

# History Project Fellowship Report

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## Project Description

In 1750 the Spanish Governor of the Philippines declared war against the “King” of Mindanao and the *moro* (Muslim) maritime communities of the Sulu Zone.<sup>1</sup> The colonial government considered war the best strategy to crush the terrifying *moro* slave-raiding attacks that had suddenly become more frequent and widespread throughout the archipelago.

My dissertation explores the Philippines’ war against the *moros* from 1750 to 1780. In order to expose and analyze the unique dynamics of Spanish colonial rule the Asia Pacific world, I examine how and why the war gained support from the complex colonial society that existed in Manila and its hinterland. My extensive pre-dissertation research in archives in Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines revealed members of the clergy, the multiethnic merchant class, Indigenous Filipinos, as well as Manila’s large Chinese population all contributed to the colonial war-effort. For example, in 1750 hundreds of Manileños (Manila residents) donated rifles, swords, and daggers to equip the expeditions against the *moros*. Indigenous villages constructed and donated boats for naval warfare, and the Chinese *gremio* (Guild) of Manila raised a militia to march into battle against this enemy.<sup>2</sup>

I hypothesized the Moro War became the foundation of the colonial bargain between the colonial government and the many Asian vassals of the King of Spain.<sup>3</sup> This conflict unified colonial society behind a distant King against an enemy other. By exposing the texture and

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<sup>1</sup> The “Sulu Zone” extended west across the Celebes Sea from Mindanao to present-day Borneo and Malaysia, and south to the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi. James Warren defined this space as a distinct zone in *The Sulu zone, 1768-1898: the Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore : Singapore University Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> “Expediente Sobre Combate Contra Moros Malanaos” (Report about battles against the Maranao moros) 1751, Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Filipinas, 155 N.4; “Real Orden Remitiendo Carta de Nicolás de Echauz Sobre Comercio de Cautivos” (Royal Order accompanying the letter of Nicolás de Echauz regarding the trade in captives), 1760, AGI FILIPINAS, 192, N.108.; “Spanish Manila” (13820), Philippines National Archives (PNA). The Chinese contribution to the Moro Wars is discussed in Rainer F. Buschmann, Edward R. Slack, and James B. Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberian World, 1521–1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Yanna Yannakakis defined the “colonial bargain” as “a degree of native cultural and political autonomy in exchange for grudging consent”. Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being in-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

practice of loyalty to Spain in the Philippines for the first time, my dissertation complicates the crude narrative that Spanish colonial rule in Southeast Asia, and European imperial expansion in the Pacific world more generally, resulted from the violent coercion of imperial subjects.<sup>4</sup>

### **Project Methodology**

This is an empirically grounded research project primarily based on the analysis of rare manuscript materials that form the archive of the Spanish empire. My sources include correspondence between the Spanish colonial government of the Philippines and the King and Council of the Indies, as well as reports and petitions that clergyman and residents of Manila and its hinterland presented to the imperial bureaucracy.

My approach to reading this colonial archive combines two distinct methodologies.

Influenced by new cultural histories of loyalty to Spain in the Americas, such as López Lázaro's discussion of "Hispanic patriotism" in colonial Mexico, I evaluate discourses of loyalty to the Crown that were constructed in Manila around the Moro War.<sup>5</sup> Yet I diverge from this body of work by also engaging with the economics of loyalty in Manila. I mine manuscripts for economic information to reconstruct the financing of the Moro War. This approach is strongly influenced by economic historian Carlos Marichal's critical study of the "fiscal pact" negotiated between the Crown and elites in late eighteenth-century Mexico.<sup>6</sup> My extended chronology enables me to identify changes over time in the entangled ideological and economic elements of the Moro War.

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<sup>4</sup> Since the late 1970s, the historiography of the colonial Philippines has been dominated by nationalist studies committed to exposing Filipinos' struggles against the Spanish Empire. Although this literature enhances our understanding of opposition to imperial expansion in southeast Asia, however it obscures the existence and significance of loyalty to Spain that was forged in these imperial borderlands from below. See William Henry Scott, *Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1974); William Henry Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History*, (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985); Reynaldo Celemeña Iletto, *Payson and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Manila: Ateneo University Press, 1979); Onofre D Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation, Vo.1* (Diliman: University of the Philippines Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Scott Eastman, *Preaching Spanish Nationalism across the Spanish Atlantic, 1759-1823* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012); Fabio López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramírez: The True Adventures of a Spanish American with 17th-Century Pirates* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2011). Tamar Herzog, "Naturales y extranjeros: sobre la construcción de categorías en el mundo hispánico." In Óscar Recio Morales and Thomas Glesener eds. *Los extranjeros y la construcción de la nación en España y la América española, 1700-1825*. Cuadernos de Historia Moderna 10 (2011): 21-31.

<sup>6</sup> Carlos Marichal, *Bankruptcy of Empire: Mexican Silver and the Wars between Spain, Britain and France, 1760-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

## Research Report

With the support of a grant from the History Project and the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET) I travelled to Spain to carry out extensive original research in four archives, including the Archive of the Indies in Seville, and the Franciscan Iberio-Oriental Archive, the Archive of the Spanish Naval Museum, and the National Library of Spain (See **Table 1: Research Schedule** below).

**Table 1: Research Schedule**

City	Archive	Dates
Seville	Archive of the Indies	18 August to 23 October
Madrid	Franciscan Oriental Archive	25 October to 7 November
Madrid	National Library Spain	25 October to 7 November
Madrid	Archive of the Spanish Naval Museum	25 October to 7 November

I am pleased to report that I located a rich array of unpublished sources that I am in the process of analysing. Sifting through the partially indexed Philippines *Legajos* (boxes) at the Archive of the Indies (AGI), I found many sources that provide new and important insight into the political economy of the Moro Wars. For example, I discovered a very rare, long list of individuals and corporate groups who made ‘patriotic donations’ to the Moro War effort in 1754, similar to one I previously located in the Philippines National Archives. This list included donors’ names, ages, ethnicity, and occupations, along with the amount of money or weapons each offered to the support the Holy War. “Cachique the Armenian” and the “Mayor of the Chinese” were among those who made sizeable contributions to the causes, supporting my hypothesis that these were an effective strategy thorough which outsiders could become insiders, or more integrated into colonial society.

At the AGI another category of documents I looked at were *Relaciones de Meritos y Servicios* (Relation of Merits and Services) in which individuals in the Philippines reported their services to the Spanish Crown in expectation they would receive a reward such as a pension, or salaried position in the colonial bureaucracy. One of the most interesting examples was written by Thomé Gaspar de Leon, a *Parava* man born on the Coromandel Coast in India who oversaw the construction of ships in the Royal boat yards to be used to hunt and fight against the colony’s Muslim enemies. Like many of his contemporaries, Don Leon considered his contribution to the Holy War as grounds for being made a *vecinos* of Manila and granted other favours from the monarch he risked his life to serve.

In the early 1780s the Manileños Don Manuel Aviles and Doña Maria Ysabel Gomez de Careaga wrote a letter to their King documenting their family’s long history of contributions to the still-raging Moro Wars, which included the very large donation of 5000 pesos for the construction of a warship. In return for this they requested young men in their family be promoted to Lieutenant coronels, a military position that would bring honour and a generous salary.

The political economy of war then shows this process of negotiation at the heart of colonial rule shaped by unique geopolitics of SE Asia.

Shifting from Manila, I also collected evidence that shed light on how the Moro Wars were organised and financed in the provinces. Proposals for arming armadas against the *moros* often came from indigenous Filipino chiefs themselves, with the support of Catholic missionaries. Some of these proposals are found in the AGI. Spain's National Library also holds rare, published accounts of the *moros* wars written by the Catholic missionaries who actively participated in the conflict, often as soldiers, deepening our understanding of the alliances forged between Indigenous Filipinos, Catholic priests and the Spanish colonial government against regional enemies. The benefits of such alliance to indigenous Filipinos, particularly the elite *principalia* class, included a share of the spoils of war; weapons, ships, and slaves seized in battle; in addition to some level of protection from the slave raids that ravaged their own villages.

Such textured examples of the ways in which men and women from diverse parts of Spain's Asian Empire cooperated with state to wage war on a common enemy are the building blocks of my dissertation, which is on track to be completed by Spring 2017. I am currently writing the first two chapters based on research I completed in Spain. I look forward to presenting my work at the Yale *InterAsia Connections* conference in February 2016, and at the *Global City: Past and Present* workshop hosted by the Institute of Historical Research in London in May 2016.