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Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction
Located in the South China Sea, the Philippines is a nation of islands divided into numerous provinces. It can be roughly divided into the Northern Philippines (consisting mainly of Luzon Island), the Visayas (the central island groups) and the southern Philippines, with the island of Mindanao as largest land mass. Mindanao, the Philippines’ southernmost point, is both the second-largest island and the regional name for a group of islands that includes the Sulu Archipelago. Tausug-speaking people make up the majority of the population of this double island chain, which extends 270 km (170 mi) southwest from Mindanao toward Malaysia. The isolated islands that make up this province lay in the center of the Sulu Sea, which lies between the South China Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south.

Geography
There are two distinct ecological zones in the Sulu Archipelago: smaller coral islands and larger volcanic islands. The livelihood of inhabitants of the coral islands, mostly Samalan speakers, comes from the sea and fishing and only marginally from horticulture. The volcanic islands, which have fertile soils suitable for intensive dry rice cultivation, are capable of supporting both cultivation and fishing along the coasts. The larger islands are populated by Tausug speakers.

Sulu Province lies at the southernmost tip of the Philippine border, midway between the provinces of Basilan and Tawi-Tawi. It is rimmed by the Sulu and Mindanao seas to the west and north and the Celebes to the east. The province is comprised of over 150 islands and islets, some of them still uninhabited. As a result of expanding human settlement, few wooded areas, which once consisted primarily of lowland rain forest, remain.

Jolo Island is the second largest in the Sulu Archipelago, after Basilan, and the seat of the provincial government. The island is volcanic, and short streams provide fresh water to the numerous towns and farms, which thrive on the fertile land.

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Volcanoes
The Bud Dajo Cinder Cone, also known as Jolo Volcano, sits in the center of Jolo Island. It stands 620 m (2,034 ft) tall. Also located on Jolo Island, Mount Tumatangas, an extinct volcano, stands 812 m (2,664 ft) at its highest point.

Climate
Located in the tropics, the Philippines has a humid climate characterized by two seasons. Southeasterly rains come from May to October, and are replaced by drier winds from the northeast November through February. However the Sulu Archipelago is outside of the typhoon belt, and as such, experiences a slightly different climate. Rainfall during the “wet” season is less than in other parts of the Philippines. The average temperature year-round is 37°C (98.6°F).

Bodies of Water

Sulu Sea
Located in the northern portion of the western Pacific Ocean, the Sulu Sea sits between the Philippines and Malaysia. With a surface area of 260,000 sq km (100,000 sq mi), the Sulu Sea contains the Tubbataha Reef, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This reef, which covers 81,000 acres, is home to a diverse population of 450 species of coral and marine life, including six of the eight sea turtle species, manta rays, salt water crocodiles, and manatees.

Celebes Sea
To the south of the Sulu Archipelago, the Celebes Sea is slightly larger than the Sulu Sea to the north, with an area of 280,000 sq km (110,000 sq mi). Like the Sulu Sea, these warm waters are home to a large variety of marine life including many types of dolphins and whales.

Major Municipalities

Jolo
Jolo, or Jolo Town as it may be referred to, is the economic and political center of the Sulu Province with a population of about 140,300. A seafaring town, it was once a pirate base, and at one time was walled as a security measure. Until 1940, it was also the capital of the Sulu sultanate. The Spanish Peace Treaty (1878) with the Sultan allowed Spain to establish small garrisons on Siasi Island and in Jolo. Since then, Jolo has been the site of government-insurgent clashes and was almost completely destroyed. Although the island has been home to the insurgent movement, many of them have moved inland. Recently, the seaport has been the scene of more fighting between the government and Moro rebels.

Indanan
Located near the town of Jolo, Indanan has grown due to urbanization in the larger town. However, this area had been inhabited prior to the 12th century arrival of missionaries from the Arabian Peninsula. It was not until the early 1900s that it came under Philippine control. Today, approximately 85,000 people live in Indanan.

Siasi
One of the original 15 municipalities of the Sulu Province, Siasi is located 58 km (36 mi) southwest of Jolo Island. With a total area of 10,252 ha (25,333 a), this island has a 40% grade from the beaches to its mountains. The highest point is Gorro Peak, at 147 m (483 ft). Six ethnic groups, including Tausug people, make up the population of over 63,500.

History

Early History
The Austronesians first migrated to the islands of Southeast Asia around 500 B.C.E. Their mode of transportation was either by boat or via a land bridge that connected continental Asia with the Indonesian archipelago. Once established, their communities often had little to do with each other, particularly those on other islands. Like the Tausug, they developed their own tribal identities.

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Arab traders and Muslim missionaries from neighboring Sumatra and Malaysia brought Islam to the southern Philippines in the 13th century. They used trade routes that connected the islands to China, India, and the Middle East. Prior to the introduction of Islam, the Tausug had created a hierarchical form of governance (kauman) in which the headman (datu) was vested with authority over his community. When Muslim missionary explorer Abu Bakr arrived in the mid 15th century, this worked to his advantage. He was able to introduce the socio-political administrative structure known as the “sultanate.” He then became the first crowned Sultan of Sulu Province after marrying a local princess. As his sultanate developed, he laid the foundation for an Islamic socio-political order based on education, law, and commerce, which reinforced Muslim values and strengthened the community.18

The sultanate in Sulu was relatively more developed than its counterpart in Mindanao. This has been attributed to the fact that Islam had reached Sulu Province first, where residents had more religious contact with other Muslims and more developed trade relations with the outside world.19 Prior to Spanish colonization of the island of Luzon in the 16th century, the Sulu sultanate was the largest and most powerful political entity in the Philippines, claiming authority over at least a quarter of a million persons of multi-ethnic background.20 The sultanate had diplomatic relations with neighboring sultanates in Brunei, whose ruling royal families shared a common ancestry with their Sulu counterpart. Wealth was generated through maritime trade as well as slave raiding, a regional form of commerce that persisted into the 19th century.21

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**Spanish Colonial Rule**

While the term, “Muslim,” refers to adherents of Islam regardless of national origin, the term “Moro” denotes a political identity distinct to the Islamized peoples of the Sulu Archipelago, the islands of Mindanao, Palawan, and Basilan, and the surrounding smaller islands. The term was bestowed by the Spanish because the peoples of the Sulu Archipelago shared the same religion as the Moors, people of Berber and Arab descent who had once colonized Spain. Thus, the distinction between Christian “Filipinos” and Muslim “Moros” is not an ethnic one, but a religious one.\(^{22}\)

Spanish colonization stopped the spread of Islam northward; yet, Catholicism did not make inroads among adherents of Islam. Nor were the Spanish able to establish the coveted commercial presence necessary to exploit the area’s natural resources. Fierce Moro resistance to the Spanish ensured that, over 300 years of colonial rule, they were never able to exercise effective control over “Moroland.” Neither combat nor naval blockades cut off the sultanates’ source of wealth, which was trade. Spanish soldiers rarely ventured far from the fortified seacoast towns to which they were deployed.

Moro culture prized bravery and, as a result, young men were conditioned to hone their warrior skills armed with daggers (*kris*) and to defend their honor to the death. In addition, resistance was inspired by Muslim religious convictions and the spirit of *jihad* (“holy war” or “struggle”). Spanish encroachment reinforced their sense of being part of *Dar al-Islam* (“House of Peace”, an Islamic term used for countries in which Muslims can freely practice their religion).\(^{23}\) Yet resistance from the different communities was largely uncoordinated, and the communities continued to fight each other on a regular basis.

**U.S. Colonial Rule**

In 1898, under the Treaty of Paris, the territory of the Philippines came under American colonial rule. A year later, a formal treaty, the Bates Agreement, was drawn up between the Sultan of Sulu and the U.S. government. The latter agreed not to interfere in Sulu religion, law or commerce and to make monthly payments to the sultan and his tribal chiefdoms in exchange for their acknowledgement of American sovereignty. This form of indirect rule had its limits. However, the Moros continued to conduct raids against each other as well as against Christian Filipinos and, occasionally, even launched attacks on American surveying and road-building crews.

The U.S. unilaterally nullified the Bates agreement in 1905 and set up a system of colonial governance. Henceforth the Sultan would be recognized only as “the religious head.” The logistical difficulties of pacification were mitigated by exploiting intra-Moro

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http://books.google.com/books?id=SSq7qXi5LGgC&pg=PA201&lpg=PA201&dq=sulu+christian+settlers&source=web&ots=tm-CvSJe1x&sig=D07RikwcDs3zTcGBnJOrrrTZk0&hl=en#PPA200,M1
animosities. In quelling resistance, two incidents that occurred near Jolo are better remembered by the descendants of the victims than the victors. The first occurred in 1906 when American soldiers killed between 600 to 1,000 Tausug men, women, and children in the crater of an extinct volcano named Bud Dajo.

The second took place in 1913 when the U.S again met resistance to its disarmament order from the Tausug, who sought refuge in another volcanic crater called Bud Bagsak. On that occasion over 500 men, women, and children were killed. A Filipino journalist wrote that these "encounters were not really massacres of weak, innocuous and helpless natives; rather, they were fierce struggles of brave resistance fighters….who had no answer to the long-range bombardment, but they held their position stubbornly and refused to surrender."26

Having militarily subdued opposition to U.S. rule, Washington then embarked on a "policy of attraction" designed to win over the hearts and minds of the Moro people. Toward this end, the colonial government, now under civilian leadership, allocated substantial spending for road construction, hospitals, and health care. A public education system was also created and attendance made compulsory. Scholarships were offered to those who excelled, enabling recipients to study in Manila, as well as in the U.S.

Since this was a frontier zone, legal rights to the potential income from the country’s natural resources had not been established. This was remedied by enticing inhabitants of the populous northern islands to settle in Mindanao. They were offered timber and mining concessions as well as land grants for cattle ranches and plantations, where cash crops would ensure profit. Vast tracts of land occupied by the Moros and the Lumads, tribal peoples who practice animism, were deeded over to settlers and transnational firms such as the Del Monte Corporation, which set up a pineapple plantation in the 1920s. The population of Mindanao, estimated at half a million by the end of the 19th century, had expanded to 1.4 million by 1939. Lured by material incentives, these Christian

settlers came to disproportionately control the market economy, whose growth was in
turn facilitated by the infrastructure built under American colonial rule.  

The Commonwealth of the Philippines was established in 1935. This presented the Moros
with the prospect of domination by the majority Christian population. To avoid such a
fate, they lobbied for Sulu and Mindanao provinces to receive independence, or to remain
under U.S. colonial administration. “Our public land must not be given to people other
than the Moros,” they implored. “[I]f we are deprived of our land, how can we then earn
our own living? A statute should be enacted to forbid others from taking over our land, a
safe and reliable way to forestall a tragedy.” Their request was rejected.

Independence

After the Philippines was granted independence from the U.S. in 1946, the Marcos
government used the slogan, “Land of Promise” to describe a place that offered the
prospect of a better life than what was, for many, an increasingly impoverished existence
in Luzon or the Visayas. The most productive agricultural land was appropriated by
Christian settlers who cultivated rice, corn, and coconuts, or by corporations producing
rubber, bananas, and pineapples for export. Deforestation became evident as a result of
unrestrained logging, which also resulted in pushing the Lumad (indigenous peoples) to
higher elevations. While Mindanao contributed substantially to the national treasury in
Manila, only meager amounts trickled back for investment in public infrastructure and
social services, especially to the Muslim communities.

Within a decade after the mid-20th century mark, the
once disproportionately Muslim provinces of
Cotabato, Lanao, Davao, Zamboanga Peninsula, and
Basilan had become home to a majority Christian
population. The expanding presence of newcomers
raised tensions over land ownership and user rights
with respect to finite natural resources. Mobilization
along religious lines was the response, as Christian
and Muslim self-defense groups formed to protect
their turf against perceived encroachments by the other side.

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4oa1e&sig=FcxtwSjmR2JoEgiyLxkEYH1Vo&hl=en#PPA44,M1
31 University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management. “Assessment
http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=84003
33 Asia Forest Network. “Research Network Report #4 Upland Philippine Communities: Guardians of the
35 Philippine-European Solidarity Centre. Jumaani, Datu Amilusin. “Muslim-Christian Relations in the
Philippines: Redefining the Conflict.” 28 October 2000. http://www.philsol.nl/A01a/Jumaani-redefining-
oct00.htm
The Moro Separatist Movement Emerges

In 1968, tensions came to a boil after the shooting of 30 Muslim army recruits on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay. They were alleged to have mutinied upon their discovery that they were being trained for an invasion of the Malaysian state of Sabah, over which the Philippines claimed sovereignty. This would have entailed killing fellow Muslims whom they considered kin. The incident, which became known as the Jabidah massacre galvanized the Moro people. The next year, a Muslim (later Mindanao) independence movement emerged to press for an independent Moro nation (Bangsa Moro). Armed clashes between Muslim and Christian groups escalated.

By 1971 Muslim Mindanao and Sulu were in a state of rebellion. A government task force from Manila was sent to Mindanao to mediate between the rival groups, but had little success. At year’s end, armed skirmishes between Muslim and Christian groups and the Philippine armed forces had resulted in the deaths of over 1,566 people, 56% of whom were Muslims. The clashes created approximately 100,000 refugees whose villages were razed. They were predominantly Muslim, but also included Christian settlers and Lumad, who had been pushed up into the mountains.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded to articulate the grievances of the Moro. In contrast to paramilitary groups established by local politicians, the MNLF viewed the Philippine government, not local Christian settlers, as the adversary. Among its demands were a separate homeland and the return of ancestral lands to Muslim stewardship. The leader of the MNLF, and its military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA), was Nur Misuari, part of a cohort of Philippine Muslims. He had received guerrilla warfare training in West Malaysia in the late 1960s. By supplying arms as well as financial backing to the MNLF, the global Islamic community also became involved in the conflict. In addition, it accused the Marcos government of genocide against Muslims and threatened to cut off oil supplies.

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The Marcos government’s response to the MNLF relied heavily on military force. The ongoing conflict in Mindanao was one of several justifications for the imposition of martial law in 1972. In turn, this provided a pretext for the Philippine military to launch a major offensive against the MNLF/BMA, which resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, as well as a massive displacement of people fleeing the violence. Mindanao-based Civil Home Defense Force (CHDF) units, which acquired a fearsome reputation for committing human rights abuses, as well as vigilante groups formed by Christian settlers, assisted in the offense.

Concurrently, and probably in part a result of the Philippines’ reliance on imported oil, the Marcos government entered into negotiations with the MNLF. This took place through the mediation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Islamic Council of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), and Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi, who had his own interest in dragging out a settlement as long as possible to score propaganda points against the U.S. The initiatives culminated in the Tripoli Agreement, signed in December 1976. It contained provisions for a ceasefire, as well as outlines for a broader political settlement, including autonomy for 13 provinces in Mindanao, Sulu Archipelago and Palawan Island. Within this area, the use of Shari’a law was officially sanctioned. Further talks were scheduled for early 1977 to iron out the mechanics of implementation, but negotiations collapsed and the ceasefire was abandoned.

The main sticking point concerned the geographical boundaries of Moro autonomy. As a result of continuous in-migration, Muslims only accounted for 25% of the population in Mindanao in 1980. Of the 23 provinces that administered Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago at the time, only five, of which only two were in much larger Mindanao, could still claim a Muslim majority. Instead of attempting to claim the whole of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, the MNLF demanded the parameters of Muslim political autonomy encompass the 13 provinces of historic Muslim dominance.

To break the deadlock, Manila floated the idea of a referendum in the affected communities, something that had not been discussed previously. Aware this would

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produce an outcome unfavorable to their cause, Misuari accused the government of violating the Tripoli Agreement. The MNLF rejected an invitation to participate in the provisional government and boycotted the referendum, in which voters, as expected, rejected the MNLF’s claim and endorsed a more limited proposal put forward by the Marcos government. The proposal called for the creation of two small autonomous regions in the Muslim-dominated parts of Western Mindanao and Sulu, and Central Mindanao.

Most Muslim groups boycotted the 1979 elections to select members for two regional assemblies. Given their limited powers, meager financial resources, and low levels of legitimacy among their constituencies, these elected bodies were unable to effectively address the concerns of their Moro constituents.47 After Marcos fell from power in 1986, they were disbanded.

**The Post-Marcos Philippine Government**

The Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was formed by the government of Corazon Aquino. This government would also elect the governor of the region, which included the five provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, and the city of Marawi. Approximately 12,000 sq km (4,633. sq mi), or 4% of the country’s total land area, became part of the ARMM. The government viewed this as fulfilling its end of the Tripoli Agreement.

However, the MNLF refused to recognize the government’s actions, and returned to armed struggle. In 1996, Fidel Ramos, who succeeded Corazon Aquino as President, and the MNLF signed a peace agreement. It was hailed on both sides as “the final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement” between the MNLF and Manila. MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari became the head of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development and the Governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).48

Lost in the euphoria over an end to the fighting was the fact that, far from being an end in itself, the agreement was intended to address the grievances that ignited unrest in the first place.49 Instead, the regional government became a vehicle for the MNLF to dispense favors and jobs to its supporters. In the absence of any discernible improvement in living standards, public dissatisfaction mounted. By early November 2001, it was clear that an impending election would strip Misuari of his position as head of the MNLF. To prevent the vote from taking place, he ordered his followers to attack Army headquarters in Jolo. After his rebellion resulted in great loss of life for his side, he abandoned his post as

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governor of the ARMM and fled to neighboring Sabah in Malaysia, where he was arrested by law enforcement authorities and deported to Manila.\footnote{Philstar.com. Corvera, Ann Bernadette, “Nur Misuari: Has the ‘Good Warrior’s’ Long Struggle Come to a Disgraceful End?” 16 January 2002. http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/Separatist_Groups/nur_misuari.htm}

**The Emergence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front**

A breakaway faction of the MNLF created a new organization, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which rejected the Tripoli Agreement. One explanation for the new group was the fact that the MNLF was dominated by the Tausug, while the MILF represented the interests of the Maguindanaon.\footnote{The Pennsylvanıa Gazette. Mabry, Tristan. “Kashmir, Mindanao, Aceh and Home.” 2006. http://www.upenn.edu/gazette/0306/gaz07.html} Others view the split as evidence of a more religious element entering into the conflict. The long-time MNLF Chairman Misuari, a devout Muslim himself, envisioned a secular form of leadership to combat injustice.\footnote{Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies. “Rebel and Separatist Groups: Moro National Liberation Front.” No date. http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/Separatist_Groups/rebel_and_separatist_groups.htm} Hashim Salamat, leader of the MILF, by contrast saw Islam as the primary inspiration for their struggle to gain autonomy. This would be achieved through *dawa* (Islamic preaching) and *jihad* (holy war) to create a government that would apply Shari’a law in all aspects of daily life. Under these circumstances, faith and political leadership could not be separated. Therefore only religious scholars (*ulama*), whose knowledge came from the Quran, were fit to lead the movement.\footnote{Asian Development Bank, Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Philippines. “Chapter 2: Defining Indigenous Peoples [p. 5].” No date. http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Indigenous_Peoples/PHI/chapter_2.pdf}

Peace talks between the MILF and Manila began in 1997, but the MILF ceded little, owing to its strength. That changed after 9/11; the U.S.-led “war on terror” prompted the MILF to agree to a cease-fire arrangement.\footnote{Manila Times. Jacinto, Al. “Moro Islamic Liberation Front Ready for War if Peace Negotiations Collapse.” 12 May 2008. http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/may/12/yehey/prov/20080512prov2.html} Talks continue to be stalemated over the issue of what territory Manila is willing to cede to establish a “Bangsamoro Juridical Entity” (BJE) and, of course, the fate of its non-Muslim residents.\footnote{Tufts University, The Jebsen Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies Research Briefing Series. Abuza, Zachary. “The Philippine Peace Process: Too Soon to Claim a Settlement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front?” February 2008. http://fletcher.tufts.edu/jebsecenter/pdfs/JCCTS_ResearchSeries_3.3_Abuza_02-2008_FINAL.pdf}

Another group claiming to represent the interests of Filipino Muslims is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which has links with the Indonesian Islamic terrorist group, Jemaah Islamiyah. In contrast to the MNLF and the MILF, whose violence took the form of hit-and-run attacks directed against the Philippine military, ASG targets Christian civilians and uses
kidnapping as a means to raise money. In June 2008, it held a prominent Philippine television personality and her crew hostage. They were released unharmed two weeks later. This led to speculation that Manila had acceded to ransom demands and underscored what others have previously suggested, namely that ASG has become a criminal syndicate more concerned with money than jihad. In contrast to the MNLF and the MILF, ASG has not issued specific policy statements, nor has it demonstrated any significant popular support.

Still, a sustainable peace agreement has proved hard to achieve. The primary reasons include unresolved issues regarding claims on ancestral land; ceasefire violations; political opposition to the negotiations; a proliferation of separatist groups, and the involvement of some of those groups in terrorist activities. Those not party to the settlement will be tempted to disrupt the peace process through a fresh display of violence signaling the movement is taking on a different character.

**Government**

There has been discussion of making Sulu into a Muslim autonomous region akin to the MMAA. This immediately generated suspicions that, while the stated intention was to better provide services to impoverished residents, in fact it’s “all for the purpose of dividing the pie to satisfy a local elite and nothing more.” The consistently poor quality of government services offers little assurance things will improve for the average citizen, regardless of how many times the administrative structure is modified.

The other governance issue is how to provide services while fighting terrorist groups. Mass-based insurgencies such as the MILF and MNLF are sustained by sympathetic civilian populations. By contrast, small numbers of terrorists such as ASG rely on kindred-spirit insurgents to operate. As a result, the central problem on Jolo Island is how to isolate jihadis from their insurgent benefactors, rather than how to separate insurgents

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from the general population, which supports them as a means to gain greater autonomy. A policy that reflects this distinction has yet to be fully implemented by Manila.\textsuperscript{63}

Media
While the Philippine media is not censored by the government, there have been complaints that it presents biased coverage of Filipino Muslims, casting them as “terrorists” while failing to provide information on the historical context of the Moro people’s plight. It is claimed the mere mention of “Mindanao” elicits images of kidnappings and bombings. Some stories receive international press because the victims were vacationing foreigners enjoying a tropical holiday when they were abducted by terrorists acting like sea pirates. Violent incidents that occur in a few hot spots over a large area tarnish the image of the whole place, something referred to as the “Mindanao Stigma.”

Economy
As the seat of the Sulu Sultanate, Sulu Province was historically an active participant in Southeast Asia’s regional maritime trade. Trading goods within the archipelago was long a way of life for residents, but Sulu’s strategic location offered the impetus for expansion with partners as far away as China. None of that former glory remains evident today. The economy is heavily reliant on foreign aid. The aid is intended to enable the province to expand its economic base and attract foreign investment to make development self-sustaining. In the absence of better security, however, foreign investment is unlikely. One of the Philippines’ major industries is tourism; but high-profile kidnappings make visitors leery of traveling there, despite Sulu’s natural beauty.

The primary source of income for the Tausug in Sulu is fishing and local commerce. Only Jolo Island’s economy has a significant agricultural component. As a result, rice must be imported. In contrast to Mindanao, there are no significant mineral deposits to be developed that might offer residents a source of income.

Ethnic Groups
There are three major Muslim groups in Mindanao. The Maranao, whose name means “People of the Lake,” inhabit the two Lanao provinces where the largest settlement is around Lake Lanao. The Maguindanao, literally “People of the Flood Plains, inhabit Cotabato Plain. Tausug means People of the Current,” in recognition of the strong tidal currents that push water from the Sulu and China Seas into the Celebes Sea. Tau means

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person, and Suug is a historic name for the island of Jolo prior to the arrival of the
Spanish.68

The Maguindanao are farmers who cultivate the fertile plains of Cotabato. They also have a tradition
of fine weaving and woodwork although, like all Muslims, they do not represent human and animal
forms in their art.69 The Maranao are traders, known for their business acumen. Among the Maranao, every
individual who has taken a pilgrimage to Mecca thereafter wears a white cap (fez).70 The Tausug are
known as fierce warriors. They are also on the top of the social hierarchy within Sulu, followed by the Samal, a sea-faring people, and the
Yakan. The Yakan are the original inhabitants of Basilan Island who live in dispersed settlements rather than village communities.

http://class.csueastbay.edu/anthropologymuseum/virtmus/philippines/peoples/Tausug.htm
69 Philippine Literature. Dris, Jose Arnaldo. “Maguindanao.”
http://litera1no4.tripod.com/maguindanao_frame.html
Chapter 2 Religion

Introduction

The Tausug, in the words of an observer, adhere to an orthodox form of Sunni Islam which includes “Mecca pilgrims, religious teachers, religious tracts in Arabic script, pig-free homesteads, and [alcohol]-free markets.” Yet their spiritual life is also infused with indigenous practices and traditions which predate the arrival of Islam on the archipelago. In reality, Tausug practice a variant of folk Islam which incorporates the major tenants supplemented by beliefs about the spirit world that is populated by saytan (evil spirits) and jinn (unseen creatures) who have the ability to disrupt daily life. Very few Christian settlers remain in Sulu after three decades of violence, “and they are a very careful and quiet minority.”

Religion and State

The Philippine Constitution calls for the separation of religion and state. Yet the Philippine government allows judgment according to Shari’a law through the Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines, which was signed into effect by the late President Marcos in 1977. The code had a long gestation. In 1973, a task force was set up to consider the difficulties faced by the Moro people as a religious and cultural minority and to find ways to make Shari’a civil code compatible with Philippine general law. The goal was to enable Muslims to make decisions in line with their faith in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and more. It applies only to Muslims and does not extend to criminal matters. One of the goals of Muslim separatist insurgent movements is to make Shari’a law apply in both spheres. Yet none of the Philippine sultanates adhered closely to Shari’a law in their legal codes. This is reflected in the mix of Shari’a and customary legal code (adat) Muslim communities currently use to administer justice, which is meted

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out by *datu* (headman) rather than Islamic judges seated on the bench of a Philippine Court.78

**Five Pillars of Islam**

There are five duties every Muslim is expected to adhere to; these duties are called the “Five Pillars of Islam.” The first pillar is the profession of faith: “There is no God (*Tuhan*) but God and Mohammad is his prophet.” Its importance lies in uncompromising monotheism; the notion of God as all-powerful. While a concurrent belief in spirits does somewhat undercut this, in the same way saints do for Christians, the Tausug view spirits as interfering with daily life; they do not, in any way, challenge the authority of God.

The second pillar is prayer, five times a day. Among the Tausug, the elderly are the most devout. Females do not participate in daily prayer until after they are married and males may pray only after they are circumcised. Among young men, however, attendance may be erratic if they are involved in feuding or engaged in other illicit activities as the two activities are seen as incompatible. Moreover, there is a fear on the part of the young that if one is extremely devout, he will accumulate so much merit God may decide to take him early.

The third pillar is fasting during daylight hours during the month of *Ramadan*, from which only the young, infirm, and pregnant women are exempt. Most Tausug observe the fast for at least part of the month. It is broken by a feast which follows a communal prayer session.

The fourth pillar is giving alms. For those who have a good harvest, the appropriate amount to give or tithe (*jukat*) is 10%. While no accounting is kept of who follows through, not to give is thought to risk a poor harvest the next year. In addition, the gift of charitable alms (*sarraka*) for the less fortunate is a means of accruing religious merit.

The fifth and final pillar is a pilgrimage to Mecca for those who can afford it. Given the logistical difficulties in travel, few Filipino Muslims make the trip. Prior to World War II, the journey took a year or more since the pilgrims had to make their way to Sumatra or Singapore where they took a boat passage to Saudi Arabia. Although modern transportation has shortened travel time, few Tausug are in a position to make the pilgrimage. Among those who do, the community expects them to exhibit exemplary conduct for a Muslim, deterring young men from joining a pilgrimage even if they are financially in a position to do so.

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Impact of Religion on Daily Life

Religion has little discernible impact on daily life. Women are free to move around the community as they wish. Often times, their family responsibilities require this. Moreover, they are allowed to mingle with men without risking their family honor.79

Touching an unmarried female (kublit-kublit), however, is in theory a finable offense with the actual amount determined by the datu according to time of day and part of body. Such rules are made to be challenged particularly since the legal censure does not carry over into the moral sphere. Thus, a young man may be motivated to touch a particular girl for no other reason than to see if he can get away with it.80

The Tausug believe if a man is innocently killed or victimized by another, the accumulated merit of the perpetrator is transferred to the victim while the accumulated bad deeds of the victim is transferred to the perpetrator.81 The accumulation of sufficient merit is important to reach heaven (sulga), the pleasures of which are described in detail in the Quran, as opposed to languishing in hell (narka), which is also vividly detailed in the Quran. Heaven and hell are thought of less as physical places, but rather as stats of being.82

In contrast to the variety of methods used to deal with the spirit world, Tausug view Islamic theology as sacrosanct. In no way can theological questions be resolved by looking inward. Imams (religious leaders), by contrast, have the expertise to interpret God’s word as conveyed through the Quran. Sara Kuraan (Quranic law) covers both moral norms and rules specific to religious conduct such as the proper way to pray, to tithe, to travel to Mecca, etc. Violators are not subject to punishment on earth because these are sins against God which will have to be answered for in the afterworld.

Religious Rites of Passage
Some time around the age of ten a boy will be circumcised (*tuli*). The Tausug place great importance on this rite of male passage which, within their culture, is akin to another pillar of Islam. The ritual is conducted in a private ceremony by a cleric who also has the surgical skill to perform the operation. Though painful, it is considered bad form for a boy to cry.

Places of Worship
Islam is a religion which does not presuppose a national identity. Therefore, the Tausug do not think of the mosque as a community structure. Men can worship anywhere. Because mosques are places of worship, it is polite to seek permission before entering.

Exchange 1: May I enter the mosque?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: May I enter the mosque?</th>
<th>manjaaree baha koo somood pa lom sin masjid?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Imams* may serve at a particular mosque, but they can lead services at any mosque. Many communities have two types of religious buildings: a mosque and a village chapel. Asking the *imam* for advice on etiquette may help ensure that protocol is met. Proper behavior at mosques begins with the removing of one’s shoes before entering.

Exchange 2: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?</th>
<th>sobaay ku eegun in tawpa bang somood pa lom sin masjid?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chapel is a small structure which serves as a place of prayer during Ramadan. While the chapel is an informal structure; a mosque needs to be constructed along prescribed lines. Most importantly, a mosque can only be built upon approval of the Sultan, and it must be built on a stone foundation. It also must be able to serve a congregation large enough to attract a substantial group of worshippers for Friday prayer.

Exchange 3: When do you pray?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: When do you pray?</th>
<th>ko ono kaw magsambahaayang?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: We pray at noon.</td>
<td>magsambahaayang kamee sin ogto sooga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One indigenous feature occurs during Friday prayers in rural Jolo. Congregants literally scream “Amen” loudly at the conclusion of the service to scare away ghosts. Young women attend mosque services only after they are married; Tausug males, by contrast, can attend services after they are circumcised. In the communal Friday prayer, men sit in front while women, who are veiled, are restricted to the back.
Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do I need to cover my head?</th>
<th>sobaay akoo magteerung?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This reinforces male dominance, as well as makes it logistically difficult for unrelated males and females to inadvertently brush up against each other.

Religious Holidays

Ramadan
Maintaining a fast during the daylight hours of this holy month is a requirement for Muslims. Only the young, old, sick, and pregnant are exempt from this requirement. The lack of food and water may cause people to be grumpy or tired. Often, business hours are erratic and some shops may be closed during Ramadan. As in other Muslim areas, it is polite for non-Muslims to refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum in public during Ramadan. The fast is broken on the first day of the following month by a large and celebratory feast. This day is known as Hari Raya. People put on their best clothes and visit each other, as well as venture out to the nearest town for festivals and entertainment.

Pagtulak bala
This holiday, literally named “sending away evil,” falls on successive Wednesdays during the second month of the Muslim calendar. It is a ritual held on the beach. Prayers and ablutions are conducted as a means of washing away accumulated bala, a form of supernatural evil believed to accumulate in the human body. It can manifest itself in many forms including disease, drought, and warfare. Prayers are offered and the entire community wades into the water up to their knees to engage in mutual dousing. Each person also carries a stone in their right hand, which is tossed out to sea. It is believed the evil is transported out to sea by the stone. In addition, rafts are filled with aromatic foods and released into the current to lead the spirits away from the land. Leading them out to sea is believed to make the spirits unable to wreak mischief on humans again. While Islamic purists frown on this ritual, which is similar to those performed elsewhere in Southeast Asia by non-Muslims, it is an enduring tradition for the Tausug.

Maulid-al-nabi
Mohammad’s birthday is celebrated in the third month of the lunar New Year. Each community mosque selects one evening for an all-night celebration. Priests chant continuously in Arabic and special flowers are placed in the center of the mosque to symbolize the Prophet. When the imam reaches a certain point in the service, each congregant stands up to hold a flower. Otherwise, the congregants seem unconcerned about the significance of the prayers, leaving that to clerical expertise. The service is noteworthy for its informality. Congregants pass the time by smoking, chatting, and gossiping about worldly matters. Around midnight they enjoy a communal feast in which each family brings a tray of food. Sharing food is a meritorious act that will garner credit for generosity.
Chapter 3 Traditions

Greetings

Tausug-speaking people, like most others in the Philippines, are quite formal in their initial greetings. Introductions are a key part of Filipino culture and should never be overlooked. Handshakes are common and should always begin with the eldest person in the group.\(^{83}\) If women are present, it is polite to wait for them to extend their hand first.

**Exchange 5:** Good morning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Good morning.</th>
<th>salaam alaykum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Good morning.</td>
<td>alaykum was salaam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the person’s surname preceded by their professional or honorific title is expected until one is invited to use their first name. Often times, business associates develop personal relationships and nicknames may be used between friends. When given a nickname, it is seen as rude to not allow people to use it.\(^{84}\)

**Exchange 6:** Hi, Mr. Ali.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Hello, Mr. Ali.</th>
<th>as salaam alaykum, bapa alee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Hello!</td>
<td>alaykum was salaam!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier:</td>
<td>Are you doing well?</td>
<td>marayaw da saab kaw?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When scheduling business meetings, it is often good to do so a few weeks beforehand. In addition, calling to confirm closer to the date is recommended as agendas do change.

Because Filipinos develop relationships with their colleagues, social conversations and inquiries about oneself and family are part of business meetings. These are important parts of building business relationships and personal questions are not viewed as too forward.

**Exchange 7:** How are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How are you?</th>
<th>maw noonoo da kaw?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Fine, very well.</td>
<td>marayaw da eesaab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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http://books.google.com/books?id=Djg777NdHnkC&printsec=copyright&dq=greeting+etiquette+Philippines&source=gbs_toc_s&cad=1
Handshakes are also a common way to say goodbye. These handshakes should be friendly, but not as firm or strong as the common American handshake. Personal space also differs from the American norm. When in conversation, a Filipino may reach out and touch someone. This shows a high level of comfort between people.

**Exchange 8:** Good evening!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Good evening!</th>
<th>salaam alaykum!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Good evening!</td>
<td>alaykum was salaam!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impressions are not only made by behavior, but also by tone of voice and volume. Loud voices are may be perceived as a sign of arrogance and may discourage people from dealing with an individual. Gentle tone coupled with an approachable demeanor portrays inner confidence and leaves a lasting positive impression.

**Dress Codes**

Impressions are very important to people in the Philippines and, as such, they will put great care into their appearance. Those visiting the country should, in turn, take pride in how they present themselves.

**Exchange 9:** How should I dress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: How should I dress?</th>
<th>beeya dee in akoo manamoo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.</td>
<td>sooloogha in panamoo bokoon masigpeet eeban dee katampanan in baran moo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a business environment, conservative dark-colored suits are appropriate for both men and women. It is interesting to note that Filipinos will not remove their suit jackets unless the most important or senior person does so first.

**Exchange 10:** Is this acceptable to wear?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Is this acceptable to wear?</th>
<th>manjaaree ku sologon in bajoo eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


**Hospitality**
When invited to a person’s home for a larger event, it is acceptable to arrive up to 30 minutes late; but any later may be considered rude. If it is for a smaller gathering or meeting at a restaurant, arrive on time. Often times, Filipinos will not take a casual dinner invite seriously, so invitations are usually extended three times before one accepts.87

When complimenting the woman of the house, it is important to not refer to her as “hostess.” This word is used when referring to a call girl and should not be used to thank someone for their hospitality.88

**Exchange 11:** I really appreciate your hospitality.

| Soldier: | I really appreciate your hospitality. | magsukool tood ha panayma neeyo kamoo |
| Local:   | It is nothing.                      | uwaay day san                          |

When dinner is ready the host will ask for everyone to move to the dining area and will seat each person. The host will also alert everyone when to serve themselves. Meals are often served family-style, with large dishes set in the middle of the table, or as a buffet where everyone serves themselves.89

**Exchange 12:** This food is very good.

| Soldier: | This food is very good. | masaraap tood in pagkaw neenee |
| Local:   | It’s byangang.         | pee yan gag san eenee          |

**Gift Giving**
As a way to show thanks for hospitality, small gifts should be brought. Because the Tausug are Muslim, flowers and sweets are the most well-received items. Alcohol should be avoided as pious Muslims are not permitted to drink it. However, chrysanthemums and white lilies should be avoided because white flowers are associated with funerals. Just as appearance is important for a person, a gift should also be wrapped elegantly with proper presentation in mind. When giving a gift, do not be surprised if it is not opened immediately as Filipinos do not open gifts in front of the giver. If sending gifts of food, such as a fruit basket, avoid doing so until after the event. Sending it before or bringing it along may imply that the host is unable to supply enough food and can cause hiya, or shame.90

**Exchange 13:** This gift is for you.

| Soldier: | This gift is for you. | tabooka in pagsampaay namoo kaymoo |
| Local: | I cannot accept this. | maaha paakoo, sa dee ku manjaaree tabookun eenee |

**Ethnic Identity**

The name Moro, bestowed by the Spanish, became associated with savagery, piracy, and violence in the minds of Christian Filipinos. During the 1934 convention to write a national constitution, delegates from the south implored their counterparts from the north to cease calling Muslims “Moros.” It implied they were something other than full-fledged Filipinos. Yet in the late 1960s, a form of identity politics emerged as part of the independence movement. The term “Moro” became a source of pride. Nonetheless, while it is a useful label when dealing with outsiders, it serves to obscure the very real cultural and linguistic differences among Filipino Muslims who regard themselves as members of their distinct ethnic groups. This is especially true for the Tausug, who as the descendants of the Sulu Sultan, may feel they are superior to others.

**Food & Eating Habits**

If their supply of rice is insufficient, the Tausug eat cassava, a starchy staple—similar to potatoes. Fish is a major part of the diet, and freshwater milkfish (bangus) has been introduced by people from the Visayas.

**Exchange 14:** What is the name of this dish?

| Soldier: | What is the name of this dish? | unee pagko neenee? |
| Local: | This is tamu. | taahmoo eenee |

Most arable land in Mindanao is planted with rice or coconut. Root crops such as sweet potatoes are planted in the field between harvests. Vegetables and tropical fruits are also important to the economy. Coconut trees yield oil and more. The trunk is used to squeeze...
and press sugar cane (thus extracting juice) while the leaves are woven into baskets and the ribs are used to make brooms.96

**Exchange 15:** The food tastes so good.

| Soldier: | The food tastes so good. | maa nanam in pagka un eenee |
| Local:   | Thank you.               | magsukool                    |

**Social Events**

*Weddings*

While Islamic law allows a man to have four wives, few Tausug can afford more than one wife since polygamy necessitates setting up additional households. Traditionally, Tausug recognized three types of marriage which females enter into at the age of puberty (akkilbalig). Those arranged by: 1) familial negotiation (*pagpangasawa*); 2) abduction (*pagsaggau*); and 3) elopement (*pagdakup*). The classifications are based on which party initiated the union. An arranged marriage is said to be the desire of the parents. For them a union between cousins is preferable. It speeds the negotiations and ensures outsiders will not cut into the family’s wealth. The public announcement (*pagturol*) draws a crowd which is informed not only of the wedding date, but the amount of the dowry (*ungsud*). If the marriage is between relatives, the amount may be overstated to enhance the social status of both sides of the family.

Abduction is motivated by the male who runs a real risk of bodily harm if he is apprehended with his intended before he reaches the home of the *datu* (headman) who can officiate the union. By the same token, “if your (the woman’s) family will not dispatch a rescue party right after you are declared missing…[it is reasonable] for the man’s party to conclude that your family has given up and accepted [the match]. It would be assumed that you are kiyakumpitan (touched woman)….It would [be] a dishonor if you returned home without a husband and a great disappointment when there were no plans of getting married underway.”97 His parents would offer some form of *ungsud* to their new in-laws as a peace offering.

Elopement reflects female choice and creates the impression the female’s feelings are stronger than those of her male partner. In such a case, the groom often claims it was an abduction to avoid any stigma for his wife. In the past she, too, would want people to think their marriage had been by abduction. Beginning in the late 1970s, however,

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women began to have a say in their choice of a spouse. Now, they are even allowed to marry non-Muslim men, although they should try to convert them to Islam.  

The wedding ceremony (pagtiyaun) itself, separate from the customary law officiating performed by the datu, is preceded by a bridal bath, a cleansing ritual that signifies the bride’s chastity, as well as the sanctity of the marriage. On the eve of the service, a cacophony of native percussion instruments signals its impending start. In accordance with Islamic norms, the marriage is a contract between father and son-in-law and is officiated by an imam.  

Exchange 16: Congratulations on your wedding!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Congratulations on your wedding!</th>
<th>makug akoo kaayin moo!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: We are honored you could attend.</td>
<td>landoo kamee makoo ha paglaruk moo ha pag kaa an namoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the ceremony, the father of the bride ceremonially passes his daughter to the groom. This is followed by a feast which, depending upon the wealth of the groom’s side, may slaughter several cows and prepare several bags of rice for the main course. Tiula itim (black soup) is a staple at wedding banquets along with various types of sweet and fried rice cakes.

Exchange 17: What ingredients are used to make byangang?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: What ingredients are used to make byangang?</th>
<th>onoo noo in sangkap yusal ha paglaatoo sin peeyangag?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Spice mix, chicken, coconut milk, turmeric, ginger, garlic, pepper.</td>
<td>yusal da moo eenee pamaapa, manook, gataa, dolaw, bawaan, looy ah, laara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meal is served in a shed (panggong) constructed adjacent to the house specifically for the occasion. For urban Tausug, the ceremony can reflect Western influences such as booking a hotel to accommodate a more lavish celebration that may include non-Muslim witnesses.

---


Exchange 18: I wish you both happiness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: I wish you both happiness.</th>
<th>mora moraahaan, dulaan kamoo sin toohaan sin takayogan eebaan kasan nagan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: We are honored.</td>
<td>magsukool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After marriage, the couple’s first home is almost always with the bride’s parents. The bond between the father and son-in-law should become as strong as that between father and son. By living with her parents, they are able to oversee their daughter’s transition to wife. After the couple has settled into married life and produces their first child, they may move in with the husband’s parents or into a home of their own. Such decisions are usually dictated by economic considerations and, for farmers, the availability of land.

Exchange 19: Did you grow up here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Did you grow up here?</th>
<th>leeyumago kaw dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funerals

Tausug funerals follow Islamic protocol while burial rites reflect indigenous beliefs about the afterlife. For Muslims, it is a religious obligation to bury the dead within 24 hours. A Tausug burial typically takes place the afternoon after death.

Exchange 20: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.</th>
<th>tabooka in kasoosaahaan ku</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Thank you.</td>
<td>magsukool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A last reading of the daily prayer is conducted before the coffin is carried on a bamboo stretcher to the grave, which is dug to face Mecca, Mourners are expected to remain stoic throughout the service where it will be emphasized to the deceased that they are, in fact, dead. The corpse is not thought to be totally devoid of feeling, and the service allows the deceased to adjust to his or her new state of being before the coffin is covered with earth.

Exchange 21: Please be strong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Please be strong.</th>
<th>pakasuga in atay neeyo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: We will try.</td>
<td>sulaayan namoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the burial, water is sprinkled on the grave and on the grounds because the deceased’s spirit still needs to drink and bathe. This is a non-Islamic rite. According to indigenous cosmology, the afterlife is one in which spirits must be kept happy to prevent them from wreaking havoc on the living. One month before Ramadan, a feast and prayer session (nispu) is held at the mosque, a thanksgiving celebration for the souls. If this is not done, the Tausug believe that the departed will curse their descendants.

Several days later the entire community turns out to tidy up the cemetery by removing weeds and planting flowers. Passages from the Quran are read by each grave to ease the suffering of the deceased and bring religious merit to the reader. This is followed by a communal feast in the cemetery. Most Tausug believe the fate of their departed forebears in the afterworld will depend at least partly on how faithfully their living descendants adhere to the rituals.

Weapons

Much has been made of the Tausug “culture of violence.” Both Filipinos and foreign observers are aware of Tausug males’ reputation as fierce warriors who are never without their daggers (kris) or, more recently, guns. For the Tausug male, his role as protector is foremost and this explains the affinity for guns. In fact, Sulu is awash in weapons and almost every household has at least an assault rifle, if very little else in the way of material possessions. Pantakasi refers to a situation where every male in a given area who has entered adolescence converges to annihilate a pinned-down enemy.

Yet guns also have non-lethal recreational uses. They are fired on holidays as part of the celebration. According to one visitor, “During lunar eclipses and New Year’s, the sky above the capital, Jolo City, looks like the first night of Operation Desert Storm over Baghdad as folks unload flaming rivers of phosphorous-coated ordnance into the heavens to chase off evil spirits.”

Clan Conflicts

The importance of bravery is instilled in every Tausug male. If an offense is committed against him, the shame he feels is reflected in his diminished worth in the eyes of those around him and particularly in the eyes of his enemy. A lack of willingness to exact revenge upsets the defined expectation between adversaries.

Exchange 22: Did these people threaten you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Did these people threaten you?</th>
<th>bakas kaw shangupan sin manga taw eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: No.</td>
<td>uwaay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Tausug male must protect and defend not only himself and his own family, but his entire clan as a matter of reciprocal obligation. He will put his own life on the line for a family member, no matter how distant a relative, so that when his own life is in jeopardy, he can be sure the clan will rally to his defense.104

Exchange 23: How is your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: How is your family?</th>
<th>beeya dee in da in tawta ya nak moo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: They are doing fine, thank you.</td>
<td>moora mooraahaan, marayaw eesaab seela, magsukool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Known as rido in Tagalog and pagbanta in Tausug, clan conflicts are akin to honor killings.105 Refusal to demand payment of a blood debt from one’s enemies, in short, opens a Tausug male up to the charge that he is without shame (way sipug). Shame reflects awareness of the individual as a member of a community.

A number of factors explain the high incidence of such conflicts. A lack of governmental authority along with a proliferation of firearms, including automatic weapons, makes these incidences difficult to prevent. It can take little more than an offhanded threat to provoke violence, which then goes into a game of tit-for-tat—or retaliation in kind. The intensity of the feud is determined by the relationship between the antagonists. If they live in the same community, it is unlikely to lead to multiple acts of homicide. If they are from different communities, however, escalation is almost inevitable.

Piracy

The Tausug, as a coastal people, have a long history of piracy. Before slavery was outlawed under American colonial rule, the booty was often humans who were sold into slavery, as well as other living creatures such as cattle, which had monetary value. In more recent times, the goods have expanded to include consumer products. What has remained constant is the type of organization which pirates form. A group of 10 to 25 armed men led by a kinsman will look for a vulnerable target like the Badjao people, fishermen also known as “sea gypsies,” whose lowly status is

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**Gambling**

Gambling is a beloved pastime of many Tausug men, and a frequent source of marital discord. Within the family, women do not view it as a harmless activity because it squanders household wealth. Gambling can also lead to stealing and fighting which may result in death. It is especially popular on Hari Raya, the day after the month-long Ramadan fast ends.

**Exchange 24:** Will you be celebrating Hari Raya?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Will you be celebrating Hari Raya?</th>
<th>palagoo nin adlaw haay la ya?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes!</td>
<td>hoon!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roads can be blocked off to make room for gaming tables. However, if Shari’a criminal law were applicable, as Moro insurgent groups would like, the punishment for gambling would be flogging.\footnote{110 Asia Times, Southeast Asia. Guerin, Bill. “Flogging for Islamic Law.” 30 June 2005. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/GF30Ae02.html}
**Dos and Don’ts**

**Do** get someone’s attention by motioning downward gently or making the “psssst” sound instead of pointing at them.

**Do** show appreciation for any help received.

**Do** show respect to those older than you regardless of their professional status and educational level.

**Don’t** point at someone. This is considered extremely rude.

**Don’t** use curse words. Most Filipinos understand enough English to know what you are saying, and cursing is not appreciated.

**Don’t** use your left hand for touching food or people. Muslims reserve the left for activities associated with the bathroom, and it is considered unclean.

**Don’t** stare at people. Prolonged eye contact is considered impolite and can even be seen as a form of intimidation.

**Don’t** speak in a very loud voice; this is considered rude.

**Don’t** draw or otherwise depict human or animal forms. The Tausug follow the Islamic belief that only God can create living creatures.
Chapter 4 Urban Life

Introduction
The town of Jolo was a prosperous place in the 1960s before duty-free trade with neighboring Borneo was outlawed. Now the town’s lone generator relies on imported crude oil to function, and blackouts occur regularly. Recently, poverty and the threat of terrorism have put Jolo off limits to tourists who might otherwise seek out its beaches and tropical ambience. The threat of kidnapping deters other types of visitors. For residents, the situation has improved since 2002, when U.S. troops arrived to support the Philippine military’s efforts, and succeeded in routing the militant Islamic group, Abu Sayyaf, from the town of Jolo. Residents now feel safe going out after dark.

Communications
While most residents lack indoor plumbing, it was reported that in 2007 that cellular phone service was available to approximately 95% of the population of both Tawi-Tawi and Basilan as well as 78% of those who live in Sulu Province. In addition to local communication, cell phones enable residents of the Sulu Archipelago to keep in touch with relatives who have migrated to Malaysia in search of work.

Exchange 25: What is your telephone number?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>What is your telephone number?</th>
<th>Unee in umboo sin taleepeenoo mo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>My phone number is 456-7263</td>
<td>Ubaat lee maa onoom pee tood wa onoom too enoom bol sin taleeponoo ku</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USAID had a hand in increasing cell phone usage through its Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) program. It worked with local governments to convince the leading cellular providers of the commercial viability of extending service into underserved parts of Mindanao by providing feasibility studies.

Exchange 26: May I use your phone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I use your phone?</th>
<th>Manjaaree usulun in taleepeeno mo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>Manjaaree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Transportation
Terrorists have previously targeted transportation hubs to maximize casualties. Travelers are advised to exercise caution when lingering in any place of public congregation. Foreigners are also advised against using buses due to the threat of kidnapping and possible harm.114

Exchange 27: Will the bus be here soon?
| Soldier: Will the bus be here soon? | magdaratung na baha in tarak padjak? |
| Local: Yes. | hoon |

While oil reserves are reputed to exist around the Sulu Archipelago, all gas is currently imported, making it expensive. In addition, gas stations have been listed as possible sites for terrorist attacks.

Exchange 28: Is there a gas station nearby?
| Soldier: Is there a gas station nearby? | awun pagbeehan sin gaas masook dee? |
| Local: Yes. | awun |

Auto repair outside of towns may be difficult to come by. This is one of the many reasons why renting a car is ill advised. Roads both in town and out are often crowded with unsafe drivers. Portions of rural areas may not be easily accessible from urban areas.

Exchange 29: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?
| Soldier: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby? | awun magdadayaw sin sasakataan masook dee? |
| Local: Yes. | awun |

When travelling in Sulu, those who are not provided a military escort are encouraged to hire their own private security, as do some foreign residents in Mindanao.

Exchange 30: Where can I rent a car?
| Soldier: Where can I rent a car? | haree in in pagpadjakan sin sasakataan? |
| Local: Downtown. | yadtoo hatyangee |

---

There is no rail service in the Sulu Archipelago.

**Exchange 31:** Is there a train station nearby?

| Soldier: | Is there a train station nearby? | awun trin masook dee? |
| Local: | No. | uwaay |

Other than ferries, the main intra-island form of transportation is air. Ferries are known to be rundown and are often overloaded. This, combined with the lack of safety equipment, has led to loss of life, as seen in a June 2008 ferry disaster in which 800 people died.115

**Exchange 32:** Which road leads to the airport?

| Soldier: | Which road leads to the airport? | haree in in dan todjoo pa landing? |
| Local: | The road heading east. | in dan todjoo pa sadlopan |

Limited taxi service is available in towns, but the vehicles are old and in questionable repair. It is not advisable to share taxis with unknown people.

**Exchange 33:** Where can I get a cab?

| Soldier: | Where can I get a cab? | hawnoo akoo makalag sin taksee? |
| Local: | Over there. | daayin deeto |

Negotiate the fare before starting off and make sure that the meter is used. While driving, be sure that all doors are locked and the windows are closed.

**Exchange 34:** Can you take me there?

| Soldier: | Can you take me there? | ka agaran moo akoo madtoo? |
| Local: | Yes, I can. | hoon, ka agaran ta kaw |

**Restaurants**

Jolo does not have any Filipino chain restaurants such as the popular Jollibee establishments. Not only is the threat of terrorism a deterrent to foreigners, most residents are too poor to afford the goods or meals they would offer.

**Exchange 35:** Put this all in one bill.

| Soldier: | Put this all in one bill. | manjaaree mo listaahun in katan beenee ku hambook reeseebo |
| Local: | Okay. | o kay |

Restaurants are more likely to be found, however, in larger towns such as Jolo. These restaurants often serve locally-made bread (*bawlu*) with coffee.

---

Exchange 36: I would like coffee or tea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: I would like coffee or tea.</th>
<th>mabaaya koo meenum sin kahawa atawa tee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Sure.</td>
<td>mat tan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A popular breakfast in Sulu is *satti*, which consists of barbecued beef bits served on skewers, along with steamed rice balls cooked in coconut leaves (*puso*). These are then topped with a curry-like sauce.\(^{116}\)

Exchange 37: Are you still serving breakfast?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Are you still serving breakfast?</th>
<th>maasee pa kamoo nag adjal sin eenuman?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another popular dish is *sabaw maymu*. This soup is made from ripe green bananas cooked with eggs and coconut cream that is served during the month of Ramadan.

Exchange 38: I'd like some hot soup.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: I'd like some hot soup.</th>
<th>mabaya akoo sin sabaw mapasu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Sure.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tausug cuisine is noted for being spicy, and *tiula itum* (black soup) is particularly spicy. It is a dark chicken or beef flavored broth prepared with ginger and turmeric and burned coconut meat. It is served on special occasions like weddings, but may also be available at restaurants.

Exchange 39: May I have a glass of water?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: May I have a glass of water?</th>
<th>manjaaree mangayoo hangka basoo toobig eenomoon?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes, right away.</td>
<td>hoon, manjaaree eesaab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main dishes on most restaurant menus may consist of beef, sheep, goat, fish, or snake. Wild boar is the only animal indigenous to the archipelago that is not served. Pork in general is not consumed in this area of the Philippines as Islam forbids its consumption.

Exchange 40: What type of meat is this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: What type of meat is this?</th>
<th>unoo in shin baaya eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Lamb.</td>
<td>beelee beelee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is said that no Filipino meal is complete without dessert, be it a piece of fresh fruit or a prepared sweet or rice cake. Mangosteens, jackfruit, mangos, guavas, and red rambutan are tropical fruits found in the southern Philippines.

**Exchange 41:** Do you have dessert?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have dessert?</th>
<th>awun kamoo bubunglaw atawa pagka un maleemoo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, we have <strong>apam.</strong></td>
<td>awun kamee <strong>apam</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Philippines it is customary for the host to pay the bill. The Dutch Treat arrangement of individual checks is unfamiliar to Tausug.

**Exchange 42:** Can I have my total bill, please?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can I have my total bill, please?</th>
<th>manjaaree ku eengatun bang peela in gastus ku?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, of course.</td>
<td>hoon, manjaaree <strong>eesaab</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Few restaurants have indoor plumbing for washing before or after a meal. If searching for a restroom, you may be directed to an outhouse instead.

**Exchange 43:** Where is your restroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where is your restroom?</th>
<th>haree eenen kasilyas neeyo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>That room to your left, over there.</td>
<td>yadtoo, ha baleek pa tu omoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Markets and Bazaars**

Tausug use the Philippine peso, which a resident of Jolo suggested is one of two daily reminders of the national government in Manila, the other being the presence of Philippine troops.117

**Exchange 44:** Do you accept US currency?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you accept US currency?</th>
<th>toomabok kaw sin sin meeleekan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No we only accept pesos.</td>
<td>dee, pagtabokun namoo hadja in peysos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One may encounter beggars, particularly people displaced by fighting. They may often include children in their begging tactics. It is advisable to not give money to beggars as that may only encourage more beggars to come to you.

---

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/philippines/guzman01.html
Exchange 45: Give me money

| Local:   | Give me money              | dihlee keeta sin |
| Soldier: | I don’t have any.          | maapa akoo, sa uwaay akoo sin |

Street vendors can also be found in more populated areas. Often, vendors switch from selling goods, such as housewares, to prepared food after nightfall.

Exchange 46: How much longer will you be here?

| Soldier: | How much longer will you be here? | beeya dee in pa in loghay mo dee? |
| Local:   | Three more hours.                 | tung ka jam pa                  |

Markets are once again doing a thriving business although they should still be entered with caution. In 2000, five people died and 40 were injured, when three grenades exploded in a local marketplace.\(^{118}\)

Exchange 47: Please, buy something from me.

| Local:   | Please, buy something from me.   | bang manjaaree, awun pabihum ku kaymoo |
| Soldier: | Sorry, I have no money left.      | maapa akoo, sa uwaay na sin nakapin kakoo |

Aside from offering food and other amenities, markets may also sell local handicrafts. The Tausug are known as fine basket-makers, weavers, and potters.

Exchange 48: Do you sell pis?

| Soldier: | Do you sell pis?  | magleeto kaw sin pees sin heenagan daayin dee? |
| Local:   | Yes.              | hoon                                           |

Most towns and more populated areas have a marketplace. The town of Jolo has numerous shopping centers.

Exchange 49: Is the bazaar nearby?

| Soldier: | Is the bazaar nearby? | awun taboo masook dee? |
| Local:   | Yes, over there on the right. | awun, yadtoo pa to oo moo |

Those who look to purchase an item should be aware that vendors may only have small change. Therefore it is important to carry smaller bills of the local currency.

Exchange 50: Can you give me change for this?

| Soldier: | Can you give me change for this? | awun heekaahug moo dee? |
| Local:   | No.                               | uwaay                           |

Because Jolo Island is not a main shipping port, stock in the shops may be limited.

**Exchange 51:** Do you have any more of these?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you have any more of these?</th>
<th>awun pa eenee kameeyo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>uwaay na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you cannot find what you are looking for, it is acceptable to ask if another vendor may have it. Increasingly, vendors use their cell phones to call other merchants to see if someone else has the item.

**Exchange 52:** May I examine this close up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>May I examine this close up?</th>
<th>manjaaree ku keeta oo eenee ha masook?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Sure.</td>
<td>kadtoo ee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once an item is located, vendors will usually let potential customers examine their wares. If you start negotiating for a bargain, the expectation is that both parties will eventually decide on a mutually-agreeable price. Do not start bargaining unless you really intend to buy the item.

**Exchange 53:** Can I buy pis with this much money?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Can I buy pis with this much money?</th>
<th>sarang na baha in sin eenee ha soopaya makaabee akoo sin pees?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>dee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

As part of the Philippines, Sulu has an educational system modeled after the U.S. system. It includes co-educational classrooms where students wear the national school uniform. Some schools sponsored by Catholics offer Muslim students instruction in Islam, not Catholicism. In addition, there are several *madrassah* (school) in Jolo that provide a traditional Islamic education. Female *madrassah* students cover their heads but few Tausug women don a *chadar* (an outer garment that covers the head and body).

Sulu rates at the bottom in terms of Philippine literacy rates. In 2000, only 35% of the population five years old and older had attended or completed elementary school while only 15.4% had graduated from high school.119 Only those who complete high school would be able to converse fluently in English, which is the medium of instruction in Philippine schools.

---

Medical Care
Medical care lags in Sulu. Hospitals have very few supplies, and doctors routinely perform surgery without any anesthetic.120

Exchange 54: Is there a hospital nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a hospital nearby?</th>
<th>awun hospetel masook dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, in the center of town.</td>
<td>awun, ha geetungan sin kawman eenee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three hospitals in Jolo. However, in 2000 there was only one nurse for every 35 patients.121 Beyond that, medical care is being provided by the U.S. military, particularly to those who have fled their homes in the interior because of violence.

Exchange 55: Is Dr. Omar in, sir?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is Dr. Omar in, sir?</th>
<th>bapa, yaaree hee doktol omar?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Chapter 5 Rural Life

Traditional Agriculture

People in the Sulu Province do not widely practice shifting cultivation (cainjin) or irrigated rice cultivation. In shifting cultivation, forest land is burned and crops are then planted in the ashes and rubble. Land is used for only a few growing seasons before it is abandoned. Irrigated paddies, which are common in Luzon, are not feasible on the southern islands given the drainage and rapid water run-off on land which is not flat. Instead of these two methods, crops in Sulu Province are often planted amid coconut palms or on open fields called palipat. Poor production methods are often blamed for poor harvests in the region. All but the poorest Tausug have draft animals, while many of those who engage in shifting cultivation elsewhere in Asia do not. Tausug farmers use animals to plow their fields where they grow rice, cassava, and other staples.

Exchange 56: Where do you work, sir?

| Soldier: Where do you work, sir? | hawno in pag heenangan moo, bapa? |
| Local: I am a farmer, sir. | magoma akoo |

Land Ownership

Traditionally, all land belonged to the Sultan while regional and local headmen (datu) had the authority to distribute usage rights. Those usage rights can be passed down through the generations. Rights granted by a title also existed before Western legal property rights were introduced under American colonial rule. Today the titular owner is the person who has legal title to the property. Nonetheless, land may be registered in the name of the datu while someone else enjoys customary rights to it, which he can pass on to his children.

Exchange 57: Do you own this land?

| Soldier: Do you own this land? | eekaw in tagdapo sin loopa eenee? |
| Local: Yes. | hoon |

Sharecropping exists but the amount of harvest the tenant must give the landlord is significantly lower than elsewhere in the Philippines—typically around 10% of the total. Landlords view their status in terms of the political influence it confers rather than the economic returns such an arrangement could generate.

---

123 There is still a Sultan of Sulu, but his role is largely ceremonial because the office lacks political power.
Traditional Communities
With the exception of coastal communities oriented toward fishing, Tausug prefer dispersed settlement patterns which enable farmers to be close to their fields. The smallest unit is the household cluster.

Exchange 58: Are these people part of your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Are these people part of your family?</th>
<th>tawtayanak mo seela?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next largest unit is the lungan (village, hamlet), which is comprised of the homes of related family members and can number 20 or more individual dwellings. The source of social cohesion comes from familial bonds shared by residents, rather than the physical proximity of their homes. A male resident, for example, might be a first cousin of his next-door neighbor through his father and also share a familial bond through his mother.

Exchange 59: Does your mayor live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Does your mayor live here?</th>
<th>nagbubutang daayin dee in mayul neeyo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still larger is the kauman (community). Here, residents share a common name known to other kauman and are under the authority of a single datu.

Exchange 60: Can you take me to your mayor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Can you take me to your mayor?</th>
<th>kaybanan mo akoo pa maayul neeyo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree of social cohesion within the kauman depends on factors such as the extent of intermarriage between different lungan, the authority of the datu upon whom the Sultan may have bestowed titles, and attendance at a common mosque. The datu’s home is the geographical, political, and social center of the kauman.

Exchange 61: Respected mayor, we need your help / advice / opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Respected mayor, we need your help / advice / opinion.</th>
<th>maayul, kabonan naamo in taban / hindoo / eepameekilan moo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An attack on one person is perceived as an attack on everyone. In such a situation, the entire lungan, usually comprised of a single clan, will mobilize to seek revenge.

The legal system does not deter lawlessness. There is only one judge for Sulu Province and a single prosecuting attorney. The judge is not a resident but, rather, spends one or two days a month there. Instead, the prospect of retaliation serves to keep the fragile peace in a situation where the government does not exercise effective control.

**Exchange 62:** Are you carrying any guns?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Are you carrying any guns?</th>
<th>Local: hoon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nagdara kaw sinapang?</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While any type of dispute can trigger violence, conflicts over land use are a major cause. Once set in motion, clan battles quickly escalate into a game of tit-for-tat. In the case of adjacent communities, some people will have relatives in both camps. They will then generally remain neutral and work to end the feud.

**Exchange 63:** Do you know this area very well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Do you know this area very well?</th>
<th>Local: hoon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ka ingatan mo tood in hola eenee?</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traditional Houses**

Building a traditional village house (bay sinug) requires community input. The house of the local imam is the most important. He chooses the best site for the builder. The optimal location is a flat, dry piece of land. The next most desirable site is on a piece of land gently sloping in a westward direction since Mecca lies to the West. Land which slopes in either a northerly or southerly direction is considered undesirable. In the case of the former, this owes to the belief that after death the soul of the deceased exits the home traveling northward. As for the latter, a home built facing in a southerly direction will be exposed to the full brunt of inclement weather.

**Exchange 64:** Do you have any brothers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Do you have any brothers?</th>
<th>Local: awun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>awun kaw taymang hood usug?</td>
<td>awun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building a home that will last is not simply a matter of selecting the right materials. It must also have a “line to the land.” This is identified through some irregularity in the soil.

---

such as a slight rise, a clump of grass, or an unusual rock configuration. For the Tausug, land is a dynamic factor and the line akin to the muscles of a human body. The imam is entrusted to determine the flow of energy within the line so it does not work to weaken the frame of the home.

**Exchange 65:** How many people live in this house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>How many people live in this house?</th>
<th>peela taw in nag hoola ha baay eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Ten.</td>
<td>hangpoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ensure good fortune from the spiritual world after the family moves into the home, members deposit small items of value in the ground where the first pole will be placed. After the flooring is finished, the Tausug hold what is known as the gantung ceremony. This entails tying a small earthenware pot to the center post under the flooring with a vine or cord. The other end of the cord is secured to something substantial and possessing natural strength, such as a nearby tree or a large stone providing a connection to something secure. Windows may only consist of slits, to keep the young women of the family from full view of passersby.

**Exchange 66:** Does your family live here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Does your family live here?</th>
<th>nabobotang in tawtayanak moo dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once construction is completed, the family performs a second gantung ceremony which involves filling up one bottle with unhusked rice and another with fresh water. After the bottles have been sealed, they are hung from the top of the center post supporting the roof. The unhusked rice is associated with prosperity and the water intended to ensure the home will be cool and confer good fortune on its occupants.  

**Exchange 67:** Is there lodging nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there lodging nearby?</th>
<th>awun hotel masook daayin dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>awun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Rural Education


**Exchange 68:** Is there a school nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a school nearby?</th>
<th>awun iskool masook dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>awun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impoverished heads of household often see investing in a USD 600 assault weapon as more important to family survival than purchasing the supplies necessary for educating their children. The drop-out rate is estimated to be around 65\%.\footnote{Asia American Initiative. “Development for Peace in Sulu.” No date. http://www.asiaamericainit.com/programs/DPIS/default.htm}

**Exchange 69:** Do your children go to school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do your children go to school?</th>
<th>nag iskool in manga anak moo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children of farmers are also often needed to tend to the farm. In addition to labor foregone, another disincentive to continued schooling is that it does not open the door to a better life given the dearth of off-farm employment opportunities.

**Exchange 70:** Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are you the only person in your family who has a job?</th>
<th>ha kamo magtawtayanak, eekaw day in awun heenang?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>bokoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Care in Rural Areas

Exchange 71: Do you know what is wrong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Do you know what is wrong?</th>
<th>kaynata moo bang onoo sakit moo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>dee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary cause of death is gun shot wounds. However, diarrhea, pneumonia, measles, and malaria cause a great number of fatalities in children. With only one provincial hospital, six district hospitals, and a small number of other clinics, the total bed count is 445.

Exchange 72: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is there a medical clinic nearby?</th>
<th>awun keeleenik masook dee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, over there.</td>
<td>awun, deet too</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sulu Province is a leader in family planning in the Philippines. Family planning receives no official promotion in the Catholic part of the country. Contraceptive use in Mindanao ranked 25% below the national average due to the fact Muslim Filipinas felt bound by the religious restrictions disallowing artificial forms of contraception. This was rectified by a group of Muslim leaders who organized a conference to address the issue of responsible parenthood. After the meeting, a fatwa proclaiming that family planning is permissible under the Quran was issued.

Exchange 73: My arm is broken, can you help me?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>My arm is broken, can you help me?</th>
<th>naabalee in buktun ku, katabangan mo akoo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes, I can help you.</td>
<td>hoon, katabangan ta kaw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Different Way of Life

The Samal, the other ethnic group in Sulu Province, live in communities of 100 to 500 people primarily on Tawi-Tawi Island. Seafaring people whose livelihood is based on fishing, the Samal build their stilt-supported houses atop mud flats which are submerged at high tide. These one-story dwellings consist of several small rectangular rooms and an attached kitchen. They are connected by wooden or split bamboo catwalks. In the social hierarchy of Filipino Muslim minorities, the Samal rank near the bottom as “loyal commoners.”

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Traditionally, the Samal people were said to be owned by the Sultan, who could transfer authority over them to others such as datu and aristocrats. This was a reciprocal relationship; the owner was responsible for protecting those he owned. Samal still seek to establish protector-client relations with a land-based Tausug clan, which can provide protection against pirates and pillagers.137

Landmines
In 1997, the Philippines signed the Mine Ban Treaty but have yet to pass any legislation regarding the treaty.138 Visitors report the one paved road on Jolo Island is swept for mines by the AFP before official traffic passes through.139 Landmines continue to be found along highways, even after government troops cracked down on a bomb-making camp run by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants.140

Exchange 74: Is this area mined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this area mined?</th>
<th>awun meena haw logal eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>awun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Risk of encountering land mines continues in areas of conflict, including Sulu Province. In 2004, a Philippine soldier was killed by a landmine allegedly laid by the ASG. In 2000, the ASG was reported to have planted some 3,000 homemade mines around its training camps in Talipao.141 As a result of this and other ongoing problems, security is tight.

Exchange 75: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Where is the nearest checkpoint?</th>
<th>haw noo in chekpoyint masook daayin deec?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>It’s two kilometers.</td>
<td>yadtoo, puwaas dowa keelomitroo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checkpoints
Although Sulu Province has created its own citizen IDs, many residents may not have much in the way of documents to identify themselves. This new ID system, implemented in the beginning of 2008, is meant to deter criminals and terrorists from settling in Sulu Province.142

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**Exchange 76:** Is this all the ID you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this all the ID you have?</th>
<th>amura eenee aadee moo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checkpoints are set up throughout Sulu Province. Vehicles and their occupants are often searched.

**Exchange 77:** Please get out of the car.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Please get out of the car.</th>
<th>manjaaree kaw gumuwa daayin ha sasakataan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>o kay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The drivers are also requested to present the car registration and other pertinent documents.

**Exchange 78:** Show us the car registration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Show us the car registration.</th>
<th>pakeeta kamoo in katas sin sasakataan eenee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>o kay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6 Family Life

The Tausug Family
The Tausug language lacks a word for nuclear family. Yet most Tausug households consist of parents and their unmarried children.

Exchange 79: Are you married?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Are you married?</th>
<th>awun kaw asaawa?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: No.</td>
<td>uwaay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extended families are generally linked by two married sisters who have their parents in residence. The reason for this is that the house is considered the woman’s domain and two sisters will get along better than unrelated women brought together under the same roof by marriage.

Exchange 80: Is this your wife?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier: Is this your wife?</th>
<th>asaawa moo eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local: Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tausug are unlikely to be aware of their ancestry beyond three generations. The only case where someone would be able to identify a forebears beyond the great-grandparents is if it plays into inheritance, which would largely apply to the social elite. In short, living kin are more important than dead ancestors.143

Infant and Child Care
To enhance a newborn’s chances of survival and future good health, infants are secluded after birth and protected by amulets (*hampan*).144 The Tausug believe that every child is born with a spirit-twin who must be appeased to keep bad luck at bay. This is accomplished with a miniature replica (*bay bay*) of their home which is also hung from the rafters like a bird house. A small amount of rice and an egg is placed inside it every Friday at sundown. Feeding the spirit is seen as a means to keep it happy. A small dish with a few sticks of incense is also placed inside the miniature.145

Since extended families under one roof are rare, parents must be the primary care providers for their own children.

Exchange 81: Is this your entire family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Is this your entire family?</th>
<th>yaree na in katan tawtayanak moo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fathers, in contrast to mothers, are the nurturing parental figure for Tausug children. At public gatherings, small children often choose to sit with their fathers. Displays of paternal affection are common and reciprocated. This is rarer between mothers and children.146

Exchange 82: Are these your children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier:</th>
<th>Are these your children?</th>
<th>manga anak moo eenee?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>hoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Divorce

While the Philippine legal system generally does not grant divorce, an exception was made for Muslims since their religion permits marital dissolution. The 1977 Presidential Decree, formally known as the Code of Muslim Personal Laws in the Philippines, provides for Muslim divorce even when only the husband is Muslim but the marriage was solemnized in accordance with Islamic law.147 In theory, the code’s regulations are only binding when it is the wife who wants to end the marriage. Muslim men have the option of divorcing their wives by simply declaring talak, i.e., verbally repudiating the marriage three times in front of the headman (datu). Yet this type of dissolution is regarded as shameful (makasipug) and therefore not commonly used.

The code requires one to go through pagbugit, literally “to discard something unwanted.” A reason for the divorce must be specified by the husband or wife for this to take place. Regardless of the affection between the couple, marriages typically break down over non-fulfillment of spousal obligations: failure to earn a sufficient living, or bear children, for example. A final effort at reconciliation is usually attempted. The mediator, normally the datu or his wife, may ask the husband to swear on the Quran that he will stop gambling, a common source of marital discord.

If the issue is not open to such resolution, then the datu will issue a divorce decree (in Tausug but written with Arabic script). This piece of paper will protect the woman from charges of bigamy by her former husband if she wishes to remarry.148 Women tend to

view the option of divorce as a source of empowerment, enabling them to end miserable unions. Custody of children may be split or retained by either parent. Property accumulated as a couple is generally divided equally.

**Naming Conventions**

Tausug children are not named until they are between one and two years old. Until that time, they are referred to exclusively by their birth order in the family. The name is bestowed on them after a ceremonial cutting of the hair in a small celebration. In contrast to other regions of the Philippines where English names are common, Tausug parents prefer to select Arabic names for their children, such as “Ameer” for a boy. Except to address members of one’s nuclear family, kinship terms are not used. People are addressed by their first names.

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