

There never has been a systematic attempt at DDR in Papua, however. In 2003, a group of 42 OPM insurgents voluntarily surrendered to the local security forces. The government welcomed this development in the hope of enticing more insurgents to give up their struggle.\textsuperscript{78} This rare type of surrender was not part of a comprehensive system to dismantle and reincorporate insurgent units, however. There were no other major instances of surrender leading up to the establishment of Law 21/2001, as security personnel were more interested in obtaining rebel armaments through force rather than voluntary hand-overs.

**DDR did not occur in Mindanao**

The situation with the MILF was very complex, with several periods of cease-fire and cessation of hostilities, none of which corresponded to a larger DDR framework facilitating the extension of the ARMM in 2001. Before the plebiscite that ushered in Republic Act 9054, the most recent of these agreements was the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of June 22, 2001. Within this agreement there is a measure for a cessation of hostilities between the government and the MILF, but no system of DDR was proposed.\textsuperscript{79} Furthermore, this cessation


\textsuperscript{77} The Council of the European Union. “Council Conclusions on Indonesia/Aceh.” 2770\textsuperscript{th} General Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels (December 11, 2006)

\textsuperscript{78} Media Indonesia. “Jakarta welcomes surrender of 42 Free Papua Movement rebels.” \textit{BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political} in Lexis Nexis (July 1, 2003)

of hostilities agreement was violated by both parties multiple times, effectively negating its importance.

**DDR is associated with lower levels of violence**

A DDR process was absent in Mindanao and Papua, most likely contributing to the smaller decreases in insurgent violence in those areas. The DDR process in Aceh was carried out to the full extent of the MoU and was even verified by an international monitoring mission.\(^80\) This process affected levels of violence in Aceh since without armaments and organized guerrilla units, GAM could not effectively mobilize and challenge the regional autonomy arrangement in the future. The sub-hypothesis is supported in Aceh and demonstrates that a DDR process is a condition under which regional autonomy is associated with greater decreases in levels of insurgent violence.

**Chapter 7: Alternate Explanations and Limitations**

The findings may demonstrate a set of conditions that increases the likelihood of curbing insurgent violence. It is possible, however, that the motivations driving the Philippines government in Mindanao and the Indonesian government in Papua differ greatly from those of Indonesia in Aceh. Both governments aim to maintain their territorial integrity, but it is possible that they are willing to pay the price of conflict to retain Papua and Mindanao. A balance of repression of the local population and offering only a few key concessions for greater self-rule may prove manageable and desirable for the state.

**Indonesia’s economic interests in Papua prevent a sincere autonomy effort**

This use of repression usually does not quell secessionist insurgency in the long run, but

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\(^80\) See footnote 72.
often works in the short term. Thus, if a conflict is at a low enough intensity, the state may allow the insurgency to extend long enough until the state has gained all that it desires from the region. For example, the relatively low levels of conflict-related fatalities throughout the course of the Papuan insurgency may indicate that the costs of pursuing a largely repressive and coercive strategy in that province are relatively low. Despite calls by the government for the Papuans to acquiesce to “special autonomy,” the security forces continued to act in an oppressive manner towards the population, largely because of the gains from their economic activities in the province. The TNI has historically needed to raise its own revenue in addition to the national budget allocation in order to sustain operations and payroll. Revenues include those from legitimate enterprises, illicit resource extraction such as mining and logging, and provision of private security. In addition, Papua hosts one of the largest copper and gold mines in the world, the Grasberg mine, which has been a point of special contention to the Indonesian government and the military. The government enjoys a wealth of revenue from the operations run by American company Freeport-McMoran, the largest taxpayer in the country, while the military is paid a large sum of money for “protection” of the facilities and personnel.

Consequentially, there is little incentive for Indonesia to relinquish a great deal of claim to Papua, especially via authentic regional autonomy, as doing so would greatly decrease tax revenue from the mining company and would constrain the military financially. The end of the insurgency means no more protection payments to the military, while comprehensive regional autonomy implies a decrease in government wealth. It is entirely possible that Indonesia has chosen the middle ground in this situation to continue to justify its military presence. They may have done this by granting just enough “special autonomy” to bring violence to a manageable

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84 Ibid.
level for the military. As such, fulfilling the conditions for a regional autonomy arrangement associated with greater decreases in insurgent violence may not be as beneficial an option as retaining the status quo.

The Philippines government holds out for a military solution

One could also argue that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has much to gain both financially and technically. Apart from the MILF, numerous other armed groups including the insidious Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist organizations are active in Mindanao. Not only do these groups pose a great risk to Philippine civilians and the government, but the United States considers them part of the global jihad movement associated with Al Qaeda. This designation has afforded the AFP substantial funding, training, and armaments in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency tactics from the United States. As a result, the AFP has become a much more efficient fighting force, capable of arresting and neutralizing more terrorists and insurgents in the southern parts of the country than it previously did. Relationships between the US Military and the AFP, however, are not like those of Freeport-McMoran and the TNI. Natural resource wealth in Mindanao pales in comparison to that in Papua, and the AFP has no major taxpaying patron corporation demanding security. The US assistance to the Philippines aims at making the security apparatus much stronger so that political compromise may not be necessary. It is possible that the AFP views continued outside support from the United States as the prime avenue for ending the insurgency through a primarily coercive counterinsurgency strategy. If success in decreasing insurgent violence can come about in that manner, fulfilling the conditions for a better regional autonomy arrangement may not be desirable.

Media coverage and international perceptions prompted different approaches

The GAM insurgency, however, has enjoyed a much larger spotlight Internationally, causing countries to pressure Indonesia to make a political settlement rather than employ coercive means alone. The 2004 tsunami raised so much awareness of the plight of the Acehnese people, that not pursuing a comprehensive political settlement with regional autonomy could make Indonesia an international pariah in terms of human rights. By contrast, the media coverage of Papua has been far less comprehensive, most likely because of US interests in mineral acquisition and the absence of a deadly natural disaster. Likewise, concerning Mindanao, the US and other Western countries see counter-terrorism efforts as a zero-sum game that negates any type of negotiation. Because the MILF has had previous ties with some of these criminal terrorist groups, the international community often associates their cause with violent anti-western jihad. As such, there are less enticing reasons for ensuring the facilitating conditions outlined in this paper in Mindanao and Papua. If both governments can manage the insurgencies at moderate levels of violence without causing strain on the security forces, then employing a regional autonomy arrangement under the conditions outlined here may prove too burdensome and yield fewer benefits.

Response to alternate explanations

However, the goals of the TNI in Papua and the AFP in Mindanao do not disprove the set of sub-hypotheses presented in this paper. Indeed, the regional autonomy agreement in Aceh yielded far better results in terms of largest decrease in insurgent violence contrasted with the other two cases. Success in Aceh is associated with the presence of all four of the sub-hypotheses' conditions. While the governments' goals in Papua and Mindanao may not be compatible with a peaceful resolution of the conflicts, if the facilitating conditions were present in

both cases, greater decreases in conflict-related fatalities would most likely occur. These conditions would only apply if the counter-insurgent government were committed to effecting less violence in a secessionist region.

Acknowledgement of limitations

While the methodology of this paper supports the sub-hypotheses, several key limitations may have adverse effects on the findings. First, the limited number of case studies makes it difficult to draw conclusions across a wider range of cases and for this reason, the findings serve only as a step forward in determining how best regional autonomy should apply in counterinsurgency. Second, measuring levels of violence based on conflict-related fatalities may prove problematic in some cases. Many instances of violence may go unreported, especially in remote areas, thus skewing the data. Additionally, the fatalities may not be a result of insurgent-initiated attacks according to one of the paper’s prime assumptions. While in theory, the insurgents are the ones who have the power and the means to dictate when hostilities occur, it may not always be the case. Consequentially, we must take these results within the context of the available data and scope of cases.

Chapter 9: Policy Implications and Recommendations

The finds of this analysis lead to the conclusion that in order for a regional autonomy arrangement to serve as a useful counterinsurgency tool for a democratizing state, it must be accompanied by several important actions on the part of the government. Constructive consultation with the insurgent group on the aspects and formation of the regional autonomy arrangement must occur. The establishment of the regional autonomy must coincide with a time in which the country’s security apparatus is in a superior position relative to the insurgents. Finally, a DDR process must accompany the establishment of a regional autonomy
arrangement. These actions will likely result in a greater decrease in violence than if the government implemented regional autonomy unilaterally and from a position of weakness. In order for Indonesia and the Philippines to move ahead and finally resolve these conflicts, the governments would do well to heed this paper's findings and the following implications.

Implication 1: Lack of consultation will continue to exacerbate the conflicts in Papua and Mindanao

If greater decreases in violence are a desirable outcome for Indonesia and the Philippines, or any other government, the utmost priority should be engaging in dialogue with the insurgent group while applying a significant degree of military pressure. The governments must be careful not to propose the idea of autonomy without ensuring that its implementation will facilitate significant decreases in insurgent violence. Simply offering a regional autonomy arrangement to a secessionist region will not end struggles for independence unless it addresses at least some of the explicit grievances of the constituent population. The only way to ensure that grievances are addressed is through consultation with the insurgent group or other forms of local leadership who also advocate independence. A half-hearted autonomy arrangement, like that in Papua, will end in continued calls for independence, a rejection of the autonomy, persistent violence, and resentment directed to the central government. Likewise, the Philippines government must continue its attempts at dialogue with the MILF, but make an effort to discuss the terms of autonomy and be flexible with its implementation, otherwise, the MILF will continue its violence. No matter how altruistic the government's unilateral efforts may appear, the insurgents and their constituents will continue to feel oppressed if they do not have a say in formation of an autonomy arrangement.

Since Indonesia and the Philippines are democratizing countries, their policies regarding counterinsurgency and regional autonomy should represent democratic values, including
consent of the governed. The current lack of genuine consultation with insurgents in Papua and Mindanao are reflective of undemocratic principles and are a hindrance to political stability and development in the countries. If a significant ethnic component of the country continues to receive hostile treatment from the national government because of an insurgency, the democratic system can never flourish as it should and conflict will continue unabated.

Implication 2: A lack of security will diminish the government's bargaining position

Establishing an autonomy arrangement without strong military and police operations in the region will encourage insurgents to continue their fight since there is no pressure placed on them to acquiesce to a political settlement. A regional autonomy arrangement is a compromise on the part of the state, as it decides to devolve power to the local groups in order to stifle demands for independence. However, a state whose security apparatus has difficulties in establishing law and order, pursuing and neutralizing the insurgents, and building trust with the local population will only embolden insurgents to continue their fight rather than accept regional autonomy as an alternative. The counter-insurgent forces in Papua are not effectively earning the trust of the population and the OPM continues to provide symbolic resistance despite extreme asymmetry between the state and insurgent forces. Counterinsurgency in Mindanao is hampered by the conflation of terrorism with insurgency in many cases and the lack of nuanced security operations against the disparate armed groups in the region.

No serious discussion of regional autonomy can occur in either of the two cases as long as the security apparatus fails to carry out effective counterinsurgency operations.

The policy implications for both Indonesia and the Philippines are applicable to other countries as well. The path to democracy is not always easy and obstacles such as secessionist insurgency can greatly disrupt that process. This does not mean, however, that
democratic principles should be thrown out in favor of stability. The failures in Papua and Mindanao demonstrate that a government that does not adhere to democratic principles and listen to the concerns of the population when forming a political arrangement, will produce less stability. Autonomy arrangements must occur in consultation with the power players in the affected population, but must also accompany effective counterinsurgency operations.

**Recommendation 1: The Indonesian government must acknowledge Papuan insurgent groups and listen to their demands**

For Indonesia, the findings demonstrate that the government has the capacity to establish a regional autonomy arrangement in Papua in order to further reduce levels of insurgent violence. If the government and the TNI can put aside their financial reasons for oppressing the province, the next step is to stop ignoring the importance of the OPM, the PDP, and other local Papuan leaders, and bring them into a series of consultative peace talks. The PDP, as a proponent of the OPM's goals, has repeated sought dialogue with the Indonesian government in the past and would likely be receptive to a call for peace talks. This act in itself would demonstrate that Indonesia is serious about listening to the grievances of the Papuan community and coming to a comprehensive, mutually beneficial regional autonomy arrangement.

The likelihood that the OPM and other Papuan dissident groups will become hardened to a political settlement will increase if the government fails to foster such communication. In fact, recent violent activities by a new insurgent group in the province, the West Papua National Committee (KNPB), show that young Papuans are becoming more radicalized and opposed to an autonomy settlement. To offset this trend, the Indonesian government must be proactive and sincere in coming to a mutually beneficial arrangement. Likewise, the government must

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continue to uphold and adhere to Law 11/2006 in Aceh so to demonstrate the extent to which Indonesia is capable of engaging in constructive dialogue with insurgent leadership and fulfilling the promises made via legislative measures.

**Recommendation 2: The Philippines government must remain consistent in its approach**

The Philippines government must be cautious and consistent in how it approaches future modifications to autonomy. The ARMM was established in 1977 and has undergone several changes under Republic Act No. 6734 in 1989 and Republic Act No. 9054 in 2001. The MILF considered both of these initiatives unilateral efforts on the part of the government. Despite multiple rounds of peace talks, the two parties never seem to gain ground, due to violations of the cease-fire on both sides. More recently, in January 2010, the MILF and the government exchanged proposed points of discussion for upcoming peace talks. The government offered the same terms for autonomy as in the past, prompting the MILF to refuse continuing in direct talks.88 This lack of change in autonomy proposals has been taken by the MILF as a demonstration of the national government's insincerity. Furthermore, the AFP attacked and arrested several members of the MILF on February 24, 2010, which has reportedly undermined the confidence of MILF commanders in continued peace negotiations.89

Ambiguity and insincerity in Mindanao have unfortunately plagued the counterinsurgency efforts for some time. The Philippines government should cease military operations while simultaneously pursuing peace negotiations, as military operations are not indicative of a commitment to peace. Alternatively, the government should discontinue peace talks and the AFP should commence a prolonged, intense military effort against insurgent

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positions. They should embed themselves within the local communities to put enough pressure on the MILF to acquiesce to more of the government's proposals on regional autonomy. The latter option is most likely the best approach to take in Mindanao, as disparate armed groups including Abu Sayyaf, JI, and splinter groups from the MILF and the MNLF will continually disrupt the peace process. By putting the military in a superior bargaining position, the MILF will be more apt to agree to negotiate on the specific terms of regional autonomy. However, if the Philippines government wishes to continue on a path of democratization, these operations must adhere to democratic principles and international norms on human rights.

Appendix:

Aceh Background: Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)

Aceh has a long history of resistance from its battles against nearby sultanates in the 16th century to its rejection of Dutch colonialism in the 18th-20th centuries. It is no surprise, then, that when Indonesia became independent and wished to incorporate Aceh into its political system, resistance once again took root. The origins of the recent insurgency began in 1976 with the founding of Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), whose explicit goal was to establish an independent Acehnese state. After rejecting one form of "special autonomy" granted to Aceh in 2001, GAM continued its secessionist insurgency, thus prompting a massive military operation on the part of the Indonesian military (TNI). This, coupled with a devastating tsunami that destroyed much of coastal Aceh, finally brought GAM to the negotiating table in 2005 to formulate a plan for a regional autonomy compromise in lieu of independence and armed resistance. A regional autonomy law, Law 11/2006, was passed on


**Papua Background: Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)**

Organisasi Papua Merdeka or the Free Papua Movement (OPM) began its struggle for independence in 1964 after the Indonesian government coerced a group of tribal leaders to sign an agreement to join the Republic. The Indonesian security apparatus has used repressive measures to force the Papuans into submission and root out the insurgents. Although handicapped by a lack of ethnic unity (hundreds of different languages are spoken in Papua alone), OPM has still managed to maintain low-level guerrilla warfare against the Indonesian security forces and their interests in the province. The Indonesian government granted “special autonomy” to Papua in 2001, but the OPM and many other political leaders continued their struggle for independence.

**Mindanao Background: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)**

The people of Mindanao, the Moros, have continually resisted outside rule since Spanish colonialism began in the archipelago in the 16th century. The group at the forefront of this continued resistance now directed against the Philippines government is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF was founded in 1977 as an off-shoot of another secessionist insurgent group, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). When the MNLF agreed to a...
cease-fire and eventually accepted autonomy over some areas of Mindanao, the MILF continued their struggle for independence.

In 2001, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was expanded to include the island of Baslian and Marawai city, but the MILF rejected this too, demanding autonomy extended to all Muslim majority areas and the right to a referendum on independence in the future. The MILF operates insurgent camps throughout Mindanao, and while its conventional military capabilities have diminished, the group still sustains successful guerrilla warfare operations against Philippines security forces. While other insurgent groups are active in Mindanao, I chose to focus on the MILF due to a greater availability of data and their explicit secessionist agenda.

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