CONFLICT ALERT

Conflict's Long Game

A DECADE OF VIOLENCE IN THE BANGSAMORO

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Peace is within our power

About Conflict Alert

Conflict Alert is a subnational conflict monitoring system that tracks the incidence, causes, and human costs of violent conflict in the Philippines. It aims to shape policymaking, development strategies, and peacebuilding approaches by providing relevant, robust, and reliable conflict data.

Conflict Alert was developed and is run by the Philippines Programme of International Alert, an independent peacebuilding organization.

www.conflictalert.info

About International Alert

International Alert helps find peaceful solutions to conflict. We are one of the world's leading peacebuilding organizations with nearly 30 years of experience laying the foundations for peace.

We work with local people around the world to help them build peace, and we advise governments, organizations, and companies on how to support peace.

We focus on issues that influence peace, including governance, economics, gender relations, social development, climate change, and the role of business and international organizations in high-risk places.

www.international-alert.org

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Francisco J. Lara, Jr. and
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Acknowledgments

The Conflict Alert annual reports have always been preceded by an intensive process of 'cracking the code' since the first annual report was released by International Alert Philippines in 2014. We sought to uncover the crucial 'why' question behind the numbers and trends revealed by the database to bring forth new, robust, and unassailable knowledge and understanding of the conflict, peace, and development dynamics in the Bangsamoro. Our aim was to provide data and analyses to enable policymakers and practitioners to change rules and systems where necessary to achieve lasting peace.

We have achieved our objective.

Being an autonomous and independent witness to the ebb and flow of violence in the Bangsamoro over the past 10 years has been an enormous privilege and responsibility. Gathering and organizing massive amounts of data on violence from multiple sources utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods combined with tight quality control systems has been crucial to our success.

The Conflict Alert database now includes 10-year panel data on violent conflict in the Bangsamoro, spanning 2011–2020, allowing database users to generate quantitative and qualitative records of violence on their own. It has enabled statistical tests, correlations, and time-series analyses, and the conduct of case studies and focus group discussions on conflict causes and trends. These processes have also exposed conflict's multicausality, revealed the presence of conflict strings, and unveiled other key drivers of violence in the region.

This milestone's output is the publication of Conflict's Long Game: A Decade of Monitoring Violence in the Bangsamoro, which features a compendium of thematic chapters of the past decade beginning in 2011, and raises major questions about the persistence of violent conflict despite the many political settlements achieved to 'end' wars in Mindanao. We return to the central question that peacebuilders have pondered for decades: Why does violent conflict persist?

Putting this publication together has proved to us that nothing is impossible, even within a four-month timeline, when working with partners, colleagues, and experts whose dedication to producing excellent work is unparalleled.

We are grateful to **Toby Monsod, James Putzel, Judy Gulane**, and **Eddie Quitoriano** for lending their respective expertise not only in producing outstanding chapters in this compendium but to their contribution in sharpening our analysis. The scholarship of chapter authors, **Ever Abasolo, Phoebe Dominique Adorable, Deanne Louise Capiral, Kloe Carvajal-Yap, Kenmore Espinoza, Saba Hussain, Maureen Anthea Lacuesta, Jilliane Joy Oria, Rey Palabon, Nicole Angelie Policarpio, Ruel Punongbayan, Daniela Luisa Tan,** and **Donnie Paul-Tan** has been exemplary.

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We would be remiss if we did not pay tribute to former partners and champions over the last decade, **Milabel Enriquez-Ho** and **Grace Rebollos**, both former WMSU presidents who championed the project in their university despite the tragedy and destruction that befell their school and Zamboanga City only a few months after the project began; **Chona Sarmiento**, **former Vice President of Research, Extension Services and External Linkages** and colleagues **Reynante Autida** and **Ere Lee Salang** for championing the relevance of Conflict Alert to the scholarship on Mindanao conflict and development. Likewise, to **Fr. Charlie Inzon**, **OMI, former President of NDU-Cotabato City**; **Sukarno Tanggol**, **Chancellor of Mindanao State University–Iligan Institute of Technology**, and **former MSU President Macapado Muslim** for their unwavering support.

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We dedicate this report to the countless community leaders, peacebuilders and local government officials in the areas covered by this report. We know the difficulties of confronting conflict and violence, particularly between families, neighbors, and clans, and making sure that residents can go about their everyday lives in peace.

Francisco J. Lara, Jr.,
Senior Peace and Conflict Adviser

Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa,
Country Director

Manila, Philippines 30 June 2022

Message

Nic Hailey CMG
Executive Director, International Alert

The world is in the grip of a conflict crisis. State-based armed conflicts have almost doubled in the last 10 years. Global conflict deaths have also doubled over the same period. For the first time on record, the number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, and persecution has passed 100 million, or one person in 80. Conflict has become the biggest single obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

This grim context demands new responses that dig deeply into root causes and offer tools for solutions. Conflict in any society is inevitable, but violence is not. Only by understanding the reasons for violence—the triggers of conflict—can policy makers, communities, and those who work in solidarity with them find the right responses.

This requires good data, backed by deep analysis and understanding of each context, including at the most local levels. Whereas some conflicts build up over years, others can suddenly erupt. Thus, conflict data and analyses must be quick, responsive, and reliable if they are to enable an equally speedy and well-judged response that can stop violence from spreading further, or offer immediate help to the victims of conflict, who might otherwise go unnoticed or ignored.

This is far from easy. Areas in conflict are, by definition, places where data and information are less accessible, and lack clarity. And information is often itself a weapon of war. The rise of digital technologies adds both volume and complexity to conflict data. Analyzing patterns of hate speech, for example, can be a tool for early action to prevent violence, but digital spaces can amplify and harden the narratives of conflict participants in ways that make resolution harder.

Conflict Alert has been gathering and disseminating data on the incidence, causes, and human costs of violent conflict in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) for over 10 years. It has done so through a network deeply rooted in local understanding and knowledge, and with a robust and consistent approach to validation and assessment—thus, the robustness of the data produced. Its results have informed research, analysis, policy dialogue, and decision-making—and will continue to do so.

No one could claim that data alone can resolve conflict and build peace. But without the tools and insight that data provides, peacebuilding approaches are much less likely to succeed. Moreover, the robust use of data over time provides a rich set of insights into causes and effects that make possible not just the short-term responses to violence, but the long-term efforts necessary to deal with its root causes.

Why does violence persist in Mindanao and so many other places, despite the many political settlements designed to "end" wars? This book provides deep insight into the answers to that question, into the approaches necessary for long-term conflict resolution, and into the lessons that can be drawn for peacebuilding approaches in other contexts.

Foreword

Dr. Ndiamé Diop
World Bank Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand

The World Bank congratulates International Alert Philippines for the launch of the Conflict Alert 2021 "*Conflict's Long Game*". Based on 10 years of data collection and analysis, this publication is a significant milestone, which offers a rich compendium of conflict trends and incidents in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The report highlights critical events and presents analysis on important themes such as land, gender, shadow economies, and governance.

We applaud International Alert's relentless efforts in sustaining and improving Conflict Alert over the years. The Conflict Alert processes and systems have evolved, strengthening the analysis and providing greater accessibility and applicability for users and stakeholders. It has adapted to the changing tides and evolving needs through innovations in its strategies and tools. One good example is Conflict Alert's use of local community stakeholders and their knowledge to strengthen verification as well as deepen insights and analysis. International Alert has also invested considerable resources in enhanced utilization of data and analysis through the use of communication technologies such as the Conflict Alert Conflict Resource Center. This facilitates greater data access and allows interested users in applying the data for their particular analysis, interests, and needs.

The Conflict Alert 2021 report reveals that horizontal level conflicts in BARMM over land and resource, political, identity, terrorism, and violent extremism have remained pervasive between 2011–2021. While political dialogues and settlements can be an effective way of stabilizing communities affected by violence thereby enabling development activities to roll out, these efforts can be hampered by continued conflict incidents. These trends highlight the importance of strengthening the regional governance structures, creating more inclusive and participatory processes, efficient service delivery, and continuing peacebuilding efforts at the local level.

The World Bank has worked closely with International Alert throughout the last 10 years and continue to be impressed by their methodology, dedication to rigor, insightful analysis, and support for the BARMM. Conflict Alert has assisted and enabled many stakeholders involved in the peacebuilding efforts in the BARMM to gain a better and more nuanced understanding of conflict causes and trends in the region, which in turn has informed research and policy and development programming. We look forward to seeing what International Alert will do next and how the Conflict Alert data and analysis will spur additional work in the BARMM.

The World Bank remains steadfast in its support for the Bangsamoro region. World Bank support going forward will include programs and projects in agriculture and livelihoods, land tenure, inclusion and empowerment, especially for indigenous peoples and women, access to finance, education and health, analytics, and governance reforms.

Finally, the World Bank conveys its sincere appreciation and thanks to International Alert Philippines for being a reliable partner in generating critical knowledge and analytical products related to the peace and security agenda in Mindanao for more than 10 years.

Foreword

Steven J. Robinson AO
Australian Ambassador to the Philippines

Australia has been a long-time supporter of peace and stability in Muslim Mindanao, and International Alert's annual Conflict Alert report is always an excellent reminder of why we do this. What begins as a single alarm from a member of a community somewhere in rural Lanao del Sur joins a trickle of similar alarms, then a flood. International Alert sorts and sifts through all this data until it can draw some conclusions and shed light on some of the most pressing questions in the country: *Just what is happening? Why? Where?*

This year's report marks a decade of the Conflict Alert monitoring system. This data has provided local governments, policy makers, aid partners, emergency response providers, and international donors with the information they need to answer their most pressing question: *What can we do to help?* International Alert's analysis of the causes and trends in violence in the Bangsamoro has been instrumental in illustrating how diverse the conflict is. Land, gender, organized crime, and clan rivalries bump up against militant groups, the security forces, and the struggle for an independent Bangsamoro.

The lessons we can learn from this report should shape all our work in the future. One, the nature of the conflict—or conflicts—in the Bangsamoro is constantly shifting. Any responses need to be dynamic and flexible, able to respond quickly to new needs. Two, this is a period of great transition and vulnerability—but it could also be an opportunity to develop more and inclusive approaches to justice to help disrupt the cycles of violence. Three, any durable solutions will need to involve the indigenous peoples of the region, along with women and girls.

After three and a half years in the Philippines, I've seen great change in the Bangsamoro—rebuilding has begun in Marawi, Basilan is home to more Abu Sayyaf Group surrenderees than members, and Cotabato City is getting a mall that would not look out of place in Manila. The one thing that has been very clear all along, however, is that nothing can be achieved by anyone working in a silo. The greatest successes in the march toward peace have come when all people have worked together—local, provincial, and national governments; educators; doctors; police; soldiers; shopkeepers; farmers; bus drivers and pedicab drivers—to make their communities safer places to live.

So it is my pleasure, one last time before I return to Australia, to congratulate International Alert on 10 years of this work, and 10 years of contributing to our understanding of peace and stability in the Bangsamoro. I know you will be here another 10 years from now as well, hopefully working in a region that looks even brighter than it does today.

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Abbreviations

A&D	Alienable and disposable
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ATM	Automated teller machine
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BBL	Bangsamoro Basic Law
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority
CA	Commonwealth Act
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CADT	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title
CALT	Certificate of Ancestral Land Title
CEMS	Critical Events Monitoring System
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DI	Dawla Islamiya
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EO	Executive Order
EV	Extremist violence
FAB	Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro
FHH	Female-headed households
HDI	Human Development Index
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
IBO	Identities-Borders-Orders
IBPL	Insular Bureau of Public Lands
IFMA	Integrated Forestry Management Agreements
INP	Integrated National Police
IP	Indigenous people
IPDEV	Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act
IPS	Indigenous Political Structure
IRA	Internal Revenue Allotment
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex
LGU	Local government unit
LRA	Land Registration Authority
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MPDC	Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator
MRCW	Marawi Reconstruction Conflict Watch
MSI	Manabilang Services, Inc.
MSVG	Multi-Stakeholder Validation Group
NAMRIA	National Mapping and Resource Information Authority
NARRA	National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NCR	National Capital Region
NGO	Nongovernment organization
NMIP	Non-Moro indigenous peoples
NTA	National Tax Allotment
OFW	Overseas Filipino worker
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OLS	Ordinary least squares
PAG	Private armed group
PC	Philippine Constabulary
PD	Presidential Decree
PDIP	Provincial Development Investment Program
PDPFP	Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan
PNP	Philippine National Police
PPP	Purchasing power parity
RA	Republic Act
RBOI	Regional Board of Investments
SAF	Special Action Force
SGLG	Seal of Good Local Governance
SPMS	Shariff Aguak, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Mamasapano, and Shariff Saydona
TFBM	Task Force Bangon Marawi
TJG	Timuay Justice and Governance
TLADC	Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domain claim
UBJP	United Bangsamoro Justice Party
US	United States
VII	Violence Intensity Index
WARN	Women Action Response Network
WDC	Wao Development Corporation
ZIP	Zero-inflated Poisson

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Five years after the siege in 2017, displaced residents of Marawi City's most affected area have yet to return home and resume their lives.
Najib Zacaria

CHAPTER 1

Editors' Introduction

Editors' Introduction

Francisco J. Lara, Jr. and Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa

There are metaphors that apply perfectly to conflict's long game in Mindanao. The "cycle of violence" and the "conflict trap" emphasize the unending nature of violent conflict in the region. There are "conflict strings" too, or violence that comes in pairs, in threes, in fours, and more.[1] They are wars at the micro level, borne out of hostile prejudice and stretched far through revenge killings. They all conjure the imagery of violent actors with a myriad of interests and shifting motives, acting with impunity and predation, and yielding constant violence.

The past decade saw no end to the interplay between conflict cycles, traps, and strings. Violent conflict started to rise in 2011, inundating the region in 2016–2017, before slowly receding from 2018, but not at the same level seven years earlier. It is a haunting tale of the relentless yet forgotten war in Muslim Mindanao.

Some would view these trends differently. The ebb and flow of violence is a good thing, they say. It follows a similar pattern of behavior exhibited by inequality that initially rises before it falls.[2] It is certainly an apt way to explain the decade-long trend line in conflict incidents, as internal and external forces often cause a spike in violence at the onset of a political transition, before gradually declining.

It is not the first time we have heard people say that an end to violence is forthcoming. They believe that the best is yet to come. It is, in fact, the most logical expectation from the Bangsamoro normalization process—that it will take more time, and more people will die before violence sinks to its depths.

Yet it is not quite easy as that.

The surge in violence after the political settlements between Moro rebels and the government in 1996 and in 2014 suggests that something bigger and more important has been left out of the equation i.e., the polarization of identities, the erosion of tradition, the appeal of extremism, and the easier access to the instruments and bounties of war.[3]

Others consider the salience of economic development in reversing the path to violence, and that the nature of violence in the Bangsamoro is one of ancestral hatreds magnified by ethnic and religious inequalities. These amplify the history of poverty that traps people in perpetual conflict.[4]

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1 Conflict Alert introduced the concept of conflict strings in 2014. See de la Rosa (2014).

2 Simon Kuznet's curve (1955) has been used to predict the impact of transitions on inequality, positing that market forces will increase income inequality first before it gradually subsides.

3 The GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement was signed in 1996 while the GPH-MILF Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed in 2014.

4 Collier (2003) describes the underlying factors of civil war and the question of whether there is anything that can be done if violence is simply determined by ancestral ethnic and religious hatreds.

This compendium trains the spotlight on these issues and more, narrating the different perspectives from which to study, parse, and analyze the 10-year panel data of Conflict Alert on violent conflict in the Bangsamoro region.[5] It is from these different angles that the authors tackled the main question about the persistence of violent conflict despite the many political settlements to "end" wars in Mindanao. Equipped with a granular database on violent conflict in the Bangsamoro, we return to the central question that development workers and peace builders have consistently asked: *why does violent conflict persist?*

Multicausal and horizontal violence

Violence can upend all expectations when least expected. As the main report in this collection has shown, political transitions, the nature of conflict actors, and the confluence of conflict causes can produce unexpected spikes in violence.

Gulane (Chapter 2) argues that both the newly emerging and resilient threats to peace in the Bangsamoro is a result of an escalation in violence from multiple causes. One example is the intractability of land-related conflicts embedded in violent clan rivalries. They get worse when guns are used or when ethnic identities are summoned. These multicausal incidents increased in proportion to the total number of incidents, from 19% of incidents in 2011 to 35% of the total number of incidents in 2020.

Gulane (Box 1) also examined land-related conflicts and deaths, seeing relatively low incidents of violence up to 2015. Violence began to move upward by 2016–2017, raising the grim prospect of more land-related deaths. Disturbing trends abound: the marked increase in the number of armed clashes over land, particularly in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur; the wider use of illegal weapons among individuals, families, and clans to assert their resource claims; and the increasing number of family and clan feuds triggered by land conflicts that spill over into political violence.

Among the above, the gravest has been the newfound assertiveness of former rebels and insurgents to contest or lay claim over vast tracts of land where the non-Moro tribes live. Their actions have severely affected the security situation and marginalized already disadvantaged groups such as the Teduray–Lambangian, the Manobo, and other indigenous groups.

The signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law have plugged rebellion-related violence and enabled the new regional authority to access more resources and power. However, it stopped short of arresting communal conflicts. It is doubtful if horizontal conflict from clan feuding will end, including the violence between and among the previous rebel fronts, indigenous peoples, criminal gangs, and other armed groups.

Horizontal and vertical violence are concepts that emerged from the scholarship on inequalities, civil wars, and subnational conflict (Stewart 2008: 18–22; UNDP 2005: 151–163; Keen 2000: 23–26; Kalyvas 2006: 131, 332, 351–352; and Lara and Champain 2016: 39–44).[6] They are central to Conflict Alert's analysis of violence, which showed that horizontal conflicts over land dominated the conflict landscape as early as 2011. These resource conflicts were

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[5] Conflict Alert now has 10 years of panel data from its monitoring of violent conflict in the Bangsamoro. The dataset covers 2011–2020, allowing not only longitudinal analysis of disaggregated data but also a more complex quantitative examination of correlations between various variables and violent conflict.

[6] Horizontal conflict is also called community-level, bottom-up, or communal conflict while vertical violence is often referred to as rebellion-related, top-down conflict. The former refers to conflicts arising from horizontal inequalities and violence between families, clans, ethnic groups, etc., while the latter often refers to armed challenges to the State's sovereignty.

Members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) shout "Allahu Akbar" inside Camp Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao to mark the conclusion of the successful Bangsamoro Leaders Assembly. **Erwin Mascariñas**

buttressed by violent factional rivalries between various rebel groups and extremist violence.

Abasolo (Chapter 5) confirmed the same trends in his own study of violence intensities. He describes how rebellion-related violence declined significantly even as land-related violence and clan feuding persisted and turned out to be deadlier. Using the violence intensity index that he created in 2014, he showed that political and identity-based issues were the causes of the highest intensities of violence leading to high death-incident and displacement-incident ratios.

Vertical conflicts and extremist violence

The searing rise in violent extremism from 2015–2017 was witnessed in the surge of horizontal conflicts outside of clan feuding over land. This time the feuding was about a more radical brand of Islam that was being foisted upon the Bangsamoro. The new set of conflict actors were ideologues who pledged allegiance to an evolving global extremist group calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).[7] Local adherents included the Bangsamoro Islamic

[7] The ISIS also goes by the name of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). These organizations follow an ultraconservative and militant interpretation of Salafist ideology in Sunni Islam (Ebner 2017: 39–45; Ansary 2009: 161–164).

Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and Ansar Al-Khalifa in Maguindanao and North Cotabato, the Dawla Islamiya-Maute Group in the Lanao provinces, and the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Sulu.[8]

This new type of identity-based political violence would swell in Lanao del Sur, the SPMS box in Maguindanao, and Sulu.[9] Though the violence took the form of state-directed, vertical attacks against extremist groups, the roots of the conflict were horizontal in nature, based upon religious cleavages and the politics of identity.

By 2020, Dawla Islamiya and the BIFF had become shadows of their previous strength and capabilities. It turns out that the extremist group had begun sharing the same space with another insurgent group—the communist New People's Army. The latter had been driven away from many of their guerrilla fronts in northern and southern Mindanao and had found refuge in some of the same areas where Dawla Islamiya continued to consolidate forces, recruit new members, and plan future attacks.

Urban violence and the shadow economies in drugs and guns

Extremist violence coincided with spikes in urban and peri-urban violence in the Bangsamoro region, especially in Cotabato City in Maguindanao, Marawi in Lanao del Sur, and Isabela in Basilan. In fact, early reports from Conflict Alert paid attention to the spread of urban and peri-urban violence—a reminder of the 2013 Zamboanga City siege and an instinctive prediction of the war in Marawi four years later.

The rise in urban violence was also facilitated by a new government that launched a vicious 'war against drugs' in the last quarter of 2016 that continued well into 2020 amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) lockdown and quarantine period.

The war on drugs would double the number of drug-related incidents as conflicts surged in 2016 amid more arrests, buy-bust operations, the confiscation of drug paraphernalia, and in many instances, loose weapons.[10] The crackdown on illegal drugs and weapons, as well as on illegal gambling, continued to buoy conflict incidents up to 2020.

Human development and the conflict trap

The intractability of conflict following the political settlement in 2014 was further affirmed when violence failed to return to its levels after the peace agreement was signed. **Monsod** (Chapter 3) offers an explanation to the challenging and daunting dilemma of intractable violence by reviewing the data from a 'conflict trap' lens—or the notion that civil war, once over, is "alarmingly likely to restart" (Collier 2007, 27).

Her analysis points to the interaction between human development and violent conflict. Human development indicators were assessed against the backdrop of war and inequality. **Monsod** notes that the people of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) have been able to accumulate less capacities and have enjoyed less opportunities to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives than others across the country. Altogether, the human development achievements in BARMM are at a level that is only a third of the achievements in the National Capital Region, the top performing region, and less than half (40%) of the average

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[8] Ansar Al Khalifa, the Dawla Islamiya-Maute Group, and the Abu Sayyaf Group Basilan faction headed by Isnail Hapilon would be decimated by the end of 2017, though their remnants have continued to thrive, biding their time, recruiting new members, and consolidating their leadership.

[9] The SPMS Box refers to the contiguous municipalities of Maguindanao province composed of Sharif Aguak, Datu Saudi Ampatuan (previously Pagatin), Mamasapano, and Sharif Saydona.

[10] The links with the illicit weapons trade was obvious since all the drug lords and their paramilitaries were armed with illegal weapons.

Human development in the Bangsamoro has been hampered by violent conflict. Better access to health care services, particularly for women and children, will improve the region's development outcomes. **Bobby Timonera**

achievements across the country. She concludes that if the BARMM is in a conflict trap, the gains in living standards and human development will not be sustained unless the drivers of horizontal conflict are addressed effectively.

Conflict strings

The clearest and most powerful manifestation of the festering violence is the unraveling of conflict strings and their descent into parallel sequences of conflict. **De la Rosa and Yap** (Chapter 4) demonstrate how the conflict string lens enabled more granular attention to the interplay of multiple causes of violence, the multiplicity of actor identities, and the centrality of honor and the washing away of shame through revenge. This violent expression of negative reciprocity, combined with shifting political and economic interests, often ignite a string of flashpoints that branch out in different directions, accumulating momentum and gaining combustion from other causes of conflict.

As an analytical frame, the concept of conflict strings was first used to explain the accumulation of incidents and deaths arising from a single cause or violent trigger event (de la Rosa 2014). These incidents were examined at a micro level over time, revealing a wider cast of actors and the shifting causes of violence as the string of violence unfolded.

Using two case studies of conflict strings in the Bangsamoro, the authors demonstrate how violence mutates, actors morph, and motives change. Narratives also change to justify violence, transforming revenge into a weapon to legitimize

authority, assuage the pain of loss, and consolidate the clan.

Conflict Alert (2016 and 2017) provided other accounts of conflict strings in the case of extremist violence, including the chain of violent events that began with the Rasuman pyramiding scam in 2013 and ended with the siege of Marawi. The scam had spillover effects beyond the loss of incomes, livelihoods, and businesses of the Maranao. They shaped the subsequent clan feuds in extremist hotspots such as Butig, Lumba-Bayabao, Piagapo and Marawi, and weakened the clans against the onslaught of Dawla Islamiya in Lanao del Sur.

The conflict strings approach was widely used to examine violent conflict from within Bangsamoro society over time, drawing attention to previous conflicts and 'wars before', instead of laying the gauntlet solely on terrorist contagion or 'wars next door'. More importantly, it proved that cutting one string of violence may not necessarily resolve conflict that has reproduced into new conflicts with their own distinct trajectory.

Boundaries and borders

Why do borderlands exhibit more violence and deaths than the rest of the Bangsamoro areas? **Quitoriano** (Chapter 6) used conflict heat maps to portray the high levels of violence in borderland areas. He further examined the borderlands phenomena by using comparative case studies of borderland municipalities within a province and between two provinces. The case studies helped determine the salience of violence data in borders and boundaries, explaining too why some borders are dangerous and why others are not.

Quitoriano found that the historic formation of borderlands better explains whether these areas will become embroiled in high levels of violence or not. Borderlands that were formed through an organic and gradual process of migration and settlement were less violent than those that were established due to the population movement policies of the State.

The study also showed how the manner through which borderlands took shape, survived, and thrived mattered more than the heterogenous or homogenous nature of the population. In fact, ethnic diversity, or homogeneity in a borderland area can go either way when it comes to explaining interludes of violence.

There were two economic factors that may be more important than the composition of the population in borderlands. First, the wealth and other resources present within the borderlands is an important element. Population density and fluctuating resource demands can turn both homogenous and heterogenous groups against each other. Second, the nature of the prevailing illicit economy in the borderland is significant. Shadow economies of the survival or coping type are less likely to draw in a strong state presence in areas where deadly economies related to illicit drugs, illegal guns, and kidnap-for-ransom groups operate.

Indigenous peoples and the surge in resource-related violence

Some borderlands discussed in the foregoing chapter such as South Upi and Lebak contain land areas that are part of indigenous ancestral land or ancestral domain claims of non-Moro indigenous peoples (NMIPs). Many urban and peri-urban areas are also within ancestral lands claimed by indigenous groups. Finally, the post-conflict decommissioning and resettlement program for ex-combatants also laid claim to areas already classified by the National Council of Indigenous Peoples as rightfully owned by indigenous peoples under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.

Oria, Palabon, and Punongbayan (Chapter 7) assert that during the past 10 years and after the crucial period of peace negotiations in the

A Teduray farmer from Barangay Kuya, South Upi takes his corn harvest to the market. **Amiel Cagayan**

Bangsamoro, the rights and privileges of NMIPs over these lands were neglected or worse, ignored.

Consequently, conflict was ignited. The Conflict Alert database shows that nine of the 11 Maguindanao municipalities where NMIPs had claims over their ancestral domains have undergone land conflicts. These are particularly violent in places such as Upi, South Upi, and Datu Odin Sinsuat. These three municipalities out of the nine conflict-stricken areas within the ancestral domain being claimed by the Teduray–Lambangian tribe have the highest number of violent conflict incidents over the past 10 years. These include clan feuds due to land disputes involving members of the MILF and BIFF. The ferocity of clashes against armed groups trying to displace the NMIPs from their homes and farms is documented thoroughly in many case studies from 2015–2020.

In 2020, the conflict database combined with advanced mapping technologies widened the access of the NMIPs to geo-referenced and digitized maps that enabled them to manage disputes among themselves, undertake resource-use management decisions, and advocate for a fair and inclusive land law. However, deep uncertainties and insecurities remain among the NMIPs.

Oria et al. voiced their fear of a winner-take-all struggle that can emerge if a 'might is right' attitude is used to settle land claims. Both the Moro and NMIPs are embroiled in a proxy war for land consolidation and ethnic homogenization in a contested ancestral domain area. With the tremendous human and economic cost it has inflicted on the inhabitants of the area, young and old, this is a war in which everyone will lose in the end.

Women and conflict

Data over the past 10 years uncovered evidence of the perpetual downplaying of gender-based violence (GBV) in the Bangsamoro. **Adorable, Policarpio, and Hussain** (Chapter 8) draws attention to the accelerated rise in GBV cases since 2014, which peaked in 2016, and turned ruthless during the pandemic in 2020. However, the availability of more robust data to back up the trend remains a challenge due to the rules of the Violence Against Women and Children law.

Subsequent spikes in GBV were accompanied by a parallel intensification of identity-based violence throughout the region. Gender-related violence became the second most common cause of identity-based conflict in urban areas such as Cotabato and Isabela City in 2015. These numbers more than tripled and overtook clan feuds that had previously been the most prevalent among identity-based conflicts. In 2016, growing reports of GBV also accompanied the shift from rural to urban and peri-urban violence.

The pattern of female-involvement in conflict incidents also ran parallel to the overall outline of violent conflict across the region. It started to increase from 13% in 2013 to 19% in 2014 and peaked in 2016 (26%), then began to steadily decline to 17% in 2020.

In 2020, a period marked by the imposition of strict COVID-19 quarantine controls, gender-related violence, including those that involved young girls, increased from March–May and from September–December of 2020, consistent with the hard lockdowns imposed at the beginning of the pandemic. Ironically, the lockdowns that were designed to shield vulnerable families and communities from the disease had the opposite effect on women and children. Forced confinement exacerbated existing inequities, lit the fuse of domestic violence, and weakened social networks that provided welfare and protection for women and children who were vulnerable to abuse.

Finally, women's roles in violent extremism became the backdrop of many studies about the binary involvement of women as victims and perpetrators of violence. As victims, the number of women involved doubled from 2014 up to 2016. However, as perpetrators, the numbers tripled during the same period. Though the numbers have decreased since then, it is still important to recognize that as overall violence peaks, women's involvement in violence likewise increases.

The association between female-headed households (FHH) and violent extremism was also studied to generate data about their potential links (**Tan and Espinosa**: Box 2). This was encouraged by earlier interviews and focus group discussions conducted with extremist returnees in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. There was evidence that many of the young extremists in Marawi were born to FHH, fueling concerns that the latter may have been a source of youth mobilization and recruitment.

The study was guided by two competing views about the links between FHHs and violent extremism. One hypothesis proposed that terrorist recruitment and violence were shaped by youth socialization in an FHH. The other hypothesized that FHHs were outcomes, rather than sources of violent extremism. They were the result of male mortality due to terrorism. The statistical analysis confirmed neither of the causal links above, underlining the need to conduct further tests to test the hypothesis using more granular data, more advanced techniques, more robust time series data, including the gathering of individual-level survey data.

Tempest in social media

Traditional and social media accounts of violent flashpoints in Marawi, Cotabato, and Zamboanga over the past 10 years vividly captured the displacement, destruction, and death suffered by many Muslim communities in Mindanao. Filipino netizens were riveted to developments online as

news poured out of these flashpoints via cellphone or laptops. **Lacuesta, Tan, and Capiral** (Chapter 9) studied how social media fanned the flames of online stereotyping against Muslims by linking them to ISIS and global terrorism. Hate-filled and sensationalist coverage of violence would feed anti-Muslim discourse online and promote a discourse that would lead to increased Islamophobia and physical harm.

Social media posts about Mindanao and the Bangsamoro often blunt and dominate local and indigenous voices and analysis of events and transmit biased, patronizing, and oftentimes discriminatory messages that impugn the Moro. In these spaces, the Moro netizen found their voices suppressed and their messages dampened by the flood of innuendos, racist bullying, and violent threats. Media reportage in Metro-Manila and other urban areas with Muslim enclaves became a source and trigger of discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes towards Muslims.

Political settlements

Will the new BARMM transform the political settlement in the country and secure lasting peace, development, and inclusion of the Bangsamoro? Will they find their proper place within the Philippine state where earlier changes in the formal institutions establishing autonomy in the region had failed?

Putzel (Chapter 10) answers the question by marshaling the historical evidence and assessing the requirements and capacities of the newly devolved political authority amid the resilient corruption and conflict of previous years.

Putzel pointed to the ideological power behind the alliance of clans and rebel groups that shaped the struggle for self-determination and more meaningful autonomy in the region. He emphasized some of the new challenges that the BARMM need to address, underlining the centrality of bargaining with the elite to acquire influence and secure cooperation with economic and political powerholders.

Putzel also argued that the scope of economic activity that entirely escapes the purview of the state is a strategic resource that must be placed under fiscal control. The more economic activities occur outside the purview of the state, the more difficult it will be to lawfully enforce contracts and agreements and resolve disputes.

Putzel recognizes the serious problems and the growing impasse in the implementation of the normalization aspects of the peace agreement. He sees the looming fractures in the political settlement surrounding combatant decommissioning and the serious delays and reduced targets.

These issues become more critical when we realize that gun-related violence is growing, instead of shrinking, plus the involvement of former rebels in communal violence.

Conclusion

The chapters in this compendium drew from the Conflict Alert database to explain conflict's long game in the Bangsamoro. They delved into the nature and causes of conflict by examining existing fractures within society, parsing the dynamics and interests between and among key actors, and examining rule systems that play into the persistence of violent conflict in the region. The combined analysis from these chapters point to an enduring pattern of conflict and the likely challenges that peace builders and policymakers will face moving forward.

Ten years of granular evidence has presented a trendline of violent conflict during the most delicate and significant period in the contemporary history of Muslim Mindanao. The "long game" tells us that things aren't what they seem at the start, when conflict often masks its motives and hides the real impact of violence.

We now see through the glass clearly.

A woman enters a polling precinct while carrying her child to vote in the 2022 elections in Maguing, Lanao del Sur. The municipality was declared a COMELEC-controlled area due to intense rivalry and violence among contending parties. **Mark Navales**

The studies profit from the hindsight made possible by 10-year panel data on the severity, magnitude, and causes of conflict. Conflict Alert data exposed the polarization of identities brought about by exclusionary policies that deny access to land and resources and the enduring imprint of clan institutions and identity dynamics across conflict causes.

The analysis of the different variables at work in gender-based violence was made robust by access to panel data and innovative qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This enabled the illumination of otherwise opaque issues such as patriarchal gender norms and violent masculinity and how these shaped and continue to shape the discourse on GBV and the ways to address it more structurally.

The data explained violence in different settings—from borderlands to broadcast and warned about the growing appeal of violent extremism. The data constantly pointed to resilient shadow economies as sources of bounties during elections and wars.

The conclusion points to the need for vital and meaningful institutional shifts that can erode violence and build trust between previously warring parties at various levels. Laws and other rule systems must improve access to land and other resources, reduce economic informality, expand democratic participation and governance, and strengthen access to justice and welfare systems that remain wanting.

The dilemma is that Bangsamoro leaders seem to be engaged in a long game as well. Accountabilities have been disregarded, prior commitments forgotten, and key legislation deprioritized. The democratic impulse that gave birth to the new autonomous authority is enfeebled, and for many peacebuilders, expectations have remained unfulfilled. Those anticipating the immediate absence of war will call this phase ***"transitions interrupted"*** because the political settlement has neither delivered the security nor the certainty that death, destruction, and displacement will cease. However, the more we encounter the same fluctuations in violence that we see in the Bangsamoro today, the more we realize that perhaps, "**cyclical transitions**" are what we should expect. Instead of hoping that the best is yet to come, is it possible that this is the most we can expect?

If conflicts are cyclical and episodic like extended strings, then peacebuilding must also be viewed as an extended game where players only learn to

choose the best solutions over time when trust has evolved. As we can see, a deficit of trust in the Bangsamoro prevents key processes such as combatant decommissioning and transitional justice from moving faster.

Other scholars have also argued that transitions from conflict to peace *"are more usefully seen as involving **only** a realignment of political interests and a readjustment of economic strategies, rather than a clean break from violence to consent, from theft to production, or from repression to democracy."* (Berdal and Keen, 1997)

The notion of a cyclical transition also rings true in the rise and fall of horizontal violence as the Bangsamoro navigates another transition from one regime (Duterte) to another (Marcos) on top of the conflict-to-peace transition. Both will be fraught with new complications and fresh challenges.

The declining violence we see today may be the only dip we'll see in a while, because political violence is on the rise due to revenge killings following the recent elections. There are signs of destabilization coming from those who resist a new regime that wants to put its imprint in the Bangsamoro.

Not too long ago the Arab Spring had peace to bring. Less than a decade later the changes that brought freedoms to Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya have been lost and gone—replaced by regimes far worse than those toppled by the people. Regime changes were faster than the prediction of a decade gone by before a fragile peace begins to unravel, and societies dive into blood (Collier 2010, 75).

The reversals illustrate conflict's long game—and in the Bangsamoro, it will take at least another generation for violence to yield and for peace to reign, until the next cycle returns.

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CHAPTER 2

Shifts in Conflict Dynamics in the Bangsamoro

Shifts in Conflict Dynamics in the Bangsamoro

Judy T. Gulane

A decade of conflict monitoring reveals constant shifts in conflict dynamics in the Bangsamoro, highlighting challenges to policy makers and peacebuilders in the region. Conflict incidents and their costs, mainly in the form of deaths, started low, then surged as new triggers of violence and a growing number of multicausal conflicts emerged. These occurred amid the rise of new conflict actors and the onset of a regime that waged a deadly 'war on drugs'. Then in 2017, martial law was declared as the State and violent extremists battled for control of the city of Marawi. Violence subsided with that declaration and a subsequent pandemic that forced people indoors for two years. When in 2019 a new law established the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), granting non-state actors such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with new powers and wider resources, people thought conflict would dive as a knock-on effect of this new and devolved political authority. Yet conflict persists and insecurity and uncertainty continue to beleaguer the region. This chapter parses the 10-year panel data and revisits the significant events that shaped the conflict dynamics in the region within the 2011–2020 period.

Conflict intensity and magnitude

The Conflict Alert database contained a total 22,808 incidents of violent conflict and a total of 8,827 conflict deaths as of 2020. Distinctive shifts in the intensity (or incidence) of conflict occurred thrice over the decade: 2011–2012 when conflict incidents were low; 2013–2016 when they began to increase and peaked; and 2017–2020 when incidents began to fall back significantly, though not fast enough to put the Bangsamoro back to the levels of 2011–2015 (**Figure 1**). The magnitude of conflict, as measured by the number of deaths, trended with the rise and fall in conflict intensity, except in 2017 when deaths nearly doubled from the year before due to the war in Marawi.

These numbers are better appreciated when set against the events that occurred at crucial junctures over the past 10 years in the Bangsamoro (**Figure 2**). These include the successful peace negotiations that yielded two peace covenants between the Philippine government and the MILF, that is, the 2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) and the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB).[1] More significant was the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) by President Rodrigo Duterte in 2018 and the law's ratification by the region's voters through a two-stage plebiscite in 2019.

A ceasefire agreement struck between the Parties in 1997 underpinned the peace negotiations and was critical in reducing clashes between government troops and the MILF over the

[1] The FAB and CAB gave substance to the demand for Moro self-determination and called for the creation of the BARMM to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

2011–2020 period as validated by the conflict database. These negotiations continuously brought the two parties back to the peace process, even after former President Joseph Estrada's 'all-out war' declaration in 2000; the resurgence of MILF attacks after the Supreme Court struck down a memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain in 2008; and after the botched police operation in Mamasapano, Maguindanao in 2015 that delayed and derailed the approval by Congress of the first version of the proposed organic law.

However, while vertical conflicts subsided, horizontal conflicts between clans and armed groups affiliated with the MILF, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), between MILF members themselves, and between these armed groups and indigenous peoples grew dramatically over such issues as land. See **Box 1** on land conflicts.

Resilient threats also continued from armed groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIS and other terrorist or extremist groups. These include the BIFF in Maguindanao and North Cotabato, the Maute Group in the Lanao provinces, and the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Sulu. Factions of the BIFF and Abu Sayyaf launched more opportunistic attacks and bombing operations in 2015 while the Maute Group, which also refers to itself as Dawla Islamiya, emerged in 2016 in Lanao del Sur. By 2017, the Abu Sayyaf faction based in Basilan and the Maute Group would merge to launch attacks in Lanao del Sur and eventually occupy the Islamic City of Marawi.

The battle for Marawi lasted from May to October in 2017 and accounted for many of the conflict incidents and deaths that year. Martial law was simultaneously imposed over the whole island group of Mindanao, initially for 60 days as the war raged, but later extended to 2019. It had a tremendous impact in suppressing violence in the region.

Duterte had declared a war on drugs in 2016 before sanctioning the war in Marawi. This war would incur high human costs, as drug-related conflicts surged amid more arrests, buy-busts, and confiscation of drugs, drug paraphernalia, and in many instances, loose weapons. The crackdown on illegal drugs and weapons, as well as on illegal gambling, continued to buoy conflict incidents up to 2020.

The Duterte administration also fought the COVID-19 pandemic, ordering lockdowns in 2020 to try to slow the spread of the disease.

Figure 1. Number of Conflict Incidents and Deaths in the Bangsamoro

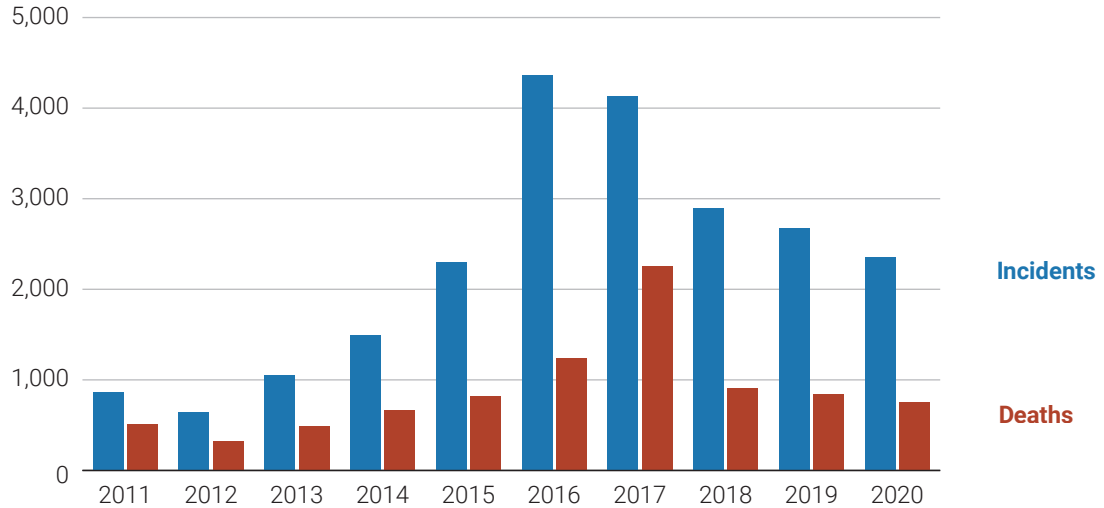


Figure 2.

Significant Events in the Bangsamoro

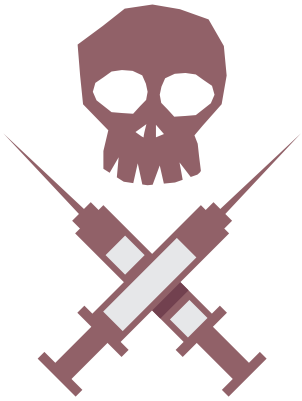
2012
Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro with the MILF is signed

2015
Misencounter in Mamasapano, Maguindanao derails the Bangsamoro Basic Law's approval by Congress

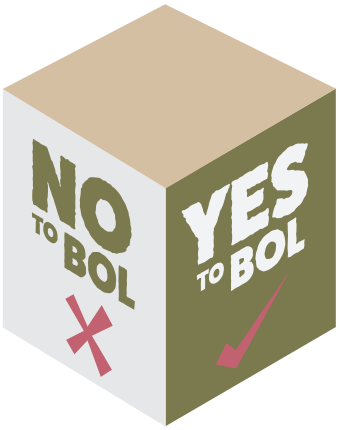
2014
Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro with the MILF is signed

BIFF in Maguindanao and Abu Sayyaf in Basilan pledge their allegiance to ISIS

Sources: News reports

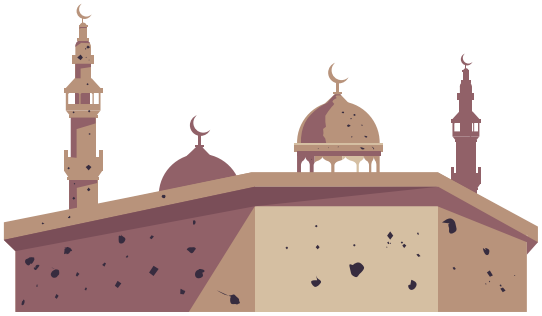


2016
Rodrigo Duterte is elected Philippines president and launches a war on drugs. Maute Group, also allied with ISIS, begins to carry out attacks in Lanao del Sur



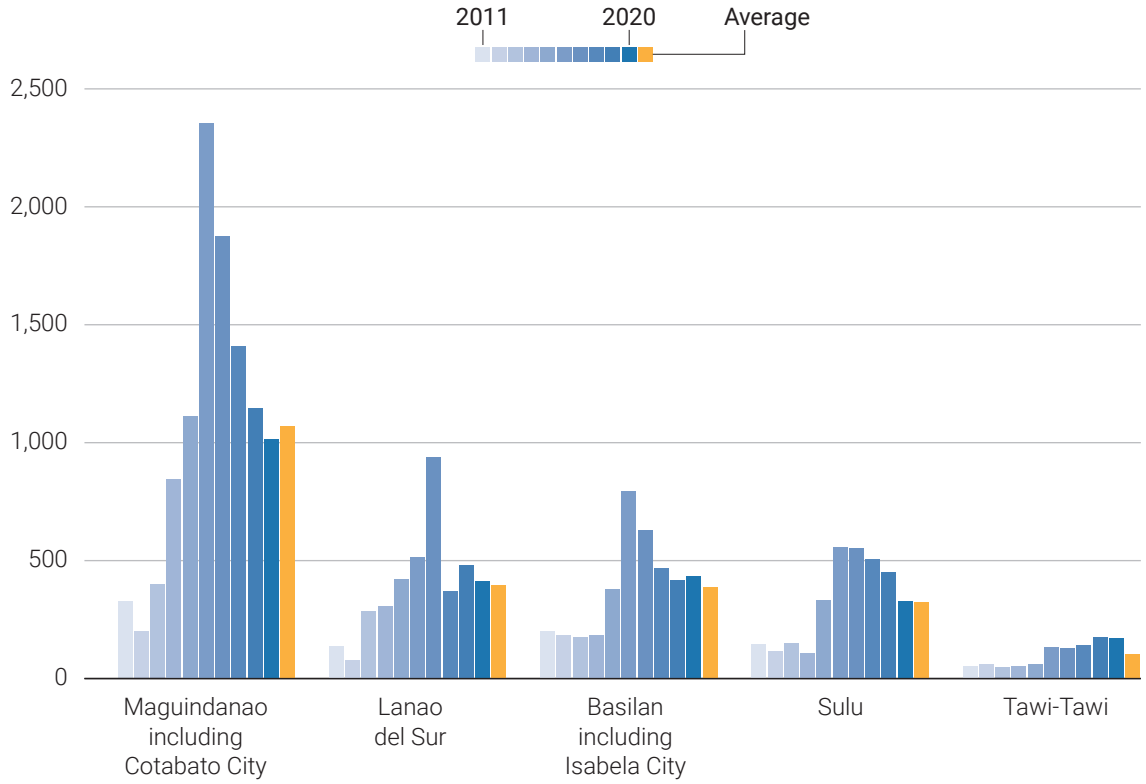
2019
Bangsamoro Organic Law is ratified; the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao gives way to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

2017
Marawi falls to the combined forces of the Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf; the war to retake the city lasts for five months



2020
COVID-19 lockdowns dampen conflict but trigger more violence against women and children

Figure 3. Number of Conflict Incidents by Province



The lockdowns used the same measures as martial law to restrict the movement of people—curfews, checkpoints, and roving patrol. These quarantines and lockdowns consequently produced the same effect as martial law. They reduced conflict incidence in general but sparked more violence among people within the confines of their homes and provoked resistance against the lockdowns at the local level.

Provincial incident and death counts

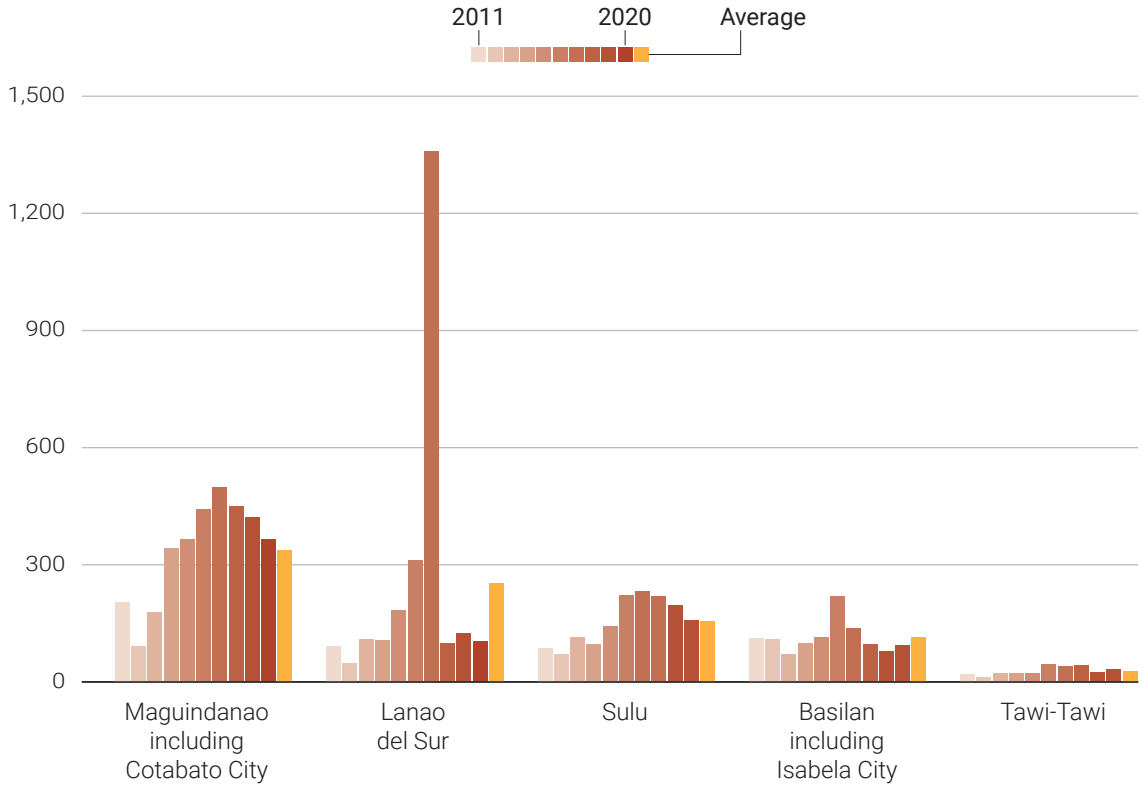
Maguindanao had the highest number of incidents and deaths among the five provinces of the Bangsamoro with 10,695, 47% of the total, and 3,355 deaths, 38% of the total. Lanao del Sur followed with 17% of total incidents and 29% of total casualties, with year 2017 standing out for the number of deaths during the Marawi war. Basilan and Sulu were third and fourth in terms of conflict incidents though Sulu had more cases of deaths. As it had consistently been over the past 10 years, Tawi-Tawi was last in terms of incident and death counts. See **Figures 3** and **4**.[2]

The mainland provinces' combined total clearly exceeded the numbers in the island provinces in terms of conflict incidents and deaths. This can be explained by the land area and population of the mainland provinces put together in contrast to the island provinces.

Maguindanao covers 10,144 square kilometers (sq. km.), second only to Lanao del Sur's 15,056 sq. km. In contrast, the island provinces have a combined

[2] Isabela City's conflict statistics are reported as part of Basilan's, being geographically located within the province. Cotabato City, also geographically located within Maguindanao, had been part of Region 12 until the city agreed to join the BARMM in the 2019 plebiscite. In this chapter, Cotabato City's conflict statistics are specified as included in Maguindanao's for consistency with previous Conflict Alert annual reports.

Figure 4. Number of Conflict Deaths by Province



11,851 sq. km. (Basilan with 3,677 sq. km.; Sulu with 4,547 sq. km.; and Tawi-Tawi with 3,627 sq. km.). In terms of population, the demographic data indicates that Maguindanao (including the city of Cotabato) had a population of 1.7 million as of 2020, followed by Lanao del Sur with 1.2 million. The island provinces (including the city of Isabela) had a combined population of around 2 million.

However, when incident and death tallies were viewed in relation to a standard measure of population and land area, a different picture emerges.

Conflict density

If conflict were assessed per 1,000 sq. km., Basilan fared almost no differently than Maguindanao. Maguindanao notched an annual average of 105 conflict incidents and 33 conflict deaths while Basilan had the same number of 105 conflict incidents but with 31 deaths (**Figures 5–6**). Meanwhile, Sulu was third in terms of conflict incidents with an average of 72 but first in terms of conflict deaths with 34. Tawi-Tawi placed ahead of Lanao del Sur in terms of incidents, the only time it was not in last place. It recorded an average of 29 incidents, outpacing Lanao del Sur's 26. In terms of deaths, Lanao del Sur was at fourth with an average of 17 deaths, while Tawi-Tawi followed with eight.

Conflict per capita

If in terms of 100,000 persons, Basilan turned out to be the province most affected by violence, with an annual average of 80 incidents and 24 deaths (**Figures 7–8**). Tawi-Tawi was the least affected with 25 incidents and seven deaths. As for the other provinces, Maguindanao was second in terms of incidents with an average of 70 but third in terms of deaths with 22, as Lanao del Sur's high casualty tally in 2017 put it second in terms of deaths with 23 despite a lower 36 incidents. Sulu recorded 37 incidents and 18 deaths.

Figure 5. Number of Conflict Incidents per 1,000 Square Kilometers, by Province

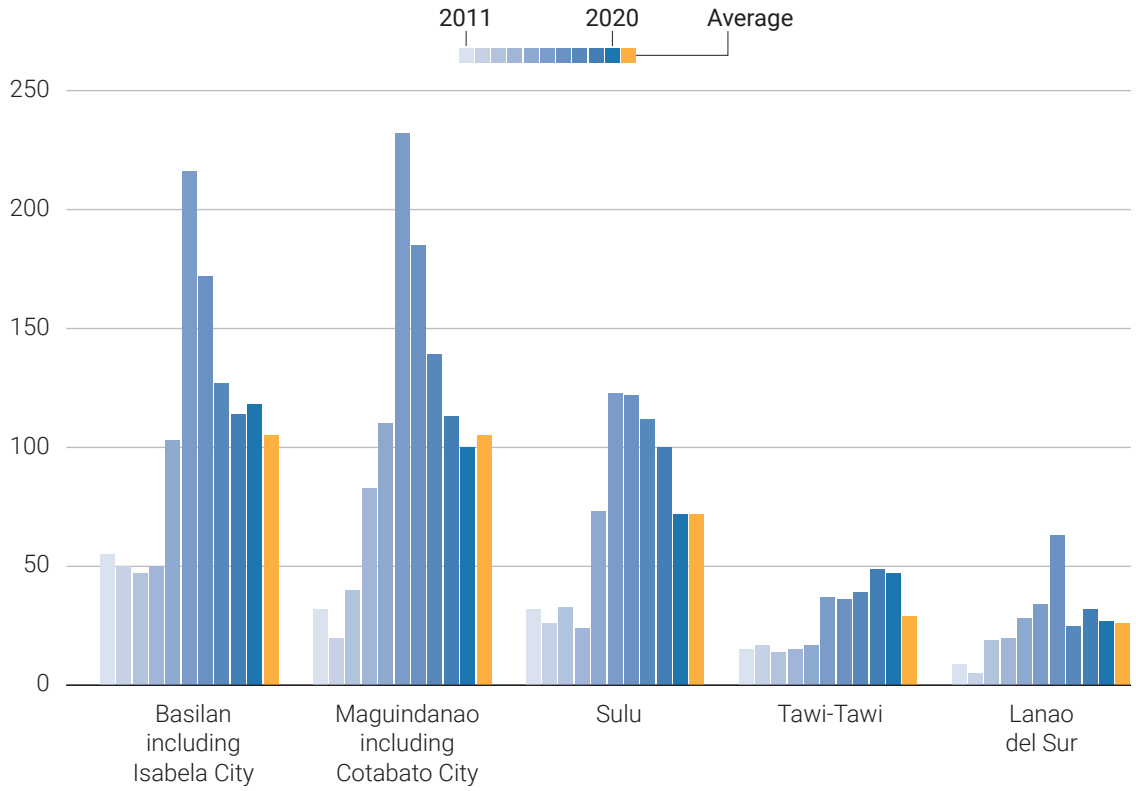


Figure 6. Number of Conflict Deaths per 1,000 Square Kilometers, by Province

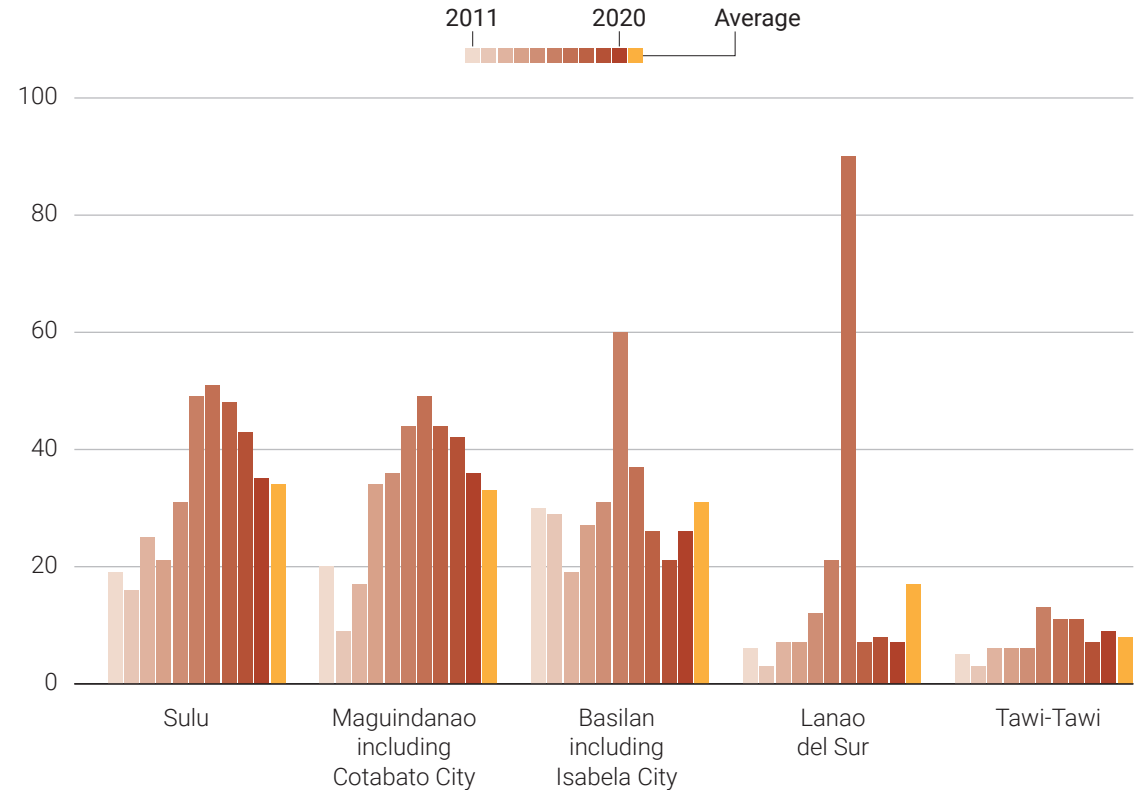


Figure 7. Number of Conflict Incidents per 100,000 Population, by Province

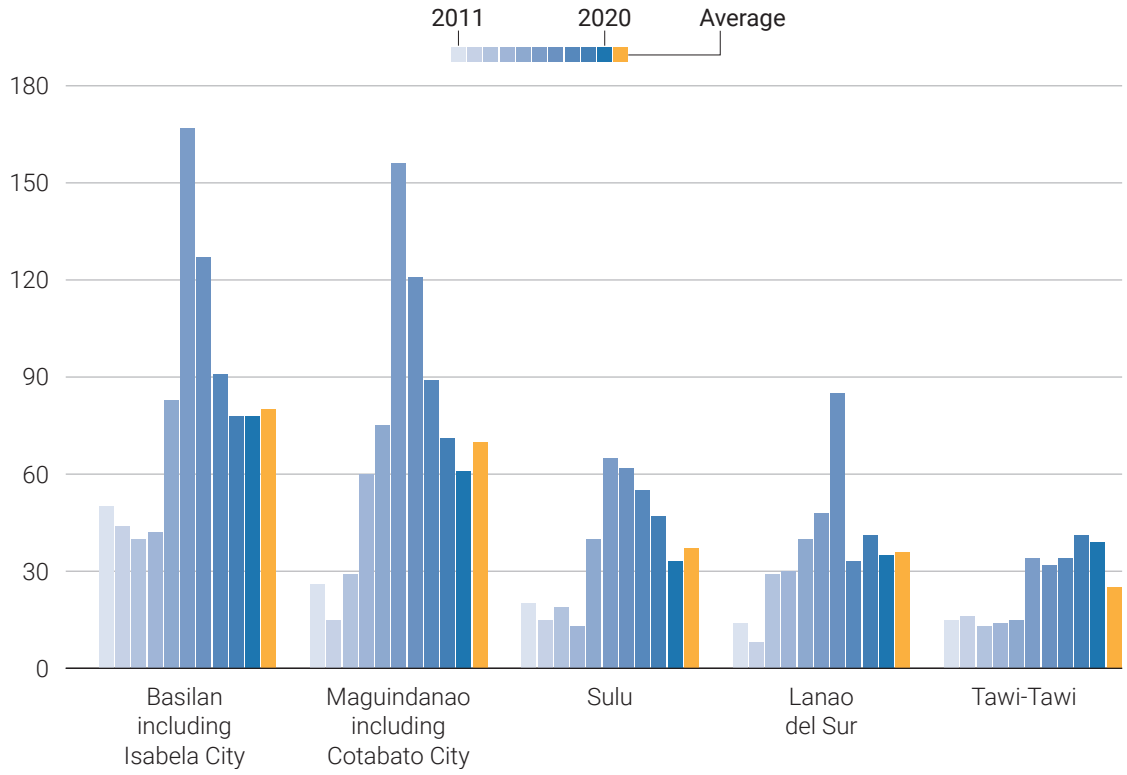
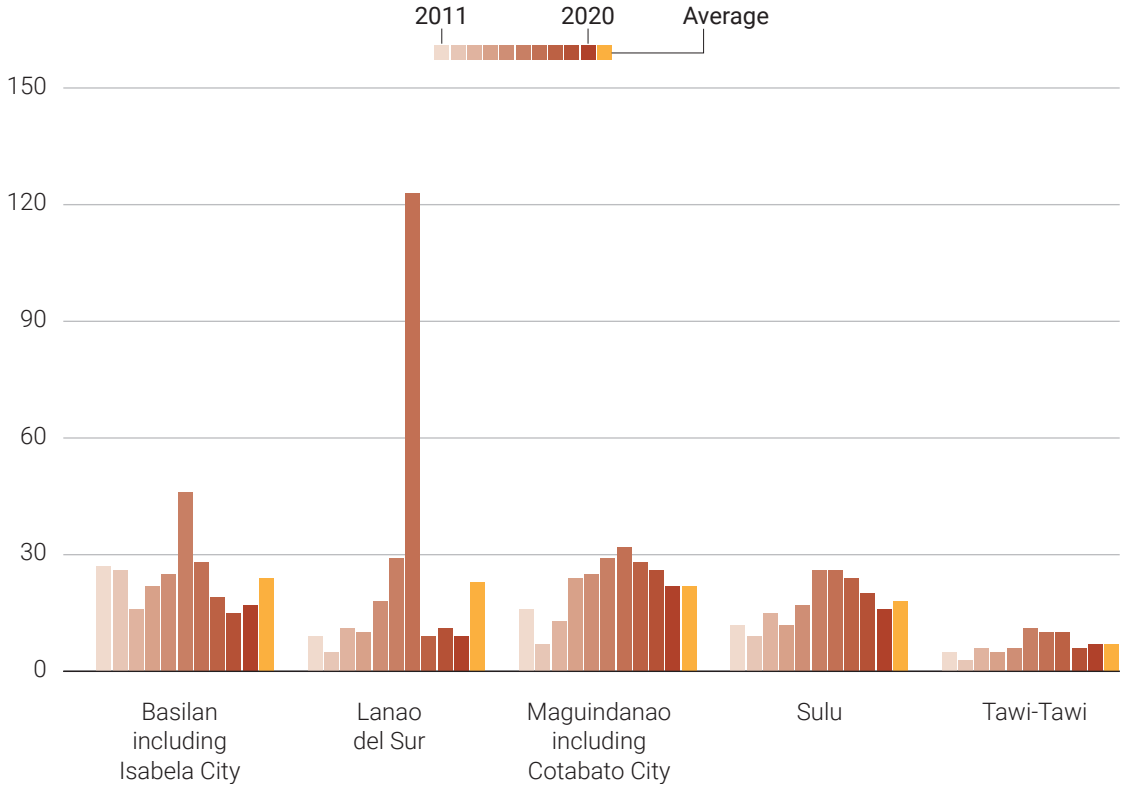


Figure 8. Number of Conflict Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Province



Comparisons between and among the Bangsamoro provinces, whether in terms of conflict incidents and deaths per capita or per kilometer can better guide peacebuilders and development workers who may tend to favor places with higher incident numbers. Per capita and density data can help recast and target those vulnerable areas where more people died, were displaced, or are in need of urgent help. They are certainly critical in calibrating the entry and the duration of peacebuilding and development interventions. See also **Chapter 5** on the violence intensity index.

Causes of Conflict

A violent incident may be due to single or multiple causes. It may be caused by the shadow economy in drugs alone, as was often the case at the height of the war against drugs. However, violence can also be due to a myriad of reasons or causes. For example, identity, resource, and political issues can merge and produce many cases of clan feuding in land that were weaponized to recruit and equip the youth with the weapons and experience to engage in violent extremism that preceded the 2017 war in Marawi. The mix and complexity of conflict triggers provide the rationale for determining and tagging the various causes that induce conflict. Often these are reflected in all causes that turn up when investigating and scrutinizing violent flashpoints. To be sure, there are many violent incidents too where the causes cannot be determined based on the information available. For more on the Conflict Alert methodology, see **Annex 2**.

An important trend that emerged in the Bangsamoro was how multicausal incidents had increased in proportion to the total number of incidents. For instance, from 19% in 2011, multicausal incidents came to comprise 35% of the total number of incidents in 2020 (**Figure 9**). This was made possible by the improvement

Figure 9. Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, in Percent

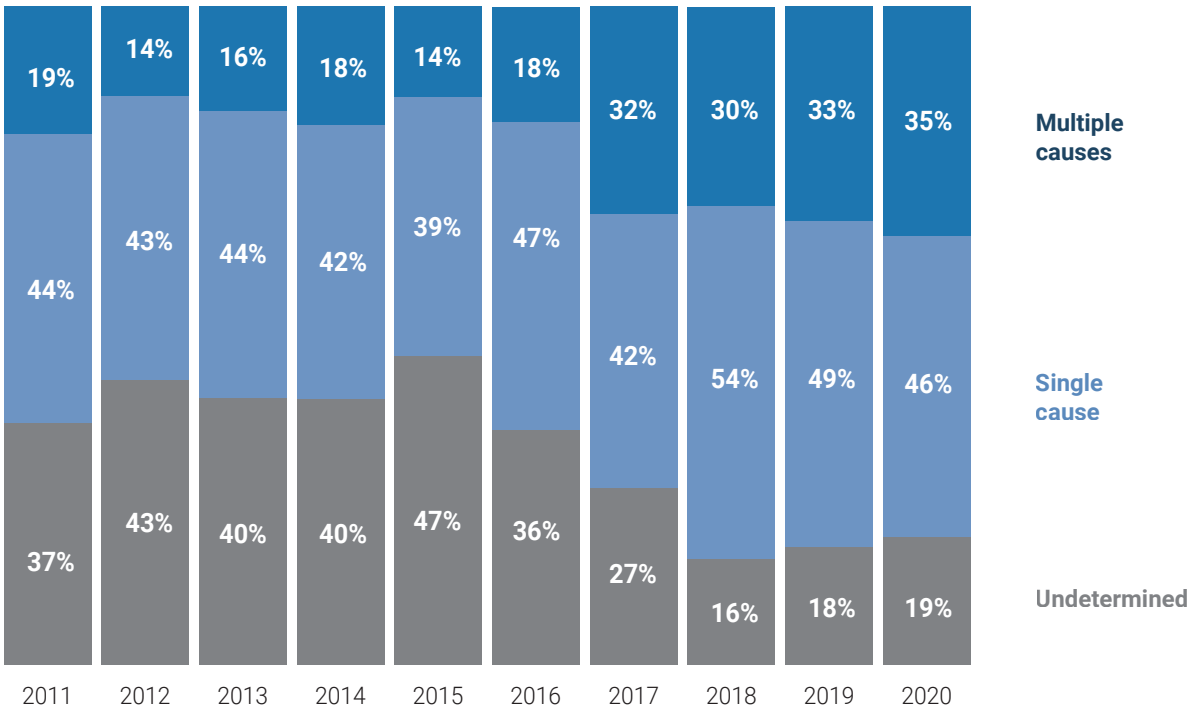
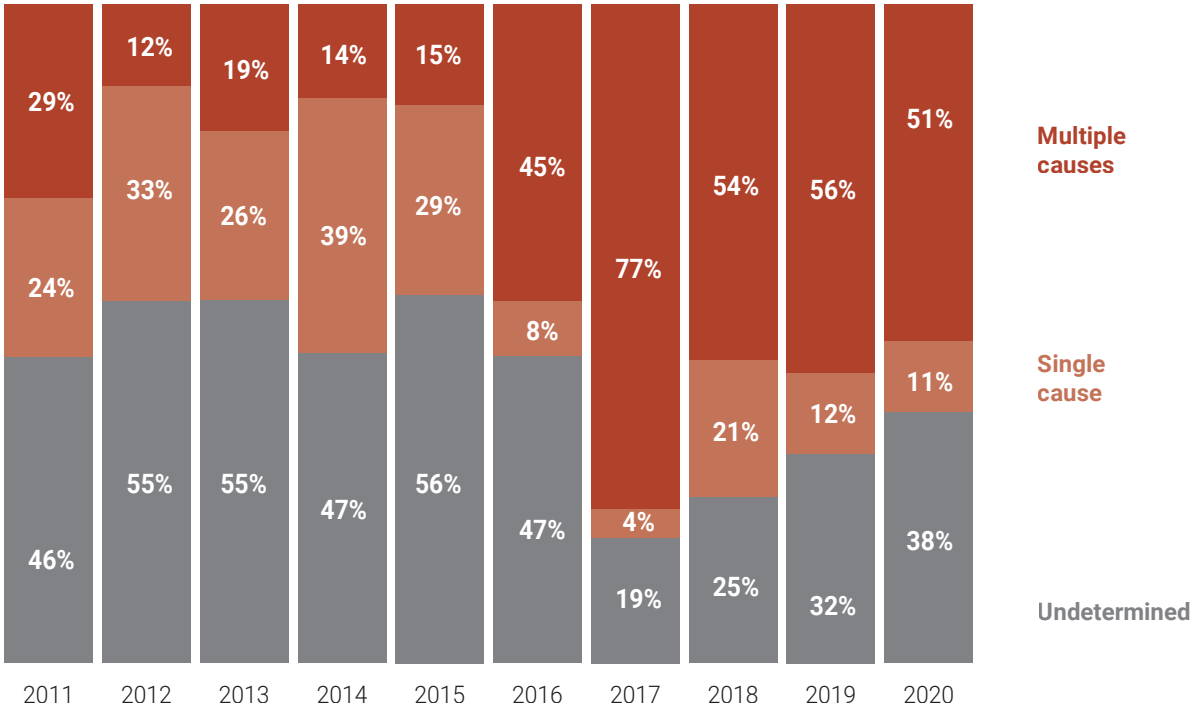


Figure 10. Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, in Percent



in the determination of the cause or causes of incidents, as seen in the lower share of incidents with undetermined causes in the total. Meanwhile, single-cause incidents consistently accounted for about half of the total number of incidents.

Being able to determine the causes of an incident becomes important in the face of evidence that multicausal incidents can exact a higher cost in terms of deaths than single-cause incidents. **Figure 10** shows that multicausal incidents accounted for nearly half of total deaths by 2016 and over half in the following years. Moreover, knowing which combination of causes are deadlier than the rest can help local government units and communities prepare the appropriate emergency responses.

It is equally important to examine incidents with undetermined causes. They may comprise less of the total number of incidents over the years but, as the data showed, they still accounted for a significant proportion of deaths, especially in the 2018–2020 period. In the Conflict Alert database, 'undetermined' incidents are distinguished by how violence is perceived and manifested. The manifestation or combination of manifestations of an incident should be subjected to analysis as well.

Conflicts with a single cause

Most conflict incidents had a single cause. As of 2020, there were 10,379 incidents with a single cause, 46% of the total 22,808 incidents in the database. The number of incidents increased in 2013 and kept rising until 2016 before falling (**Figure 11**). Deaths, a total of 1,430 as of 2020, followed a different course, posting increases in 2013, 2014, and 2018.

Figure 12 shows the prominence of shadow economy issues as drivers of violence from 2011 to 2020. 'Illegal weapons' and 'illegal drugs' were

consistently among the top five single causes each year, joined at times by 'kidnap-for-ransom', 'human trafficking', and 'illegal gambling'. Some of these causes became more prominent, others turned less, as presidents and their policy priorities changed. For instance, illegal weapons was the top shadow economy issue prior to 2016. By 2016, it had slid to second after illegal drugs as the Duterte administration launched a crackdown on illegal drugs. Illegal gambling was not among the top five single causes until the state crackdown pushed it up by 2017.

As the number of incidents related to illegal weapons, drugs, and gambling rose, so did the number of deaths. The increase in deaths due to shadow economy issues in 2018 was principally due to illegal weapons (**Figure 13**).

Rebellion, a political issue, was among the top causes of conflict incidents and conflict deaths from 2011 to 2015 or during the term of former President Benigno Aquino III. The incidents mainly involved the BIFF and Abu Sayyaf which, unlike the MILF, had no ceasefire agreement nor were engaged in peace talks with the government. The incidents were of clashes between these groups and government troops that resulted in high death counts, particularly in 2014 and 2015.

Most of these incidents were tagged as rebellion-related violence before the BIFF and Abu Sayyaf embraced extremist ideology, after which incidents were categorized as 'violent-extremism-religious conflict' (For a description of this pair of causes, please see the next section). From 2011 to 2020, there were 455 rebellion incidents, sixth highest on the list of single causes, but causing 552 deaths, the highest number of deaths due to single causes, overtaking the 258 caused by illegal weapons.

Robbery, a common crime, and gender-related issues, an identity issue, also figured high on the list of incidents with a single cause.

Figure 11. Number of Conflict Incidents and Deaths by Single Cause

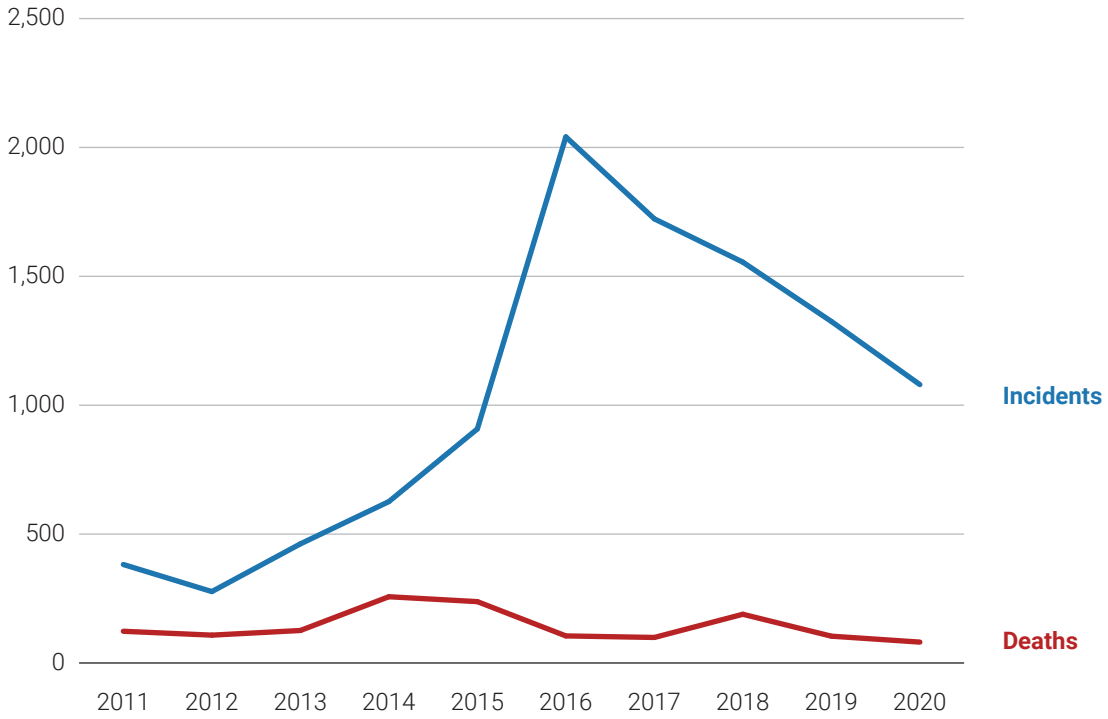


Figure 12. Number of Conflict Incidents due to a Single Cause

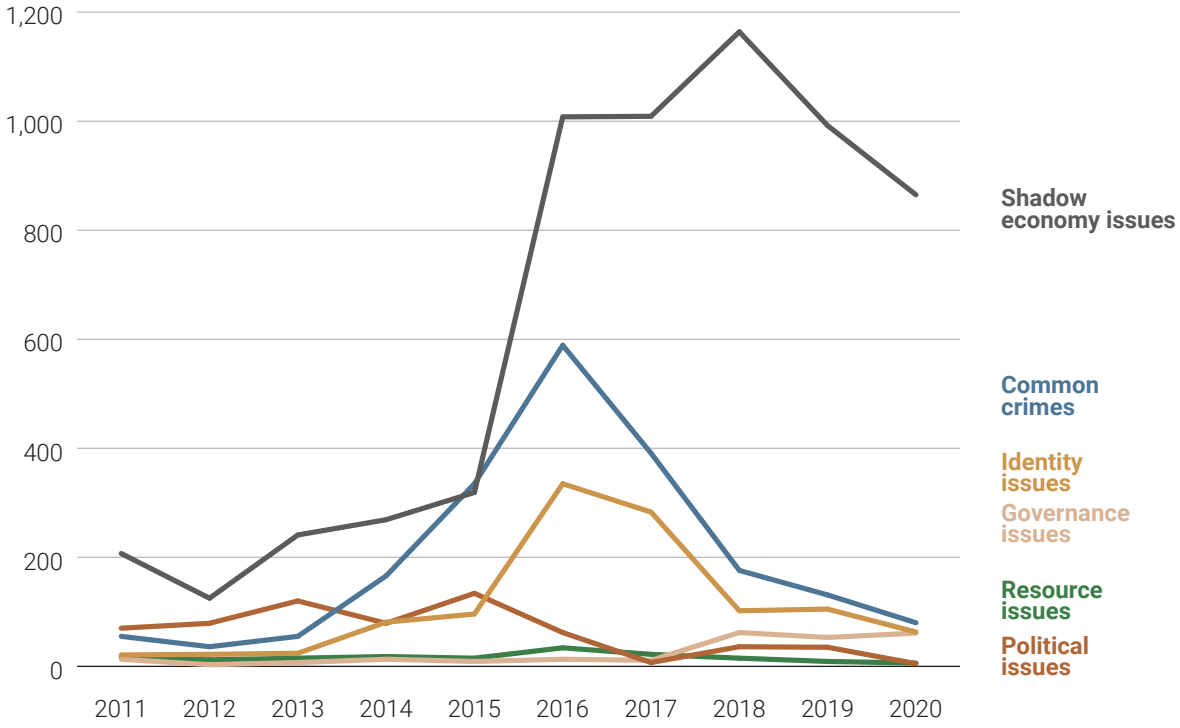
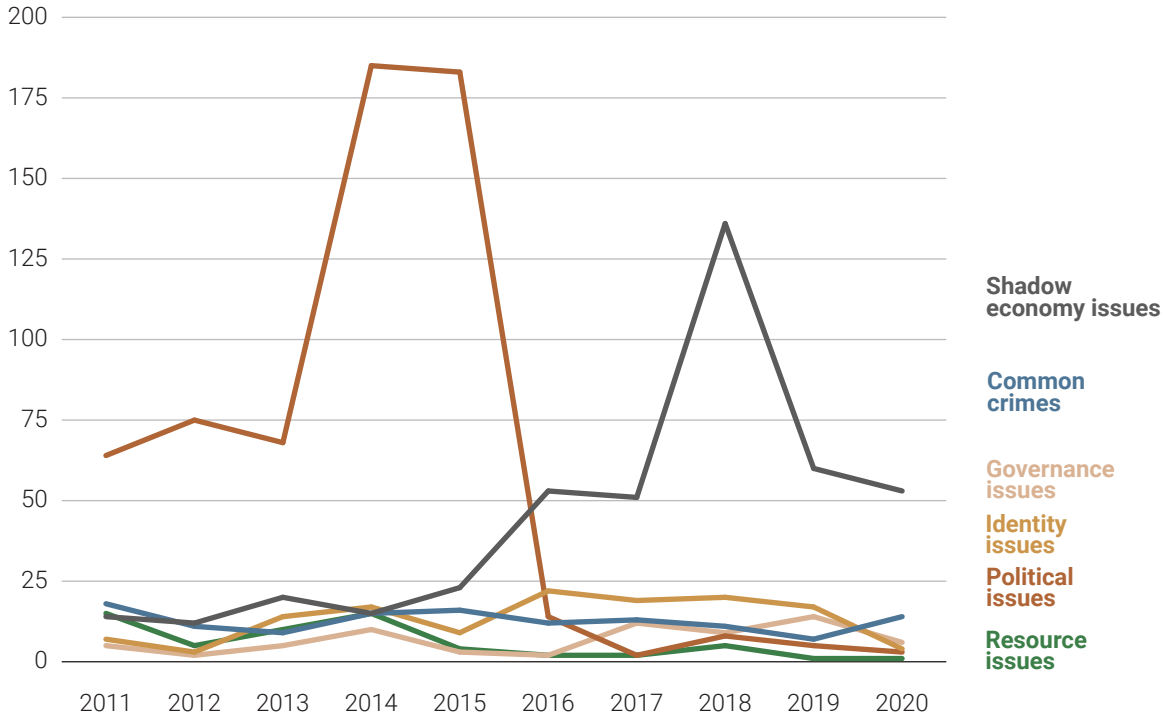


Figure 13. Number of Conflict Deaths due to a Single Cause



The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in BARMM and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology made a surprise inspection at the Maguindanao provincial jail located in Cotabato City on 14 June 2019. The inspection was part of Oplan Greyhound, a campaign to confiscate illegal items such as drugs and weapons in jails and police stations.
Ferdinandh Cabrera

Multicausal conflict

Incidents due to multiple causes totaled 5,661 as of 2020, of which around 88% were due to a pair of causes; 10% to three causes; and 1% to four causes. These multicausal incidents claimed a total of 4,147 lives, of which 87% were due to dual causes. **Figures 14** and **15** illustrate the severity of two-cause incidents and deaths and how these spiked in 2017 due to the flashpoint in Marawi. A small number of incidents and deaths were due to five or six causes.

Causal combinations matter

Table 1 shows the different two-cause combinations and the number of incidents and deaths ascribed to them. Political-identity issues topped all others, having caused the highest number of incidents and deaths. These were mostly 'violent extremism-religious conflict', clashes between ISIS-allied armed groups and government troops. The actors involved in these incidents were driven by political aims and by the need to assert an identity, specifically, as believers and adherents of a strict version of Islam. Violent extremism-religious conflict became salient in 2016, then exploded in 2017, causing a huge jump in deaths in those years. The BIFF and Abu Sayyaf launched more attacks in 2016 while the Maute Group became active. The BIFF ramped up attacks in 2017 while the Abu Sayyaf and the Maute Group joined forces to occupy Marawi for five months that year.

Up until 2016, shadow economy issues-common crimes were the top causes of conflict in terms of incidence. These were mostly 'carjacking-robbery' incidents, carjacking being a shadow economy activity and robbery a common crime in Conflict Alert's categorization. Incidents involved the stealing of motor vehicles and motorcycles. While numerous, these incidents resulted in few deaths.

Third in the ranking of two-cause combinations were identity issues coupled with shadow economy issues, composed mostly of clan feuding and personal grudges, which often turned deadly with the use of illegal weapons and create cycles of revenge-killings. Total deaths ranked second to those caused by political-identity issues. See also **Chapter 4** on conflict strings.

Fourth were shadow economy issues, mostly 'illegal drugs-illegal weapons' supplemented by 'illegal drugs-illegal gambling'. The number of incidents rose in 2016, and the number of deaths jumped by the following year. Incidents and deaths remained high up to 2020. The Duterte administration's war on drugs turned this previously quiet and discreet shadow trade into a bloody one.

Fifth were identity issues-common crimes, comprised mostly of 'gender-related issues-child abuse' incidents that victimized girl children. Also included were 'gender-related issues-alcohol intoxication' incidents. Gender-related issues, or violence that stems from gender-based identity and targets women and girls, is considered an identity issue while child abuse and alcohol intoxication are regarded as common crimes.

In 2020, the number of incidents tagged with gender-related issues-child abuse nearly doubled to 44 from the previous year. Thirty-five incidents took place in the March–December period when the lockdowns were implemented, indicating how oppressive those were to girl children cooped up within their homes. Data from police reports showed an increase in rapes, other forms of sexual molestation, and grave threats.

Last were shadow economy issues linked with governance issues composed mainly of cases of arrests, raids, and confiscations through warrants for those involved in shadow economy activities, particularly the illegal drug and weapons trades. Such actions multiplied in 2016 and claimed a high death toll.

Figure 14. Number of Conflict Incidents due to Multiple Causes

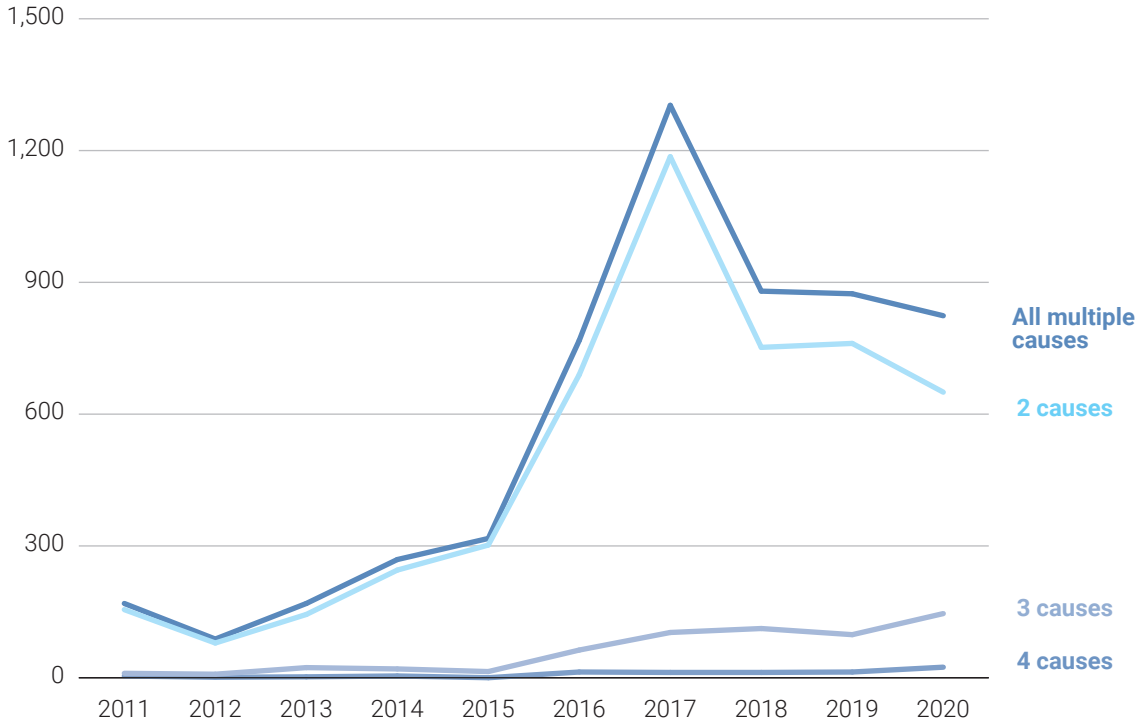


Figure 15. Number of Conflict Deaths due to Multiple Causes

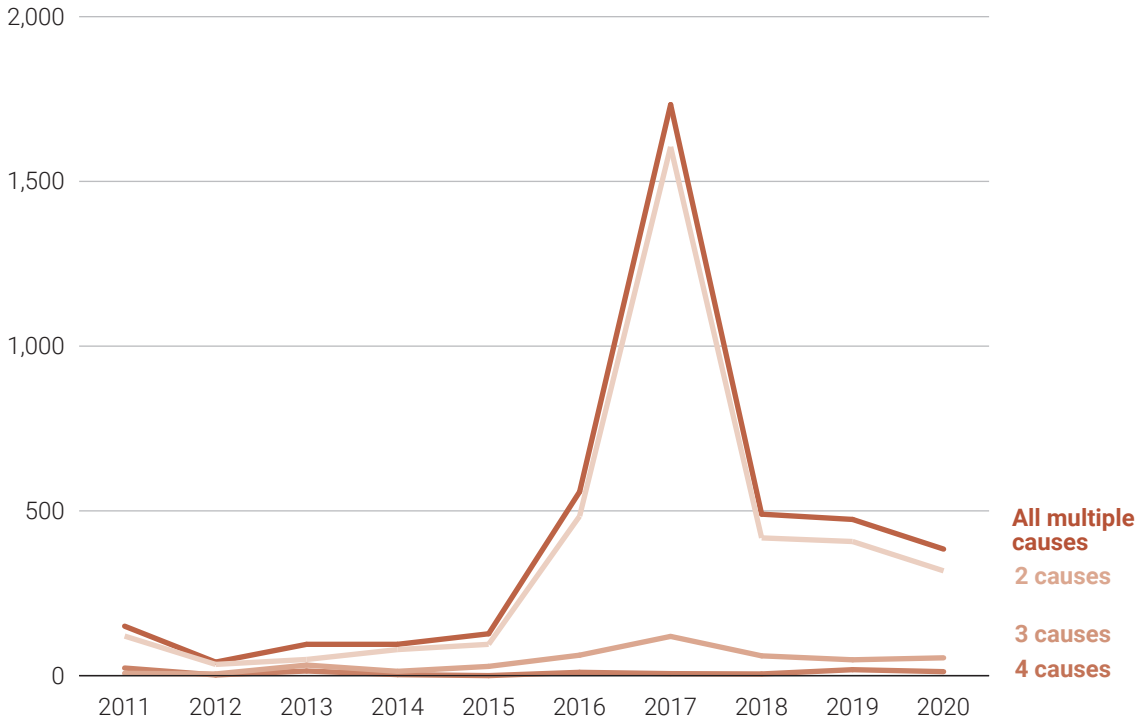


Table 1. Number of Incidents and Deaths by Two-Cause Combinations

	Number of incidents										
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**Total**
Political-Identity issues	7	1	5	0	7	134	635	236	181	213	1,419
Shadow economy issues-Common crimes	28	20	30	95	136	263	219	155	123	60	1,129
Identity-Shadow economy issues	86	38	49	81	68	78	118	98	121	86	823
Shadow economy issues	5	5	21	25	27	74	89	80	118	91	535
Identity issues-Common crimes	5	1	4	23	34	90	90	58	44	50	399
Shadow economy-Governance issues	10	4	4	5	4	20	3	44	30	30	154
Others	14	10	31	16	26	31	32	81	144	120	505

	Number of deaths										
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**Total**
Political-Identity issues	24	1	4	0	18	375	1,467	294	238	193	2,614
Shadow economy issues-Common crimes	0	2	3	4	3	8	7	6	8	6	47
Identity-Shadow economy issues	84	25	29	58	61	54	87	73	86	60	617
Shadow economy issues	0	0	0	3	1	2	32	29	51	40	158
Identity issues-Common crimes	0	0	0	2	5	5	2	1	3	2	20
Shadow economy-Governance issues	4	3	2	0	1	34	0	4	5	5	58
Others	8	3	11	12	6	6	10	11	16	12	95

Increase in triple-cause incidents

The number of incidents with two causes noticeably dipped in 2020, pulling down the total number of multicausal incidents. However, an increase in incidents with three and four causes tempered the fall of the total count with an increase of 49% and 85%, respectively.

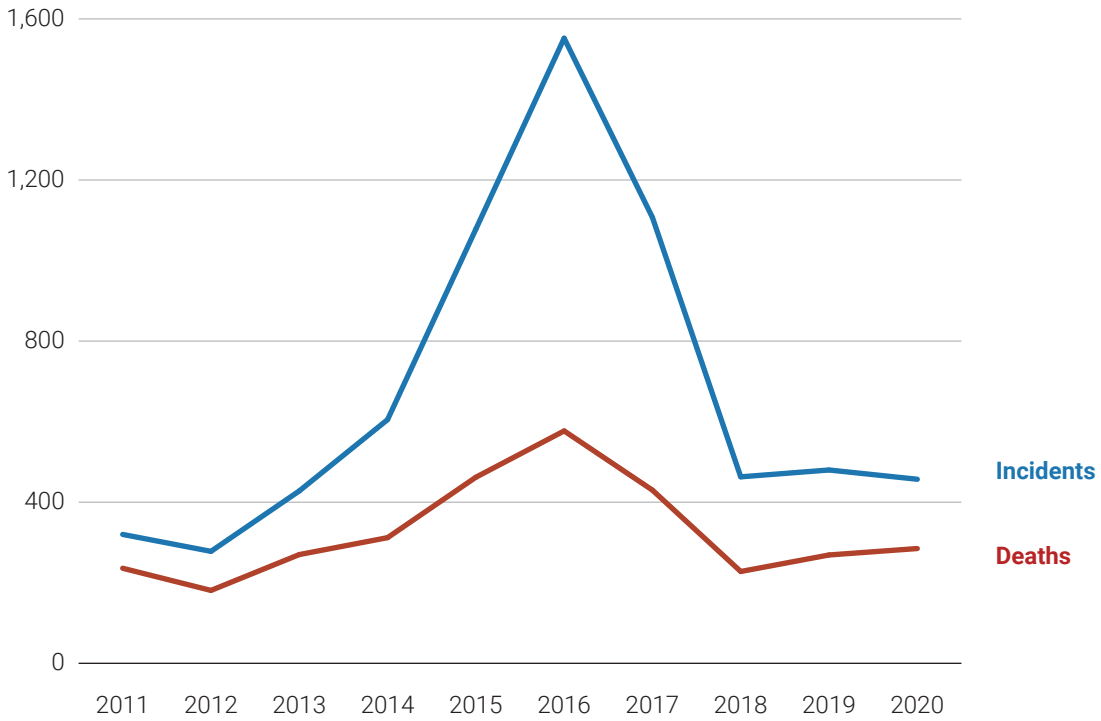
Feuding between individuals, families, and clans, some associated with groups such as the MILF, MNLF, and BIFF over land and other issues, and involving the use of firearms, increased remarkably. There were also more deaths from such incidents. These are the types of conflicts that could become protracted, cause extensive damage in terms of lives and properties, and force repeated displacements.

The lockdowns engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 registered a total 122 incidents of conflict that were tagged primarily as governance issues. They were usually in the form of arrests of individuals who had violated national laws and local ordinances on checkpoints, curfews, and health protocols, notably the wearing of face masks and face shields. The rest of the incidents were arrests and confiscations of illegal drugs and weapons discovered at checkpoints or after body searches and police chases. There were also arrests for illegal gambling and public drinking. Meanwhile, the uneven distribution of relief goods saw the local officials who were tasked to undertake it being threatened or even shot at.

Undetermined causes

Incidents with undermined causes totaled 6,768 and caused 3,250 casualties. The numbers fell in 2017 after hitting a high in 2016 (**Figure 16**). These incidents consequently comprised a lower share in the total number of incidents in the Bangsamoro, particularly by 2018 to 2020. This came about as

Figure 16. Number of Conflict Incidents with and Deaths from Undetermined Causes



the Philippine National Police's (PNP) monitoring and classification system and media reporting improved, revealing more details about the causes of the conflict incidents. However, though vastly reduced in contrast to previous years, the number of undetermined causes still poses an important concern because of the number of deaths, mostly gun-related, that cannot be explained.[3]

Causes of conflict per province

Examining the causes of conflict is essential in understanding the highs and lows of violent conflict. It can be discerned from the discussion on conflict intensity and magnitude that conflicts in Maguindanao, Basilan, and Sulu had built up between 2013 and 2015 and peaked in 2016 before declining after. Incidents spiked a year later in Lanao del Sur due to the war in Marawi and fell soon after. The trend seemed to be different for Tawi-Tawi, which was known as the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (ARMM) most peaceful province. Incidents there had stayed elevated after these rose in 2016.

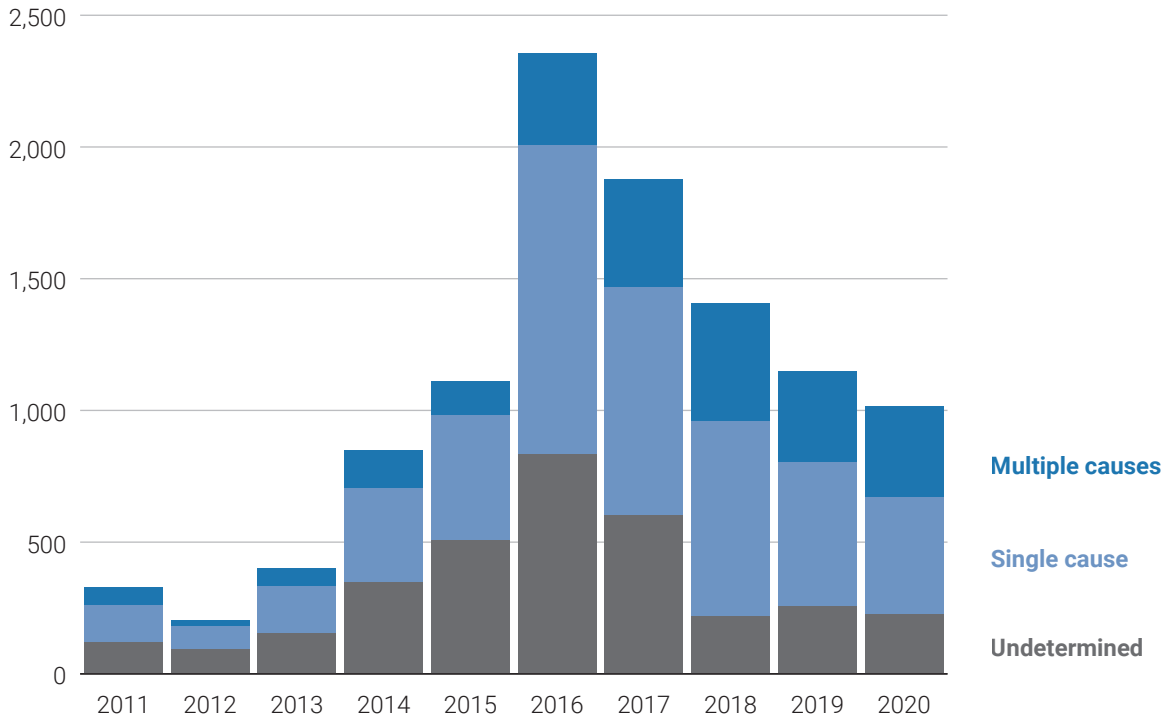
Maguindanao

Maguindanao saw conflict incidents nearly double in 2013, continue to climb in 2014 and 2015, and peak in 2016. Conflict deaths followed the same trend except that they reached their highest in 2017 (**Figures 17–18**).

Single cause

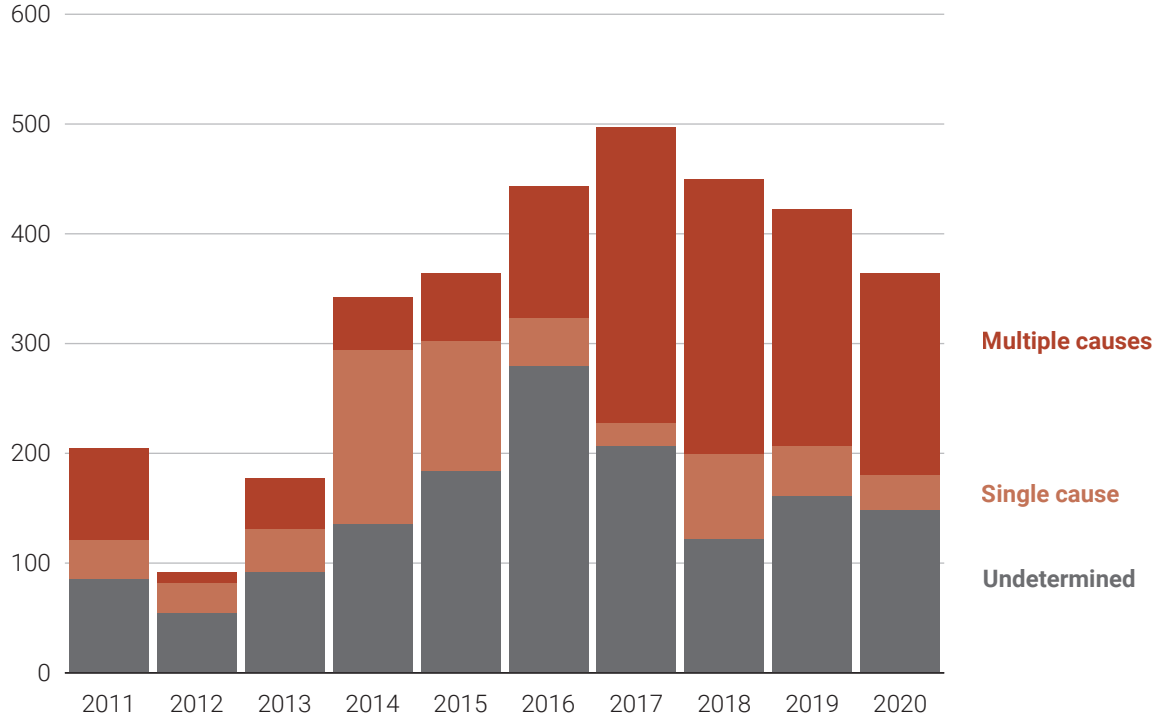
Incidents with a single cause were a major driver of violence, comprising 47% of the total 10,695 incidents recorded from 2011 to 2020. The top

Figure 17. Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Maguindanao



[3] Police and media reports described these as "shooting incidents" although no firearms were recovered. A total of 3,681 incidents were shooting incidents that killed 2,601 people. In contrast, incidents tagged with "illegal weapons", a shadow economy issue, were those where firearms and other weapons were found.

Figure 18. Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Maguindanao



single causes were the shadow economies in drugs, weapons, and gambling; common crimes namely robberies, damage to property, and child abuse; and identity issues specifically gender-related issues. These causes pushed up the incident counts in the years leading up to and in 2016. They declined after that year, but these causes continued to be the top single-cause drivers of violence in the province. Rebellion was among the top single causes up to 2015, after which violent extremism-religious conflict became pervasive.

Multiple causes

Multiple causes accounted for 22% of the total number of incidents. Multicausal incidents ramped up in 2016 and tallied a higher death toll than single cause incidents.

Of the 2,330 multicausal incidents, 86% were due to a pair of causes and just 11% to a combination of three causes. But whereas two-cause incidents went on a downtrend after 2018, three-cause incidents more than doubled in 2020 from the previous year.

The top pairs of causes, apart from violent extremism-religious conflict, were carjacking-robbery, illegal drugs-illegal weapons, personal grudge-illegal weapons, clan feud-illegal weapons, and gender-related issues-child abuse. Those that caused a higher death count in the 2017–2020 period were violent extremism-religious conflict, personal grudge-illegal weapons, and clan feud-illegal weapons. These were essentially a volatile mix of political, identity, and shadow economy issues.

Municipalities heavily affected by violent-extremism-religious conflict comprise the so-called SPMS Box or lie within its vicinity. These municipalities, in the province's southeast, are known for being the stronghold of the BIFF. Datu Salibo, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Shariff Aguak, Datu Unsay, Ampatuan, Datu Saudi-Ampatuan, Mamasapano, Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, Datu Piang and Gen. S. K. Pendatun were heavily affected by clashes between BIFF and government troops. Meanwhile, the municipalities of Buldon and Parang—two of the four municipalities comprising the 'Iranun corridor' in the northwest—recorded

the highest number of armed confrontations between families, clans, or individuals. The city of Cotabato often served as site for armed duels between feuding families, clans, or individuals.

Incidents with three causes reached 66 in 2020, more than double from the previous year and the highest annual tally within the 10-year period. The highest number of incidents were related to the lockdowns central to the government's COVID-response measures. Checkpoints and curfew violations netted those engaged in illegal gambling or were carrying illegal drugs or weapons. Armed conflicts between families, clans, and individuals associated with former rebel groups, often triggered by land-related disputes occurred amid the pandemic.

The lockdowns also spawned more violence against girl children. Incidents tagged with gender-related issues-child abuse causes that essentially affected girl children rose to 17 in 2020 from 10 in the previous year, with 16 taking place during the lockdowns from March to December. While these incidents did not result in any deaths, the sexual molestation, threats, and assaults that happened to the children were the kind that could leave lasting physical and mental scars.

Lanao del Sur

Lanao del Sur recorded a total 3,950 conflict incidents and 2,531 conflict deaths by the end of the 2011–2020 period. The year 2017 stood out for the 83% jump in conflict incidents to 941 and the 338% surge in conflict deaths to 1,358 during the war in Marawi (**Figures 19–20**).

Single cause

Incidents with a single cause dipped in 2012 before steadily climbing to hit a double high in 2016 and 2017, with 243 incidents recorded in both years. The number of incidents declined thereafter. The top single causes were illegal drugs, with a total of 525 incidents, and illegal weapons, with

Figure 19. Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Lanao del Sur

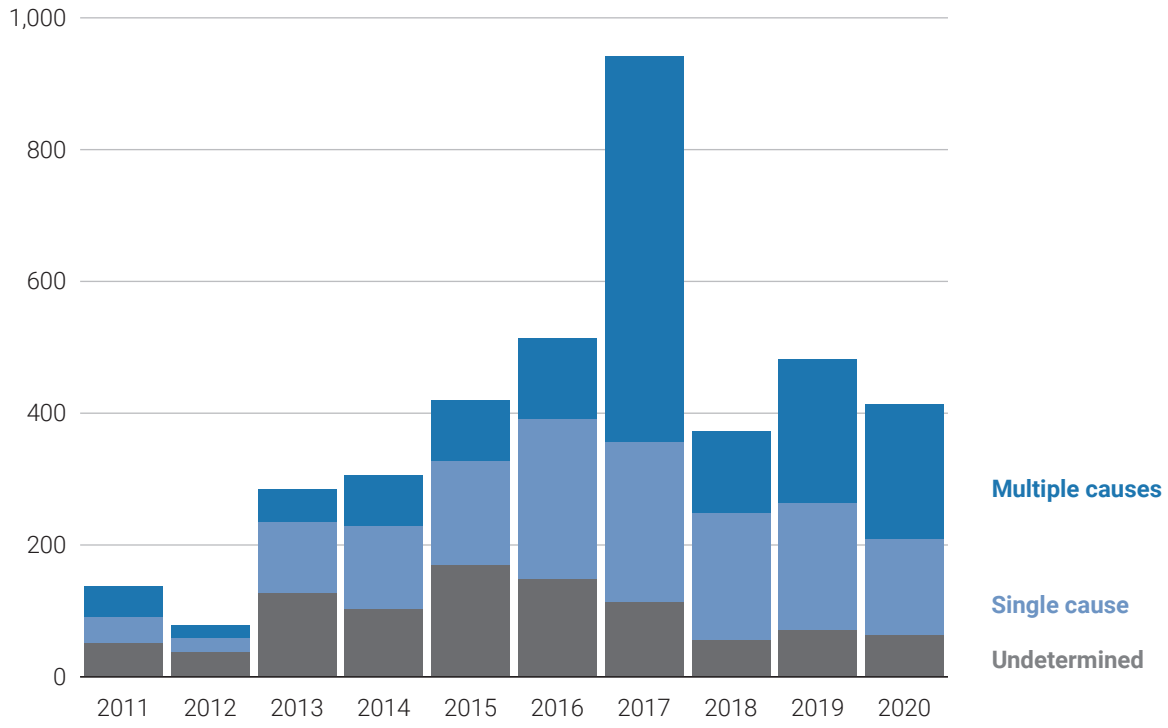
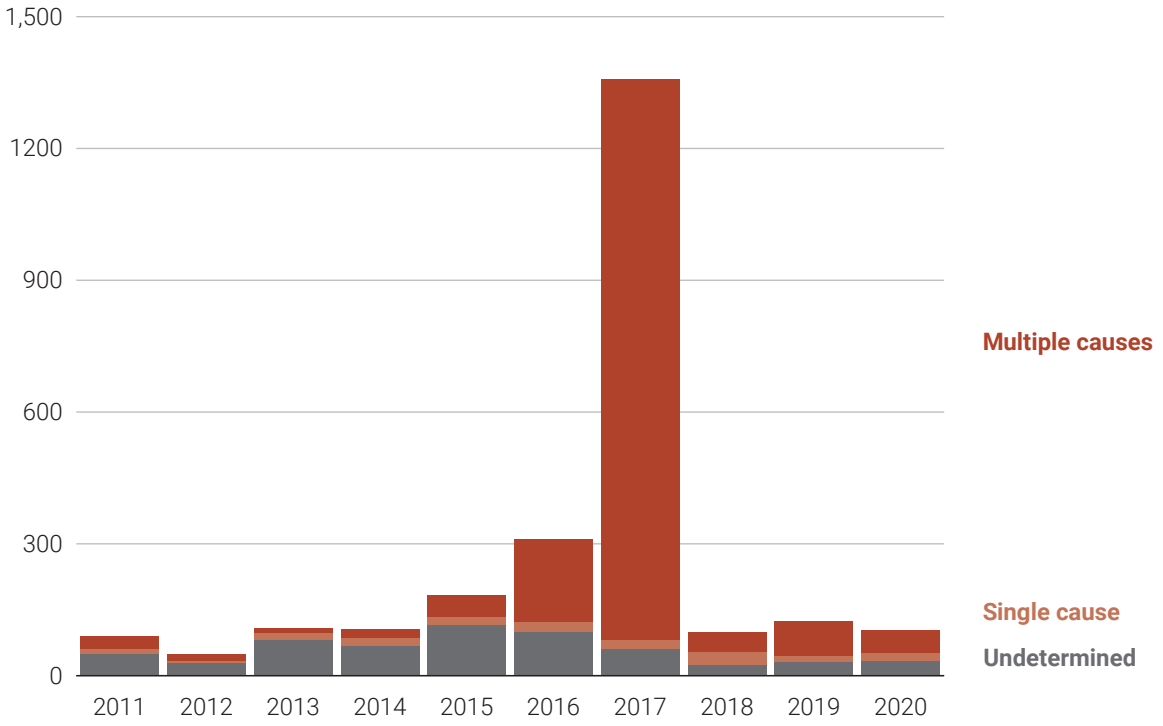


Figure 20. Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Lanao del Sur



a total 225 incidents. The two combined for 51% of the total 1,469 single-cause incidents in the 10 years to 2020. Illegal drug-related incidents surged in 2016 when the Duterte government's war on drugs was unleashed and declined after but continued to count more incidents than other causes. Incidents involving illegal weapons also went on a decline after hitting a high in 2018.

Multiple causes

As Lanao del Sur, particularly Marawi, became the center of extremist activity and attacks in 2017, the share of multicausal incidents in the province's mix of conflict causes rose to 62% while the share of deaths due to such incidents climbed to 92%. Incidents tagged with the 'violent-extremism-religious conflict' pair of causes rose to 446 in 2017 from just 12 in 2016, the year when the Maute Group began launching attacks in Lanao del Sur. The number of deaths hit 1,218 from 156.

By the end of the 2011–2020 period, incidents with multiple causes had comprised 39% of the total while those with a single cause accounted for 37%, with deaths from multiple causes accounting for 70%, and single causes, 7%. Clearly, violent extremism had profoundly reshaped Lanao del Sur's conflict dynamics.

Without it, the province had mainly confronted conflicts with the following multiple causes: clan feud-illegal weapons, personal grudge-illegal weapons, carjacking-robbery, illegal drugs-illegal weapons, and gender-related issues-child abuse. As clashes between Maute Group and government troops became sporadic after 2017, these causes buoyed the multicausal segment of incidents. In particular, armed violence due to clan feuding and personal grudge totaled 321 incidents and took 214 lives—the second highest incident and death counts after violent extremism-religious conflict. Places that recorded at least 10 incidents over the 2011–2020 period were Marawi City, Balabagan, Malabang, Picong, Pualas, Lumbatan, and Masiu.

Basilan

Conflict incidents in Basilan stayed at around 200 a year from 2011 to 2014 yet more than doubled by 2015 and 2016 to reach 380 and 796, respectively, before declining slightly in the next three years (**Figure 21**). Violence began to rise again in 2020. In the 10 years to 2020, incidents totaled 3,874, equivalent to 17% of the region's total and a close third after Lanao del Sur, which placed second to Maguindanao.

Conflict deaths followed a different wave pattern: starting with an elongated V curve from 2011 to 2015, a spike in 2016, and a retreat from violence in 2017 to 2019 before rising once more in 2020 (**Figure 22**). The total deaths of 1,129 in the 2011–2020 period ranked only fourth after those of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Sulu.

Single cause

Conflicts from a single cause accounted for 47% of total incidents. Their numbers stayed low in the 2011–2014 period, climbed in the next two years, then skidded in the next three years. They posted a small increase in 2020. The top single causes throughout the 2011–2020 period were illegal drugs, illegal weapons, gender-related issues, and robbery. Illegal drug incidents summed up to 588, comprising about a third of the 1,816 total incidents with a single cause. Illegal drug incidents rose in 2015, spiked in 2016 or during the start of the war on drugs, and stayed high up to 2020. Deaths totaled 45, of which 33 were recorded from 2016 to 2020.

Rebellion was among the top causes until 2015, after which violent incidents involving the Abu Sayyaf were tagged as violent extremism-religious conflict. There were 112 rebellion-related incidents in the five years to 2015 with 98 conflict deaths.

Multiple causes

Conflict deaths were lower in Basilan compared to the three other provinces because the province had fewer incidents with multiple causes. The province's 784 multicausal incidents, which

Figure 21. Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Basilan

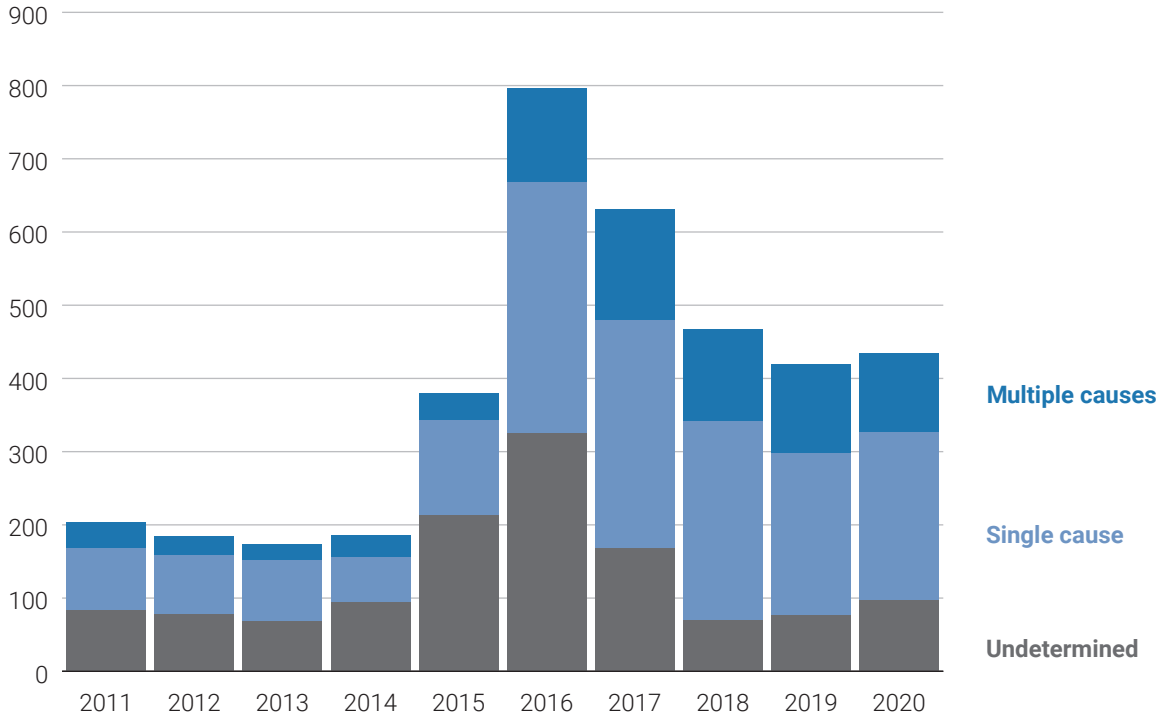
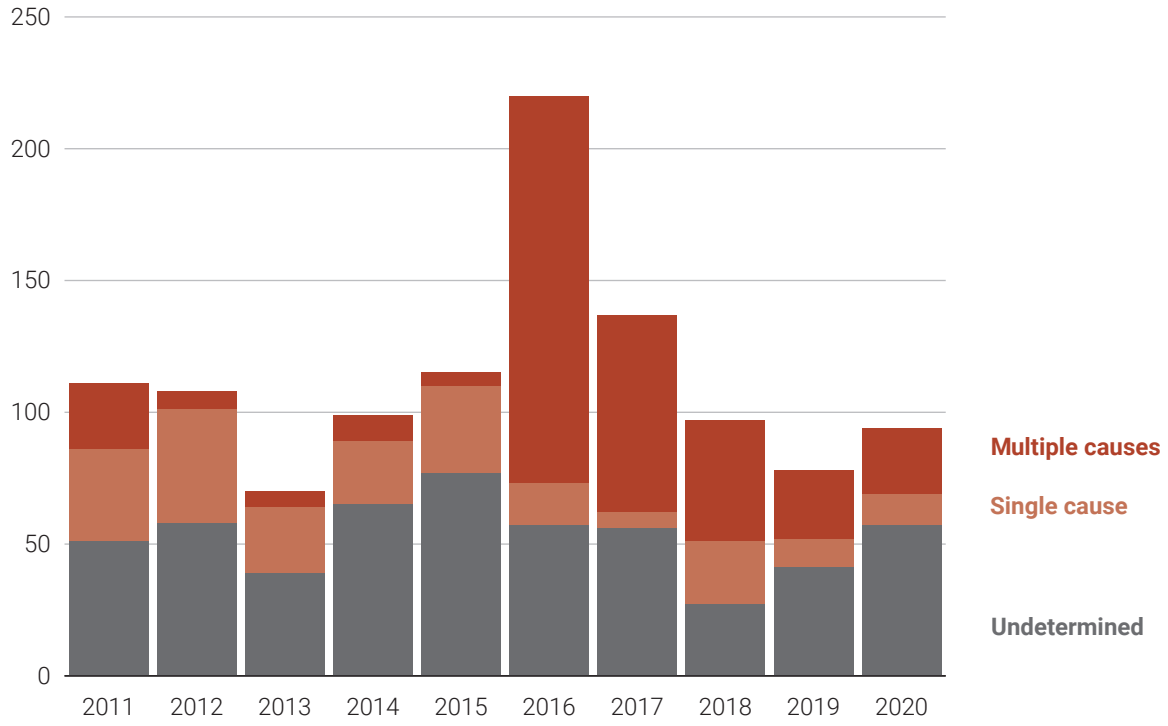


Figure 22. Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Basilan



comprised 20% of the total, were lower than Maguindanao's 2,330 (equivalent to 22%), Lanao del Sur's 1,545 (39%), and Sulu's 870 (41%). Multicausal deaths were 372 in total, also much lower than those of the other provinces.

Nevertheless, multicausal incidents and deaths made a significant impact on Basilan's conflict dynamics. From an annual average of around 30 from 2011 to 2015, multicausal incidents jumped to an average 127 in the next five years, causing deaths to rise as well in the 2016–2020 period. The increase in incidents was due to the following pairs of causes: carjacking-robbery, violent extremism-religious conflict, gender-related issues-child abuse, personal grudge-illegal weapons, clan feud-illegal weapons, and illegal drugs-illegal weapons.

However, the increase in deaths was mainly due to violent extremism-religious conflict, whose toll totaled 213, of which 123 were recorded in 2016 alone. The identity issues of clan feuds and personal grudges linked to weapons use added a total of 77 deaths, of which more than half were recorded in the 2016–2020 period.

It must be underscored though that while violent extremism-religious conflict had pushed up conflict incidence and deaths in Basilan, the totals of 111 incidents and 213 deaths were far less than those in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Sulu. Incidents and deaths, after hitting a high in 2016 and 2017, respectively, had subsided in the following years, including 2020 when more clashes between the Abu Sayyaf and government troops were recorded compared to the year before. The decline could be traced to the election of Hadjiman 'Jim' Hataman-Salliman as provincial governor in 2016 and the departure of an Abu Sayyaf faction led by Isnilon Hapilon to join the Maute Group in Lanao del Sur that year. Hataman, with the backing of then ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman, his brother, and Gulam 'Boy' Hataman, also a brother and mayor of the municipality of

Sumisip, initiated development projects in the province that quelled the Abu Sayyaf.[4]

Sulu

From an annual average of 130 incidents from 2011 to 2014, conflict incidents in Sulu more than doubled to 332 in 2015, climbed further to reach a peak in 2016, dip in 2017, and further decline from 2018 to 2020 (**Figure 23**). The province recorded a total of 3,253 incidents, fourth highest after Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Basilan.

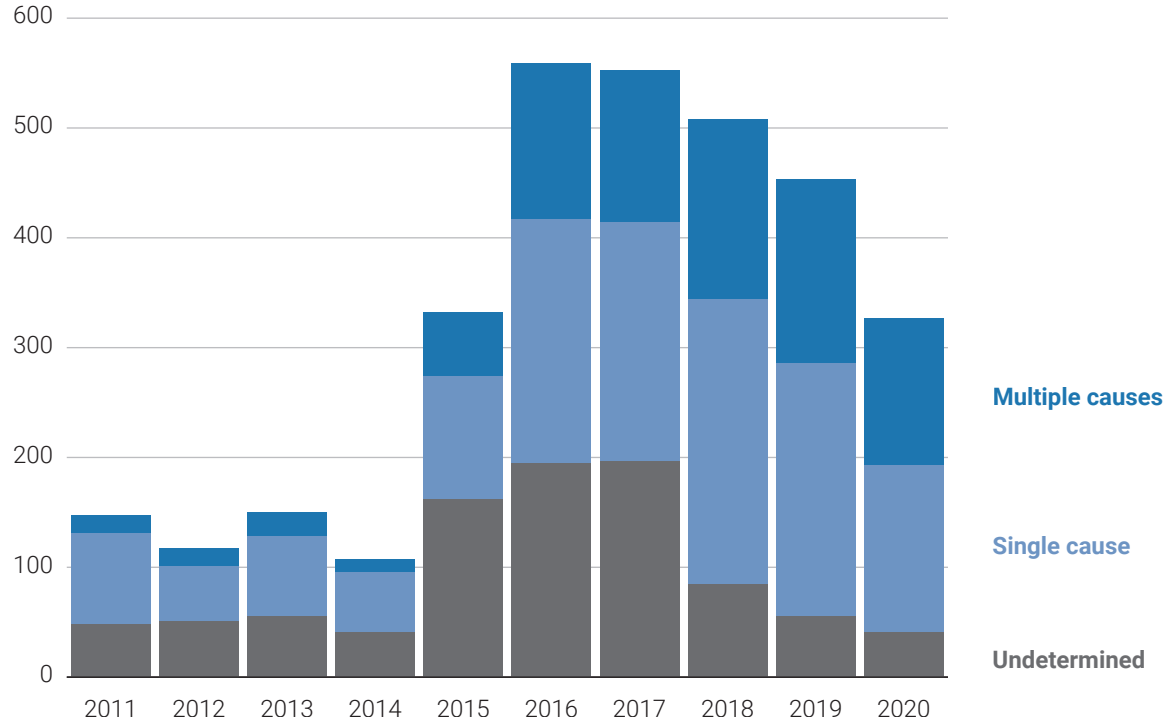
Conflict deaths nearly matched the pattern of incidents, with the highest count recorded in 2017 **(Figure 24)**. Deaths totaled 1,537 in the 10 years to 2020, the third highest after Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

Single cause

Overall, there were more incidents with single rather than multiple causes, though more people died from the latter. The top single-cause drivers of conflict were the shadow economies in drugs, weapons, gambling, and kidnap-for-ransom; robbery, a common crime; and gender-related issues, an identity issue.

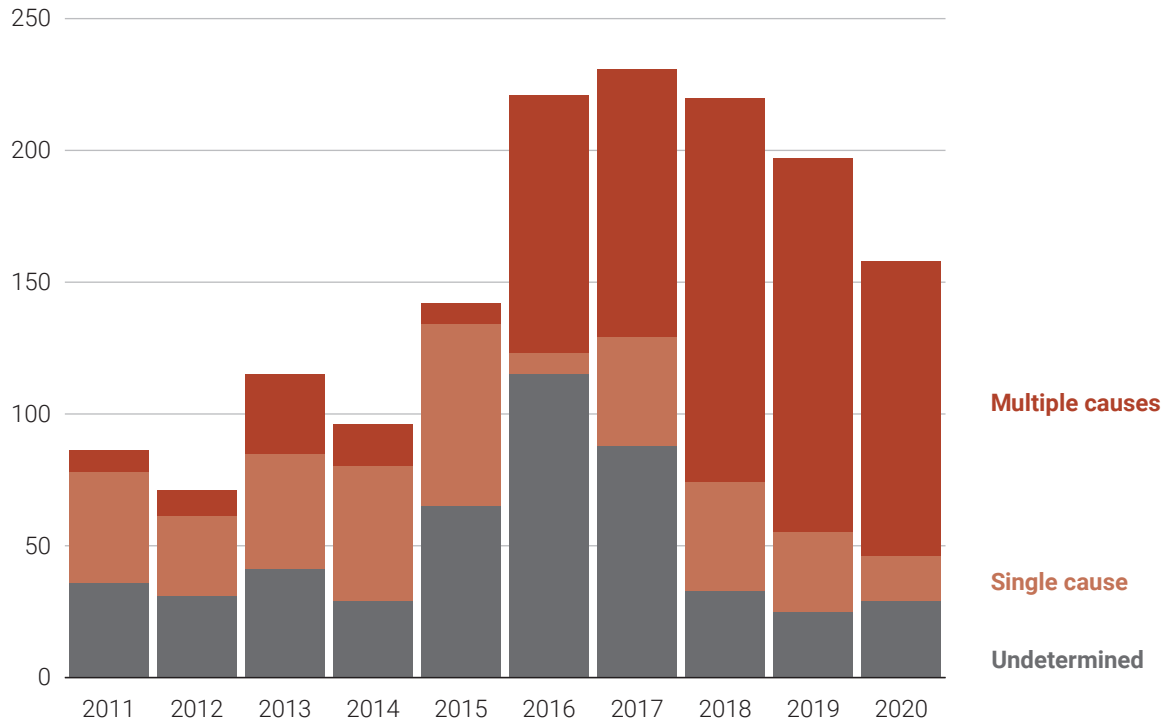
Violence from illegal weapons was the top shadow economy-related issue prior to 2016. However, as the Duterte government launched the war on drugs, illegal drug-related incidents picked up, hitting a peak in 2016 and another high in 2019 before declining the following year. Illegal weapons and illegal gambling incidents hit a high in 2018 then fell in the next two years.

Figure 23. Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Sulu



[4] International Alert, Philippines. 2020. "Peace Dawns in Basilan." In *Conflict Alert 2020: Enduring Wars*. Quezon City: International Alert, Philippines. pp. 27-32.

Figure 24. Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Sulu



Kidnapping incidents also peaked in 2016 before falling in the succeeding years. These four shadow economy issues accounted for 1,038 incidents, equivalent to 71% of the 1,455 total incidents with a single cause while deaths, mostly recorded from 2017 to 2020, summed up to 121 or 32% of the total 373 killed in single-cause incidents.

Rebellion, a political issue, caused a higher death toll, with 188 killed in the five years to 2015. It was also one of the top single causes with 104 incidents before clashes, bombing, and ambush incidents involving the Abu Sayyaf were tagged with the violent extremism-religious conflict pair of causes starting in 2016.

Multiple causes

Multiple causes were behind 870 incidents and 672 deaths, equivalent respectively to 27% and 44% of total incidents and deaths. Pairs of causes were behind 750 incidents and 536 deaths.

Violent extremism-religious conflict was the top pair with 248 incidents and 363 deaths. Incidents and deaths had been rising from 2017 to 2019 before declining in 2020. These incidents covered clashes, shooting incidents, and suicide bombings involving the Abu Sayyaf. The most affected municipality was Patikul with 137 incidents and 234 deaths, followed by the provincial capital Jolo, Indanan, Talipao, and Parang that recorded a total of 73 incidents and 98 deaths.

Other top pairs of causes were carjacking-robbery, illegal drugs-illegal weapons, clan feud-illegal weapons, personal grudge-illegal weapons, and gender-related issues-child abuse. Incident numbers were generally high until 2020 when they fell.

Tawi-Tawi

Of Tawi-Tawi's total of 1,036 conflict incidents in the 10 years to 2020, 61% were due to a single cause, which caused 23% of the 275 total conflict deaths. The province had a low mix of multicausal causes in its conflict profile, accounting for only 13% of incidents that were responsible for 14% of deaths (**Figures 25–26**).

Single cause

Figure 25 shows that single-cause incidents were low from 2011 to 2015, averaging 30 annually during that period. Incidents shot up in 2016 and continued to increase in the following years, hitting a high of 135 in 2019. While incidents fell in 2020, the 108 incidents recorded that year was still higher compared to the annual totals in 2016, 2017, and 2018.

Of the 633 incidents due to a single cause, 550 were due to shadow economy issues, principally illegal drugs that tallied a 10-year total of 362 incidents. Illegal drug-related incidents spiked by 540% to 32 in 2016, the start of the war on drugs, and continued to climb to reach a high of 115 in 2019. Incidents fell to 77 in 2020 but this was the highest garnered by a single cause that year.

Other shadow economy issues that triggered a high number of incidents were human trafficking with a 10-year total of 89; illegal weapons with 54; illegal gambling with 26; and kidnap-for-ransom with 15. Human trafficking was the top shadow economy issue in the 2011–2015 period with a total of 64 cases, making Tawi-Tawi the center of human trafficking in Muslim Mindanao; incidents slowed in the next five years. The

Figure 25. Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Tawi-Tawi

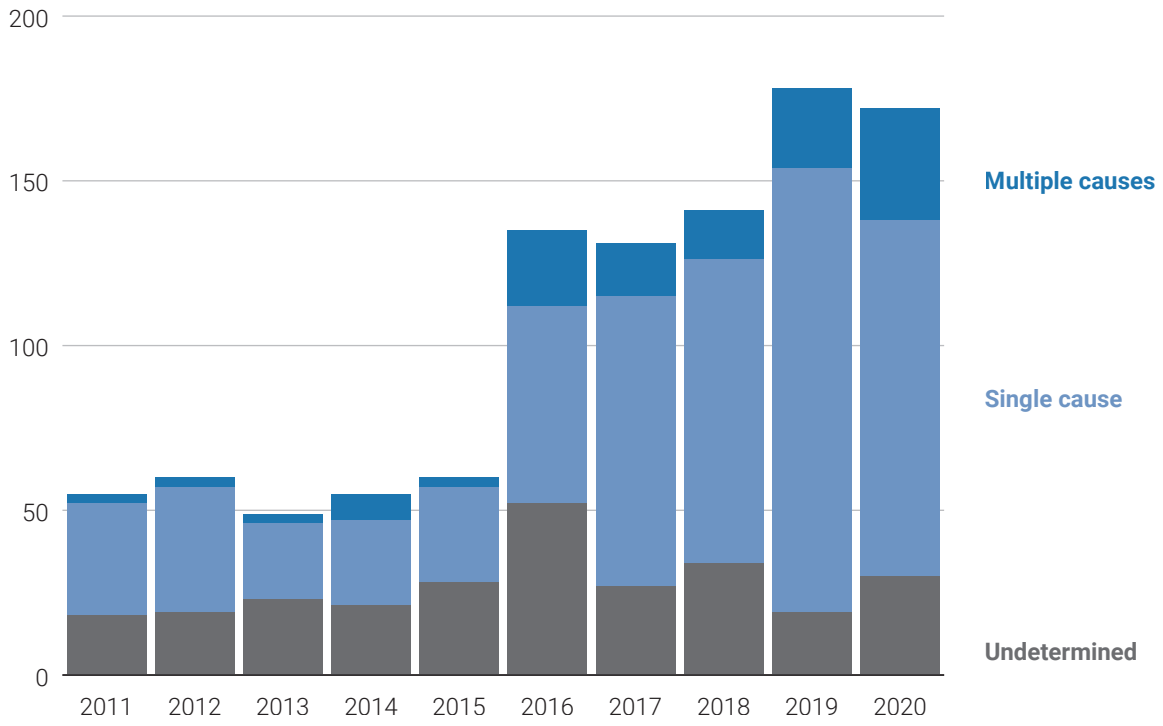
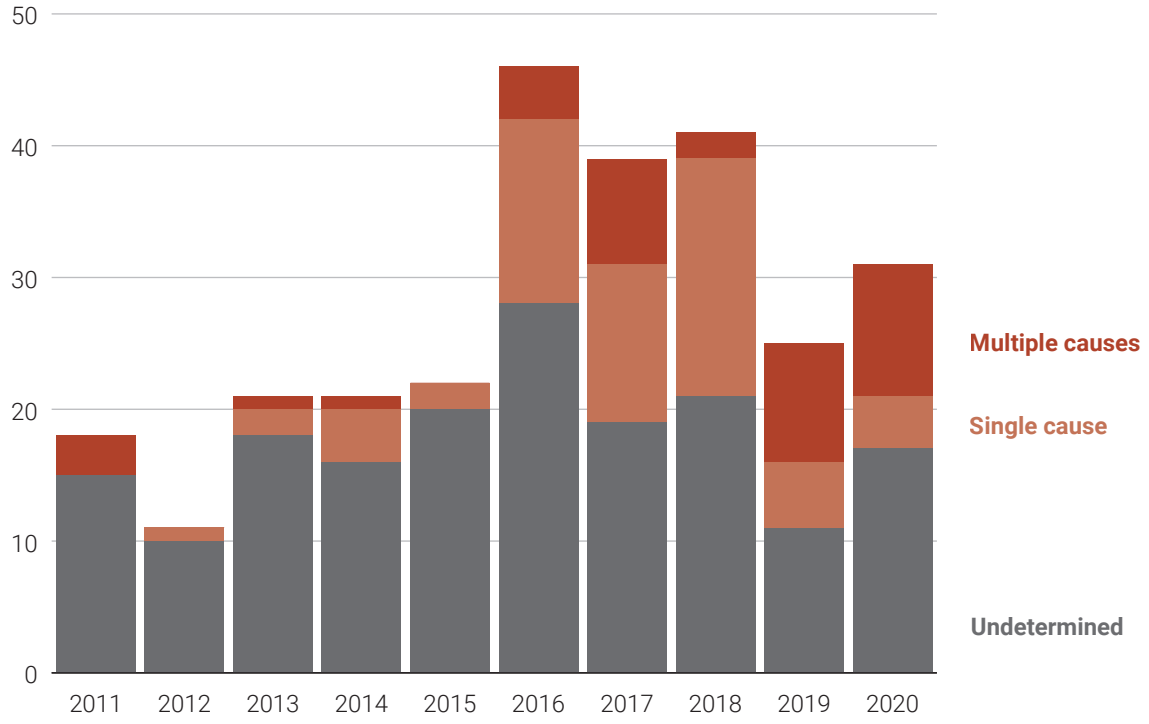


Figure 26. Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Tawi-Tawi



shadow economies in drugs and weapons were the highest contributors to deaths with a total of 43 or 70% of the total 62 due to a single cause.

Other single causes with a high number of incidents were robbery, a common crime, and gender-related issues, an identity issue. They had pushed up incident counts from 2015 to 2017 but decelerated in the following years.

Multiple causes

Incidents with multiple causes totaled 132 as of 2020 and caused 38 deaths. This was partly due to the fewer incidents of violent extremism-religious conflict in the province. However, incidents tagged with this pair of causes tallied four in 2020 from zero in the previous year, providing a warning that more could develop in the coming years.

Tawi-Tawi also had fewer cases of illegal drugs-illegal weapons compared to other provinces, even though this was the province's top multicausal pair with 31 incidents that resulted in 13 deaths. The number of incidents, however, had been steadily increasing since 2018, which taken with the number of incidents tagged with the single illegal drugs and illegal weapons, underscore the growing severity of these causes of violence in the province.

Conclusion

More than 10 years of monitoring conflict in the Bangsamoro has enabled a view and an understanding of the triggers and causes of conflict and their impact on peace, security, and development in the region. The main feature in all the accounts is the 10-year ebb and flow of conflict incidents and deaths that show how violence rose, peaked, and later declined, ostensibly reinforcing the oft-made claim that violence is "going to get worse before it gets better".

The constant shifts in conflict dynamics in the region, however, depict the situation as more complex than the remark above and disparages

the notion that violence in the region is receding for good. If there is anything learned from this granular database, it is that violence can upend expectations when least expected. As Conflict Alert has shown, political transitions and decisions, violent actors, and the confluence of conflict causes can cause unexpected spikes in violence.

The first transition, from the Aquino to the Duterte administration in 2016, saw a state crackdown on the illegal drug trade that lifted the number of buy-busts and arrests of dealers and users and the confiscation of drugs and drug paraphernalia. At the same time, the State campaigned against illegal weapons and illegal gambling, thus, turning these three previously discreet shadow economies into potent sites of conflict. Conflict Alert data demonstrate that the number of conflict incidents and deaths due to these shadow economies rose and fell within the 2016–2020 period, though as a whole they totaled much more than in the previous five-year period. Conflict related to the illicit drug economy remains high as the Duterte administration bows out and will likely increase again, underscoring the unfinished business on this front.

The conflict-to-peace transition that was marked by the signing of the CAB and the ratification of the BOL has realized the Bangsamoro dream of a bigger autonomous region with more powers than the previous ARMM. While this has drastically reduced rebellion-related violence, horizontal violence from communal and clan feuding involving the MILF, MNLF, BIFF, indigenous peoples, and other armed groups over issues such as land endures. These are the types of conflicts that will continue to threaten the fragile peace.

Extremist armed groups and communist insurgents that were not a part of the Bangsamoro political settlement will also pose continuing threats to the regional government. The data shows that while the number of extremist incidents had declined from the peak in 2017, they caused the highest number of conflict deaths.

To be sure, the imposition of martial law and the COVID-19 lockdowns played a decisive role in the steady decline in conflict incidents and deaths from 2017 to 2020. They restricted the use and transit of weapons and the movement of violent actors. These repressive actions were unsustainable to say the least, though they did pose a critical challenge to peacebuilders who now need to demonstrate that the political transition could deliver a more stable and lasting peace.

For policy makers and peacebuilders who continue to work in the Bangsamoro, keeping up with the shifts in conflict dynamics can be challenging. However, the insights from 10 years of conflict monitoring and the tools that Conflict Alert has developed will be of help. The measurement of conflict per capita and conflict density are particularly helpful in providing an alternative way of appreciating how conflict has affected a locality and thereby inform programs and projects that can better address this.

Another tool is the determination of all possible causes of a conflict and to account for its possible costs based on the combination of causes. Conflict Alert has shown, for instance, that political and identity issues, mixed with the shadow economy in illegal weapons, like the feuds between individuals affiliated with former rebel groups, can turn bloody, cause displacement, or invite reprisals. If the point of contention is land, the conflict could persist. By unpacking the causes of conflict, policy makers and peacebuilders can address the root causes.

Teduray families remain displaced after a firefight between two families over a piece of land in 2019 forced them to leave their homes and farmlands in the interior sitios in Barangay Kuya, South Upi. They have set up new houses near the center of the barangay. ◙ **Amiel Cagayan**

BOX 1

Conflict Terrains

Judy T. Gulane

Territorial claims are at the heart of the quest for a Bangsamoro homeland. The passage of Republic Act No. (RA) 11054 that created the BARMM gave life to that quest and paved the way for retiring the decades-long rebellion and the underlying land conflicts that lay at its core. It also set the momentum for expanding the core territories of the Bangsamoro.

However, the establishment of the new Bangsamoro region did not resolve the many land-related conflicts among its residents. In fact, Conflict Alert data from 2011–2020 show that in many instances, these conflicts were aggravated. Farmers, indigenous peoples, migrant-settlers, families and clans, former rebels violently fought over the control of land and other agricultural resources, causing injury, deaths, and displacement.

This article traces the contours of the land-related conflicts in the Bangsamoro region.

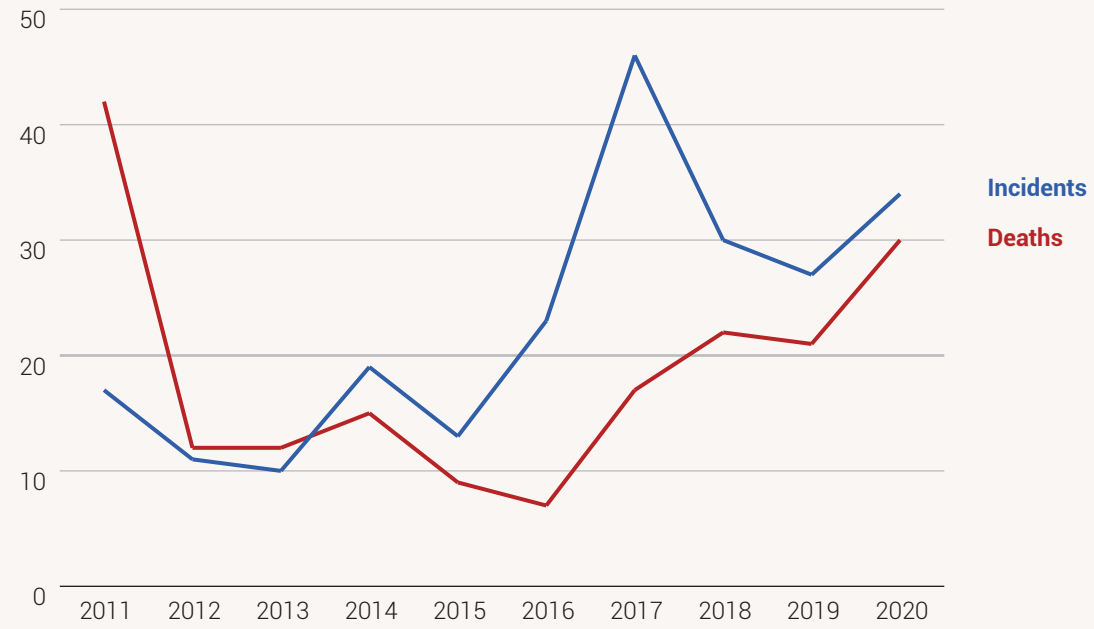
Uptrend in land conflicts

From 2011 to 2020, the Bangsamoro tallied a total of 230 land conflicts and 187 fatalities from these incidents. The decade began ominously, with 2011 registering 17 land-related conflicts that incurred 42 deaths, and ended just as portentously, as 2020 recorded 34 incidents and 30 deaths (**Figure 1.1**). Land-related conflicts and deaths were relatively low up to 2015 but began to move upwards by 2016–2017, raising the grim prospect of more land-related conflicts by the next decade.

Examination of the incidents shows that 82% were multicausal in nature. Many land-related conflicts evolved into violent incidents involving the use of illegal weapons or into bloody family or clan feuds.

Other incidents involved individuals and groups affiliated with the MILF, MNLF, and BIFF. They possess a distinct advantage because they wear two hats: one, they were or are combatants of

Figure 1.1. Number of Land-Related Conflict Incidents and Deaths in the Bangsamoro



these groups and are armed; and two, they are also members of families and clans with economic interests.

Clashes took place between members of the MILF and between members of the MILF and the BIFF or MNLF. These groups were also at the head of the process of driving away other groups with equally legitimate land claims such as the indigenous peoples, other Moro farmers, and Christian settlers. Attacks deliberately targeted groups such as the Teduray–Lambangian indigenous peoples. These despite the fact that the MILF is a signatory to the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro that preceded RA 11054 and the MNLF was a party to the 1996 Final Peace Agreement that accompanied the establishment of the ARMM, the precursor of BARMM.[a] It is safe to say that these political settlements did not arrest nor decrease the land wars in the Bangsamoro.

Ebb and flow

An examination of conflict triggers shows that a combination of causes pushed up the number of land-related conflict incidents and deaths in certain years.

The year 2011 was distinguished by incidents involving the use of illegal weapons, clan feuding, and clashes between commanders identified with the BIFF and the MILF, all of which exacted a high number of casualties. For instance, in Sumisip, Basilan, a bomb took the lives of seven, including a four-year-old girl. Authorities linked the bombing to a conflict involving land claimants of a rubber plantation that was put under the government's agrarian reform program.

In Datu Piang, Maguindanao, a clash between BIFF and MILF commanders and their men left 13 BIFF members dead and five injured, five MILF members killed and four injured, and the displacement of more than 2,000 town residents.

[a] Lingga, A. 2016. "Building the Bangsamoro Government." In *Mindanao: The Long Journey to Peace and Prosperity*, edited by P. Hutchcroft, 134–137. Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing.

The fighting had little to do with vertical struggles against the State, but rather exemplified the intense horizontal conflicts dating back to the early 1980s over an eight-hectare piece of land.

In 2017, the number of incidents climbed to 46 from 23 in the previous year while the number of deaths rose to 17 from seven. Incidents surged in four of five provinces comprising the BARMM.

For instance, Tawi-Tawi recorded four incidents that year after recording none in the previous six years. One of these was a shooting incident in Panglima Sugala that was triggered by the issuance of a certificate of land ownership award under the government's agrarian reform program. The conflict was settled through the payment of blood money.

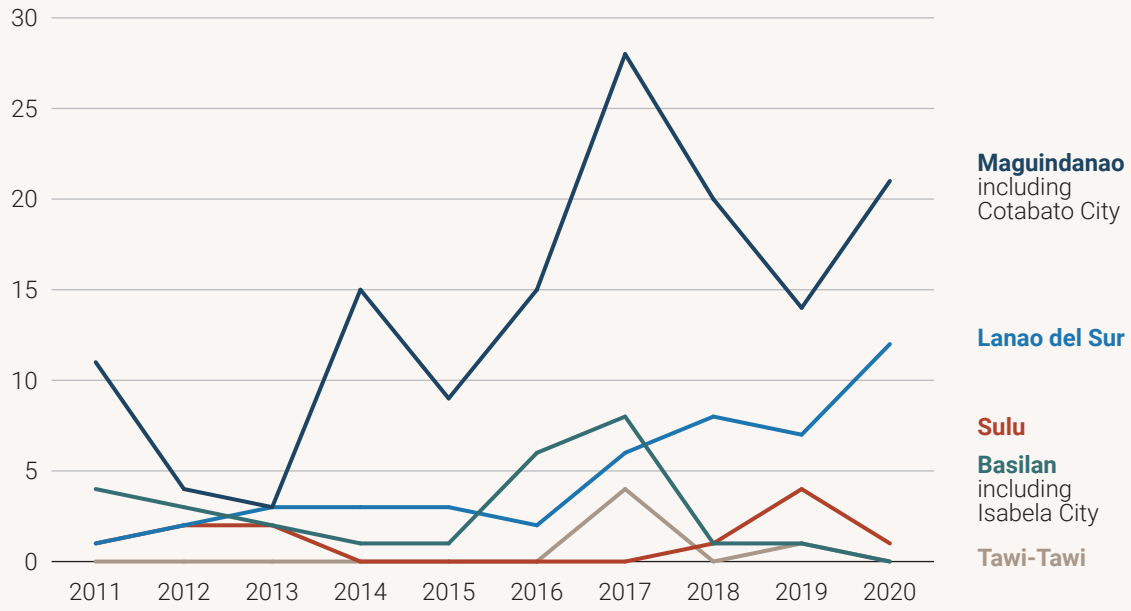
In Maguindanao, clashes between groups associated with the MILF and the MNLF took place in the towns of Datu Blah T. Sinsuat, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Sultan sa Barongis, and Guindulungan.

Worst among all other land-related conflicts was the rapid escalation of violence against the Teduray-Lambiangan indigenous tribe. In December 2017, the BIFF launched successive attacks against Teduray families in the contiguous towns of Datu Saudi-Amptuan, Datu Unsay, and Datu Hoffer Ampatuan. The BIFF had been engaged in a firefight with the military but also attacked the Teduray. Houses were burned, men were kidnapped, and a Teduray leader was executed.

Finally, the year 2020 was marked by an increase in clan feuds due to land issues, which raised the number of people killed from such incidents relative to the previous year. Other land-related conflict incidents that were associated with the use of illegal weapons similarly increased. The number of incidents involving armed groups remained as serious as the year earlier.

Teduray families who were displaced in 2019 chose to stay near the center of Barangay Kuya, South Upi out of fear of being caught in violence if they returned to their homes and farmlands. **Amiel Cagayan**

Figure 1.2. Number of Land-Related Conflict Incidents in Bangsamoro Provinces



Locus of incidents and costs

Figures 1.2 and 1.3 show the distribution by province of land conflicts and their cost in terms of conflict deaths. Sixty-one percent (61%) of incidents and 76% of deaths took place in Maguindanao while 20% of incidents and 10% of deaths were in Lanao del Sur.

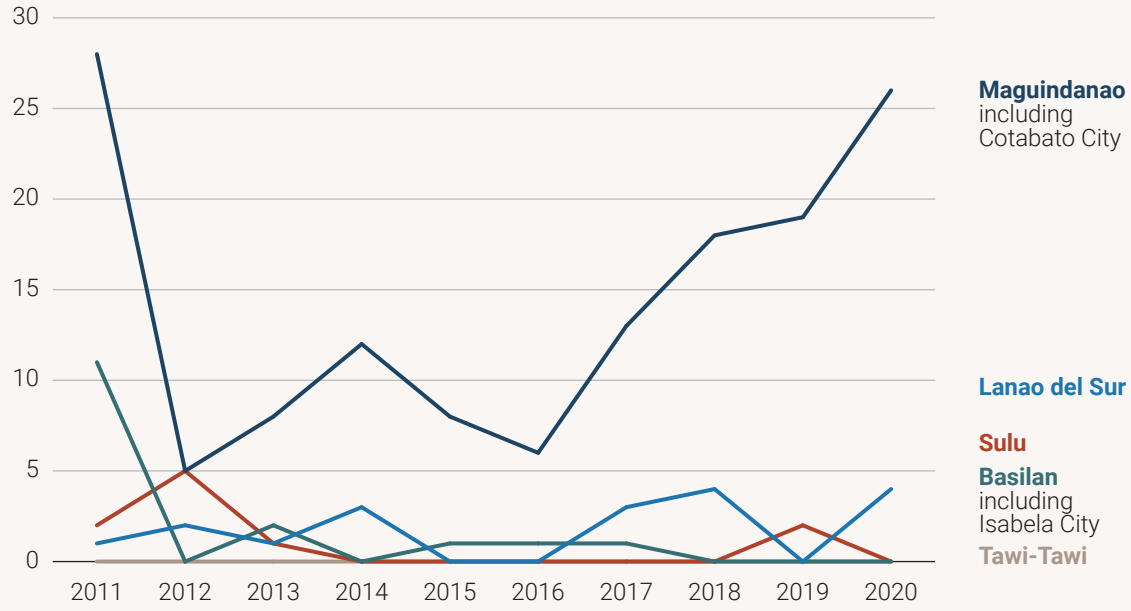
These two provinces in the central Mindanao mainland possess wide plains and significant water resources that can turn their total 25,200 square kilometers of land into an ideal site for agriculture and other rural-based industries. Sadly, these same features have transformed Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur into the center of land-related conflict incidents. In contrast to the mainland, the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi account for less than half of the total land area of the mainland, or only 11,851 square kilometers. As they bear most of the incidents and deaths related to land, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur also determine the overall trend in resource-based violence across the Bangsamoro region. The upward direction in incidents and deaths in 2020 in these two BARMM provinces predicts the future scenario for land and other resource-related conflicts.

Conclusion

Conflict Alert data covering 10 years highlighted several disturbing trends: the rising number of land conflicts, particularly in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur; the wide use of illegal weapons among individuals, families, and clans to assert their land claims; and the increasing number of family or clan feuds triggered by land-related issues. Revenge killings turned these feuds into conflict strings.

However, the newly emerging and growing assertiveness of former rebel and extremist groups to contest or claim tracts of land is most critical. Their actions have severely affected the security situation and marginalized already disadvantaged

Figure 1.3. Number of Deaths due to Land-Related Conflict Incidents in Bangsamoro Provinces



groups such as the Teduray–Lambangian and other groups that also have land claims.

Previous Conflict Alert annual reports have unequivocally called for a Bangsamoro land law to mediate or settle disputes before they explode into violence. However, this call has fallen on deaf ears.

Except in many places at the local government level.

The future lies with conflict resolution bodies especially dedicated to land and clan conflicts established by local governments such as those in the Iranun municipalities of Parang, Buldon, Matanog, and Barira in Maguindanao. They have resolved many land conflicts and prevented deaths and displacement. The optimism lies with these self-help initiatives at the ground level.

In the meantime, violent conflicts between armed groups associated with the MILF, MNLF, and BIFF have not been defused enough to erode the fear that communities endure whenever they are caught in the crossfire of these warring groups. Worse, the intimidation and bullying of unarmed groups have become rampant and are intensifying.

Without mediation or intervention by the State or by Moro leaders in the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, resource-related violence focused on land will remain a feature in the Bangsamoro despite the political settlements. And that will undermine any effort at or claim of normalization that has been hoped for in the new region.

A mother finds time to play with her son in Ditsaan-Ramain, Lanao del Sur while cleaning *sibujing* (*sakurab* or scallions), an ingredient for the popular Maranao condiment *palapa*.
Bobby Timonera

CHAPTER 3

Human Development and Violent Conflict in the BARMM, 2011 to 2020

Human Development and Violent Conflict in the BARMM, 2011 to 2020

Toby Melissa C. Monsod[1]

This paper takes stock of human development outcomes and the incidence of violent conflict in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), focusing on the years from 2011 to 2020. The period is significant for the following events that transpired: one, the rescheduling of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) general elections and appointment of an officer-in-charge governor by former President Benigno Aquino III in 2011; two, the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2012 and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014; and three, the events that occurred before and immediately after the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) was finally ratified in January 2019 and BARMM created in February 2019, including the violent flashpoint in Mamasapano in 2015, the war in Marawi in 2017, and martial rule that lasted till the end of 2019.[2]

It is also significant for the availability of conflict data from Conflict Alert, which began tracking violent conflicts in the region in 2011.

The author finds that between 2012 and 2018 there was an overall uptick in the level of human development achievements in BARMM. This advance is welcome, but it is much less than the advances registered by all other regions over the same period. It is, moreover, too early to tell whether the rise can be sustained long enough to buck the overall declining trend in development outcomes observed since 1997.

One reason to be cautious is that the ebb and flow of vertical and horizontal conflict since 2011—for instance, the increase in violent conflict after 2012, specifically horizontal conflict, followed by the eruption of another vertical war in 2017, this time between the GRP and ISIS-allied groups, and the resilience of horizontal conflict even during martial rule and a pandemic lockdown—seems to be consistent with what has been described as a "conflict trap", wherein the end of political fighting ushers in a surge in violent crime, and civil war, once over, is "alarmingly likely to restart" (Collier 2007, 27).[3] If BARMM is in a conflict trap, then gains in living standards and human development could be fleeting unless drivers of horizontal conflict are addressed more definitively.

In the next section, human development levels in BARMM and other regions over time are described. This is followed by a description of the vertical

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[1] Professor, University of the Philippines School of Economics. I thank Paolo Kris Adriano and Randy Tuano of the Philippine Human Development Network for the estimation of the regional HDIs, as well as AJ Montesa of International Alert for excellent data processing support. All errors are mine alone.

[2] The CAB was the final peace agreement between the GRP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

[3] This was suggested in an earlier essay by Monsod (2016) based on a descriptive account of armed conflict in then-ARMM until 2012 and Conflict Alert data from 2011 to 2014.

and horizontal conflicts since 2011, positing how patterns indicate that BARMM may still be in a conflict trap. The paper concludes with a comment on horizontal conflict and social peace.

Human development in BARMM, 1997 to 2018

"The purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives" (UNDP 1995, 11). While gross domestic product and its growth are about the expansion of material resources—incomes or outputs—available to a people, the human development approach is about "expanding the richness of human lives and not simply the richness of the economies where people live."[4] In other words, human development is fundamentally about "widening the range of people's choices"—giving people more freedom and opportunity to live lives they value. This effectively means developing people's abilities as well as giving them a chance to use those abilities.

The three foundations for human development are to live a healthy and creative life, to be knowledgeable, and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living (which is a surrogate for all other dimensions of human development not reflected in the first two). To capture these foundations and provide a measure of overall achievements, four indicators are combined into what is known as the human development index (HDI). Indicators are life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling for adults (age 25 and older), expected years of schooling among youth (ages 6 to 24 years), and per capita income adjusted to reflect purchasing power parity (PPP) across space and time. The value of the HDI can range from 0 to one, with values closer to one indicating high average achievements.[5]

This metric indicates that the people of BARMM have been able to accumulate less capacities and have enjoyed less opportunities to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives than others across country. The latest data (for 2018) indicates that "stock" of health in BARMM, as measured by life expectancy at birth, is below the national average by 5 percent (or by 3.6 years); the stock of education, as measured by mean years of schooling among adults, is below the national average by 35 percent (or by 3.2 years); and living standards, as measured by per capita purchasing power, is below the national average by 60 percent (or by 43,436 PPP National Capital Region [NCR] 2018 pesos). Altogether, human development achievements in BARMM are at a level that is one-third the achievements in NCR, the top performing region, and about 40 percent of the average achievements across the country.

These numbers and how they have evolved since 1997 are presented in **Figures 1** to **5**. From a life expectancy at birth of 55.4 years in 2000, BARMM is now at 68.1 years, or an increase of 12.7 years, narrowing the distance from the top performing region (NCR) by about 8.5 years (**Figure 1**).[6] This catch-up could very well be an overestimation however, since official life tables have not been updated and values after 2010 are only a simple linear projection using values from the 2000 and 2010 life tables.[7]

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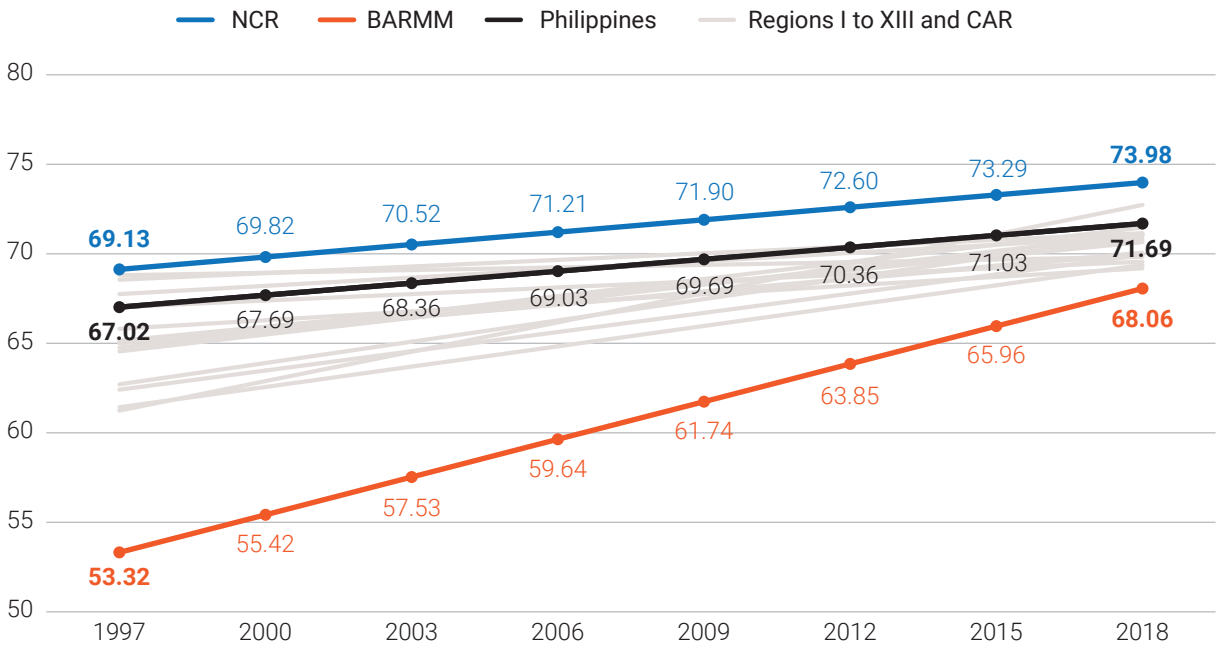
[4] See https://www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/what-human-development, which this paragraph draws heavily from. The human development approach was first introduced by the UNDP in 1990.

[5] Methodological notes on the HDI are found in the technical annex of Philippine Human Development Reports. See https://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013techstat.pdf.

[6] Defined as the number of years a newborn child can be expected to live under a given mortality condition of an area in a given year (https://psa.gov.ph/content/life-expectancy-birth-1).

[7] The linear projections are obvious from the straight lines (constant slopes) in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Life Expectancy at Birth by Region, 1997 to 2018



Source: Computations by the Human Development Network; available upon request.

In contrast, the mean years of schooling among adults[8] in BARMM has decreased from 7.9 years in 1998 to 6.1 years in 2018, which increased the gap between BARMM and the top performing region (NCR) from 2.3 to 4.6 years. There was also a general increase in mean years of schooling across all regions during the period, thus the gap between BARMM and the national average increased from 0.4 to 3.2 years. Between 2012 and 2018, mean years of schooling in BARMM decreased from 6.7 years to 6.1 years (**Figure 2**).

Expected years of schooling among children and youth ages 6 to 24 years has fared a little better.[9] After decreasing from 11.6 to 10.7 years between 1998 and 2004, expected years of schooling in BARMM increased to 12.4 years in 2018 for an overall increase of 0.8 years. This narrowed the gap between BARMM and the top performing region (Cordillera Autonomous Region [CAR]) from 1.8 years to 1.5 years, but the gap between BARMM and the national average widened from 0.6 to 0.9 years. Between 2012 and 2018, difference between BARMM and CAR stayed steady at 1.5 years, while the difference between BARMM and the national average increased by 0.1 years (**Figure 3**).

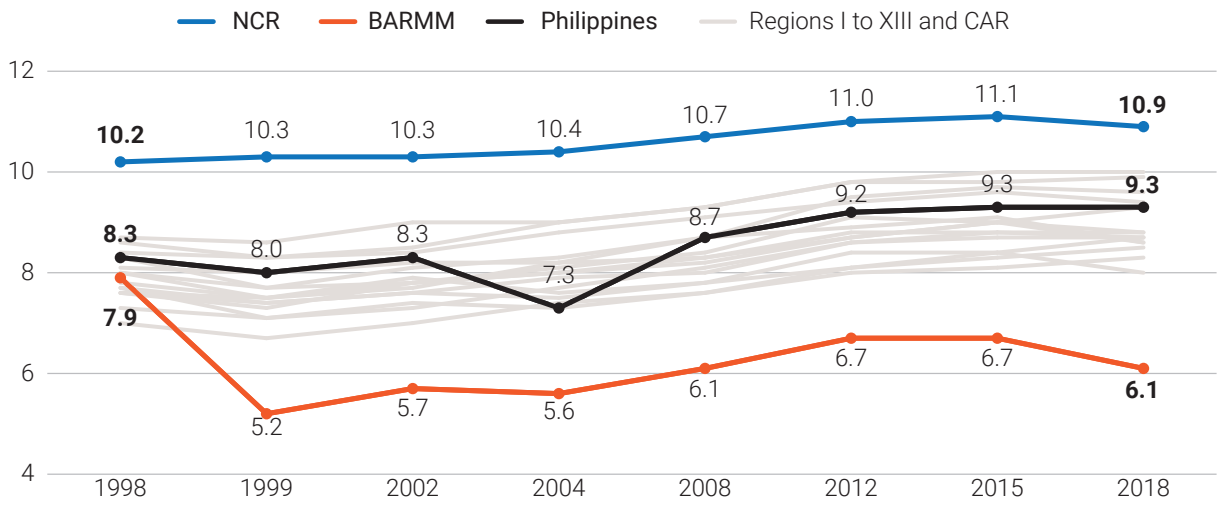
Living standards in BARMM declined substantially between 1997 and 2018, despite improving slightly from 2015 to 2018 (**Figure 4**). Per capita income (in PPP NCR 2018 pesos[10]) was at 39,778 in 1997 and at 28, 901 in 2018, which amounts to

[8] Mean years of schooling is estimated by assigning an equivalent number of years to each response under the 'highest grade completed' variable in the Labor Force Survey (LFS). The weighted average of the number of years of schooling among adults aged 25 and older is then generated for each province.

[9] Expected years of schooling is calculated using the weighted sum of the complete number of years of a school-age child of a particular age, where the weights are the probability of being enrolled in school at that age, which is assumed equal to the current enrolment ratio at that age in the LFS.

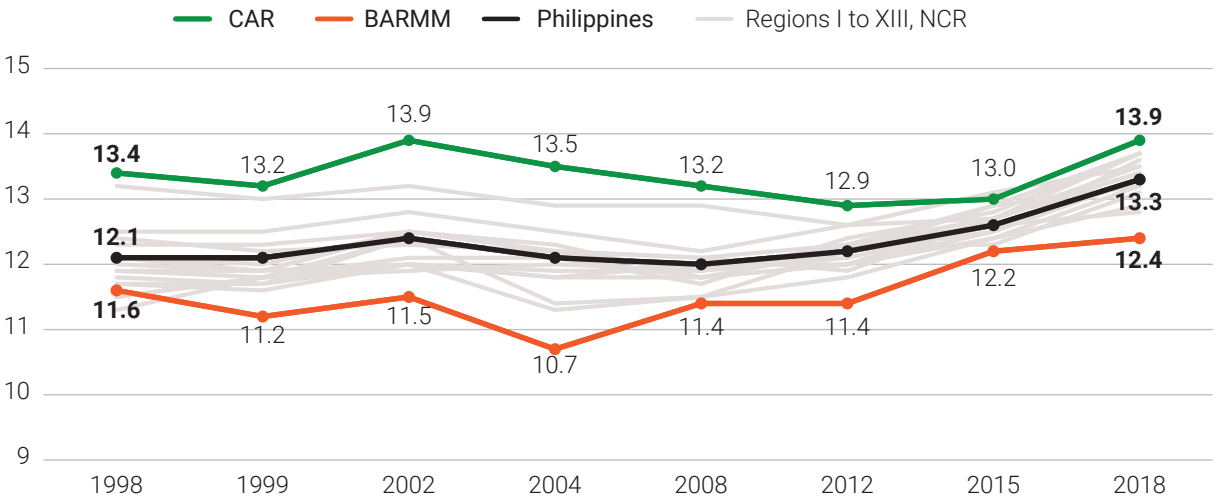
[10] Nominal per capita income in each region is converted to '2018 NCR pesos' using a conversion factor equal to the cost of a bundle of minimum food and nonfood requirements in that region relative to its cost in the NCR in 2018. This gives a comparable measure of income per capita over time and space in the Philippines.

Figure 2. Mean Years of Education of Adults (25 years and above) by Region, 1998 to 2018



Intervals correspond to the closest and latest data available to the survey rounds of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (i.e. 1998 for 1997; 2002 for 2003, 2004 for 2006, 2008 for 2009, then 2012, 2015 and 2018).
Source: Computations by the Human Development Network, available upon request.

Figure 3. Expected Years of Schooling for Youth ages 6-24 by Region, 1998 to 2018

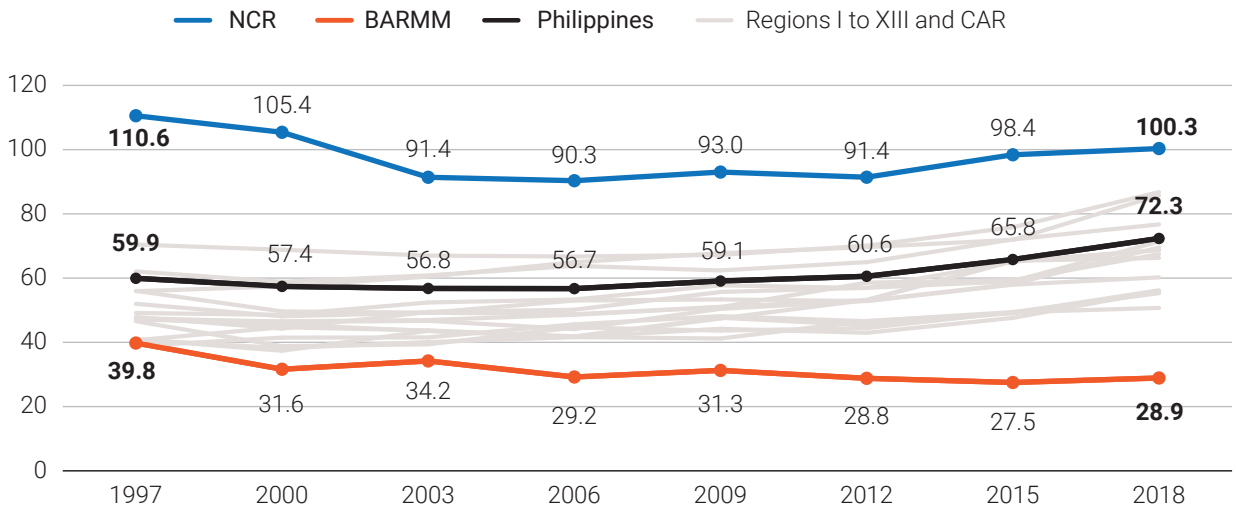


Intervals correspond to the closest and latest data available to the survey rounds of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (i.e. 1998 for 1997; 2002 for 2003, 2004 for 2006, 2008 for 2009, then 2012, 2015 and 2018).
Source: Computations by the Human Development Network, available upon request.

an annual average growth rate of −1.51 percent. Because average national living standards increased during the period, the gap between BARMM and the national average widened by about 92 percent (from 22,569 to 43,436); the gap between BARMM and the top performing region (NCR) widened by 25 percent (from 57,184 to 71,435). The increase in living standards in BARMM between 2015 and 2018 was just enough to leave living standards between 2012 and 2018 fairly steady.[11]

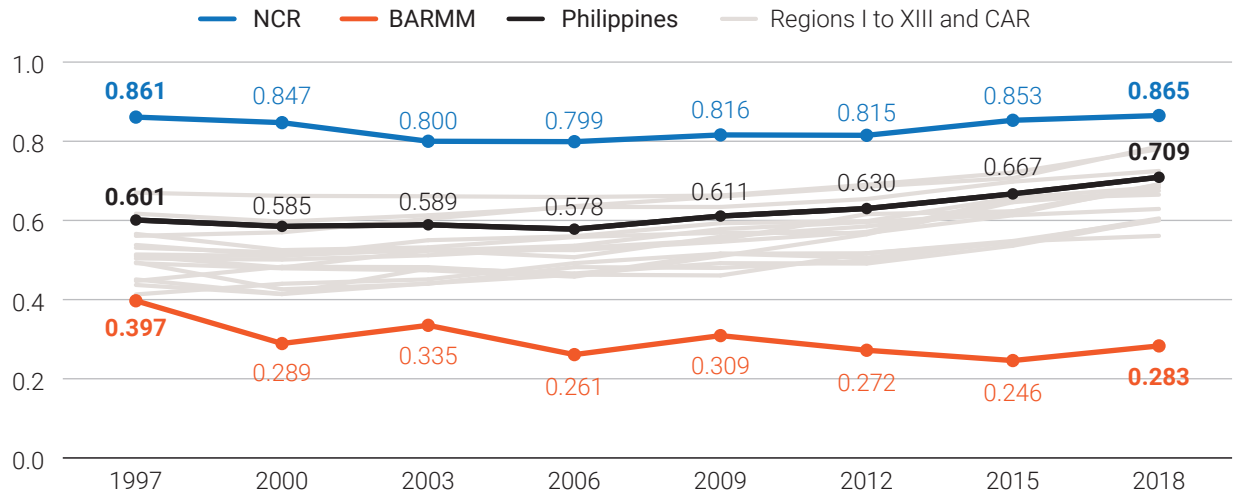
[11] Living standards may substantially increase in 2021 if recent estimates of first semester poverty incidence for 2021 from Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), which are based on per capita income estimates from the first round of the 2021 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES), are any indication. The PSA does not release first round estimates of per capita income, however (https://psa.gov.ph/income-expenditure/fies).

Figure 4. Per Capita Income by Region, 1997 to 2018 (in 000's PPP 2018 NCR pesos)



Source: Computations by the Human Development Network; available upon request. Intervals correspond to the survey rounds of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey.

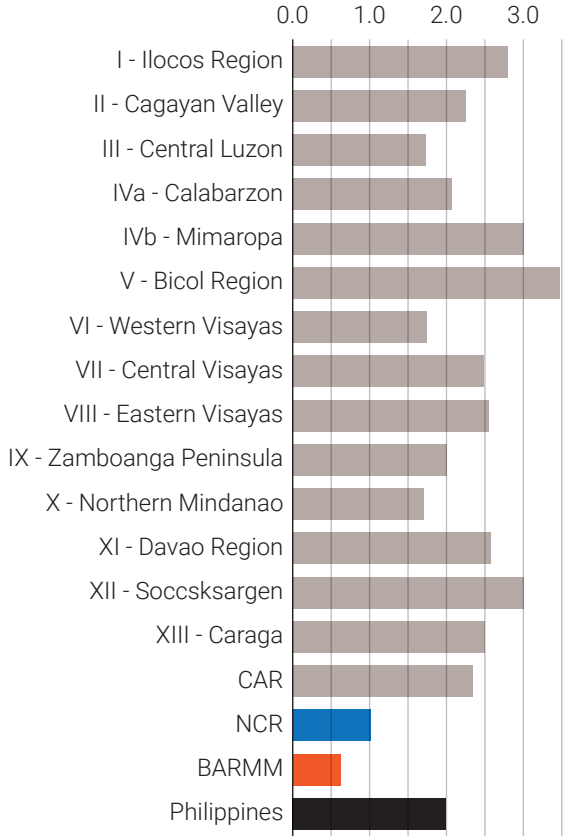
Figure 5. Human Development Index by Region, 1997 to 2018



Source: Computations by the Human Development Network; available upon request. Intervals correspond to the survey rounds of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey.

As a whole, the HDI in BARMM in 2018 was 0.283, or about one-third the HDI of the top performing region (NCR at 0.865) and about 40 percent the HDI for the country as a whole (0.709) (**Figure 5**). That said, the HDI of BARMM increased slightly between 2012 and 2018, representing an annual average growth rate of 0.62 percent—a welcome advance. However, this growth rate was smaller than the rates observed in other regions (**Figure 6**) and, moreover, it is too early to tell whether there is enough momentum behind that rise to finally buck the overall declining trend of human development achievements recorded in BARMM since 1997 (**Figure 7**).

Figure 6. Average Annual Growth Rate of Human Development Index for the Period 2012 to 2018, by Region (in percent)

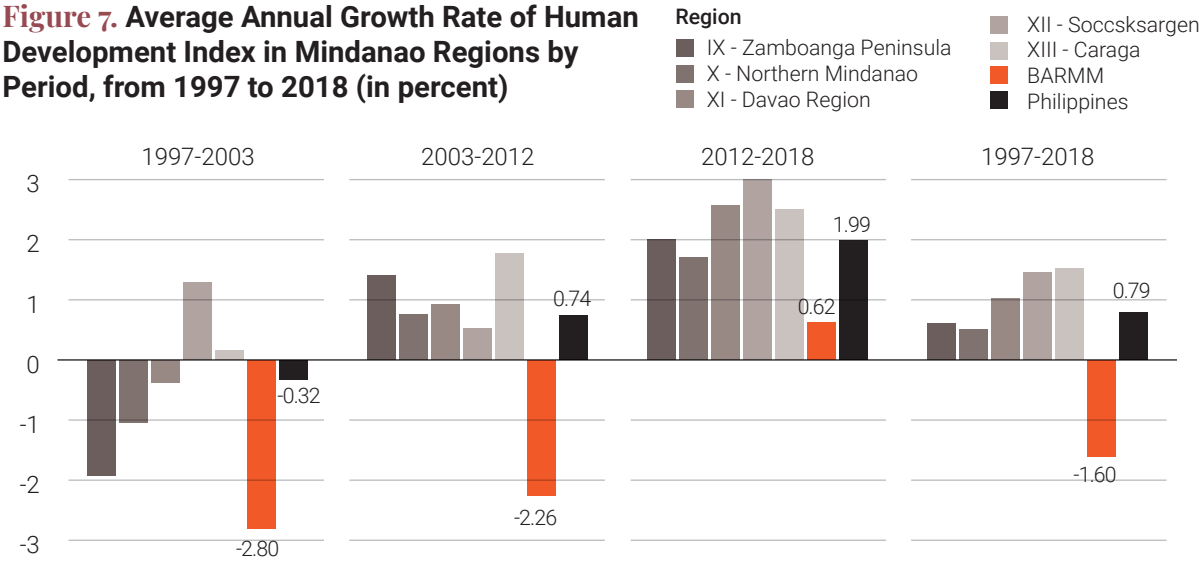


Source: Computations by author, available upon request.

Vertical and horizontal conflicts in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2011 to 2020

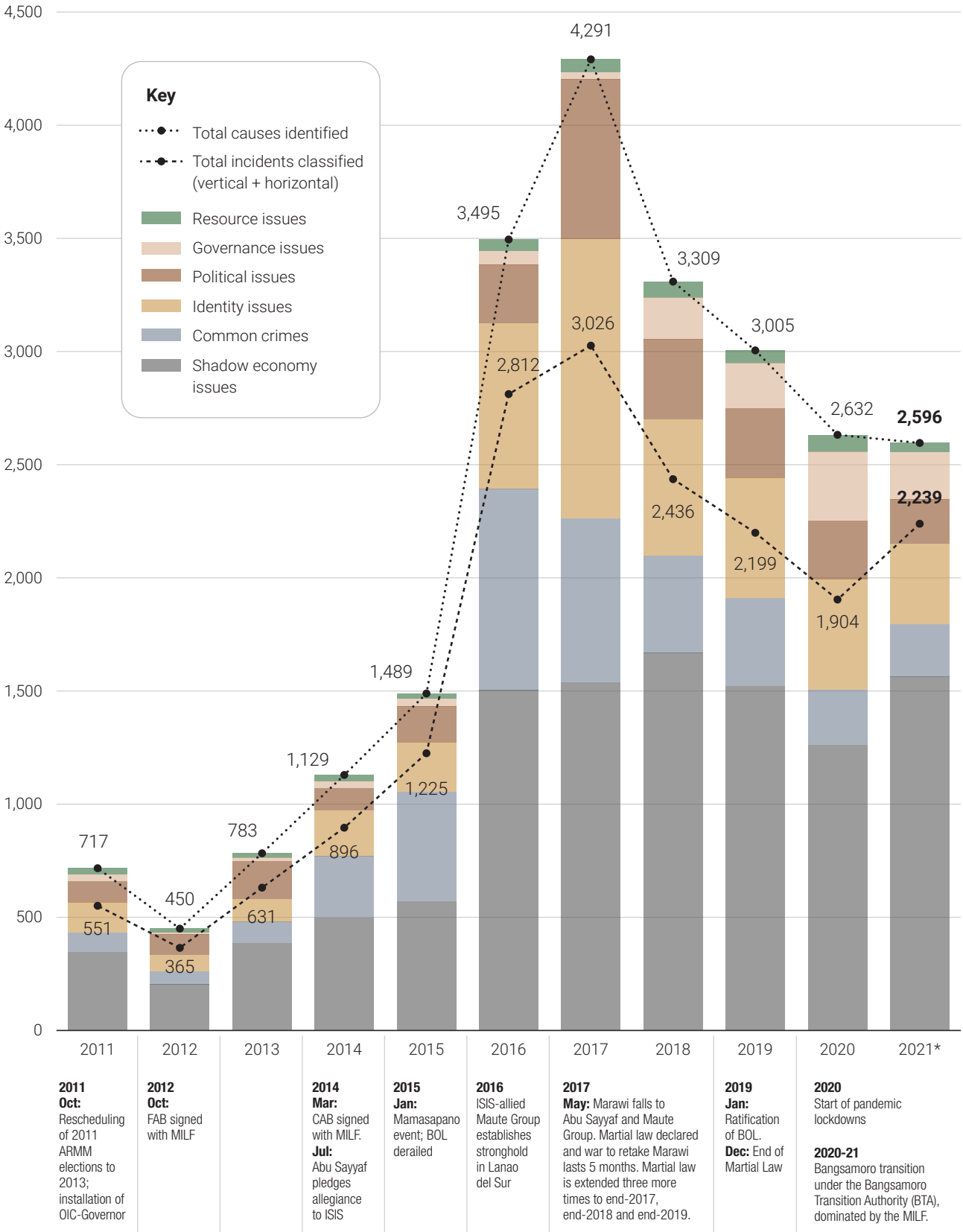
Collier and Sambanis (2002) coined the term "conflict trap" to describe the situation in which civil war wrecks an economy and increases the risk of further war. "Civil wars generate a conflict trap. Hatred and other rebellion-specific capital accumulate during war, making further conflict more likely" (Collier and Sambanis 2002, 5). In large part, civil war is highly likely to restart because of a legacy of "atrocities" and "leaders and organizations that have invested in skills and equipment that are only useful for violence" (Collier et al. 2003, 4). Put another way, violent conflict becomes normal, fueling a recurrence of war. "Civil war leaves a legacy of organized killing that is hard to live down. Violence and extortion have proved profitable for perpetrators. Killing is the only way they know to earn a living. And what else to do with all those guns?" (Collier 2007, 33).

Figure 7. Average Annual Growth Rate of Human Development Index in Mindanao Regions by Period, from 1997 to 2018 (in percent)



Source: Computations by author, available upon request.

Figure 8. Violent Conflicts by Cause, 2011 to 2021*



Base data: Annex. Incidents with undetermined cause are excluded. Also, incidents may have multiple causes hence the total number of causes (dotted line) is greater than the number of classified incidents (dashed line). *Summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

A conflict trap is essentially what Lara and Champain (2009) observe and seek to explain when they ask *"Why is there so much conflict in the post-conflict moment?"* (Or, why have peace agreements failed to secure a lasting peace?). Their question was posed in light of the "recurring violence that accompanies successful political settlements" in the Philippines (and other countries in the region), such as the new war that broke out and the inter-clan conflicts that intensified a few years after the 1996 peace agreement between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front. They explain that there are actually two types of violent conflict involved: rebellion-related violence (subsequently called 'vertical' conflict in the Conflict Alert database) and armed challenges between and among families, clans and tribes (subsequently, classified as 'horizontal' conflict)—which "interact in ways that are poorly understood and which sustain conditions serving the interests of those with access to economic and political power" (Ibid, 4). Consequently, efforts to end armed rebellions, which focus solely on addressing vertical aspects of the conflict (e.g., by arranging ceasefires, elections, autonomy and the like), and fail to engage the dynamics of horizontal conflict at the same time, do not and will not prosper.

The pattern of violent conflict in BARMM since 2011 is striking in the light of these insights and indicates that BARMM may be stuck in a conflict trap. Between 2011 and 2017, the total number of violent conflicts initially dipped in 2012, but then increased between 2012 and 2015, before spiking in 2016 and 2017 (**Figure 8**). The dip followed the Congress's deferral of the October 2011 general elections in the then-ARMM, and the subsequent installation of an officer-in-charge-governor by former President Benigno Aquino III, justified as necessary to insulate the near-completed (vertical) peace negotiations from partisan, short-term interests.[12] But even as the anticipated peace settlement was signed in 2012 and 2014, violent conflicts triggered by shadow economies, common crimes and identity issues started their surge in 2013; violent conflicts triggered by political issues, which encompass both rebellion and political rivalry, did not surge yet but remained important (**Figure 9**).[13] Then, between 2015 and 2017, as the approval of a BOL was derailed, violent conflicts triggered by political and identity issues spiked in tandem, growing faster than any other type of conflict at 110.9 percent and 137.4 percent per year, respectively. This was a period of rising Islamic extremism, which culminated in the siege of Marawi in May 2017. Violence due to political and identity issues accelerate in tandem again after martial law, having registered the largest declines under it. Violence due to shadow economies are the most resilient during this period, declining at the smallest rate under martial law and accelerating after it.

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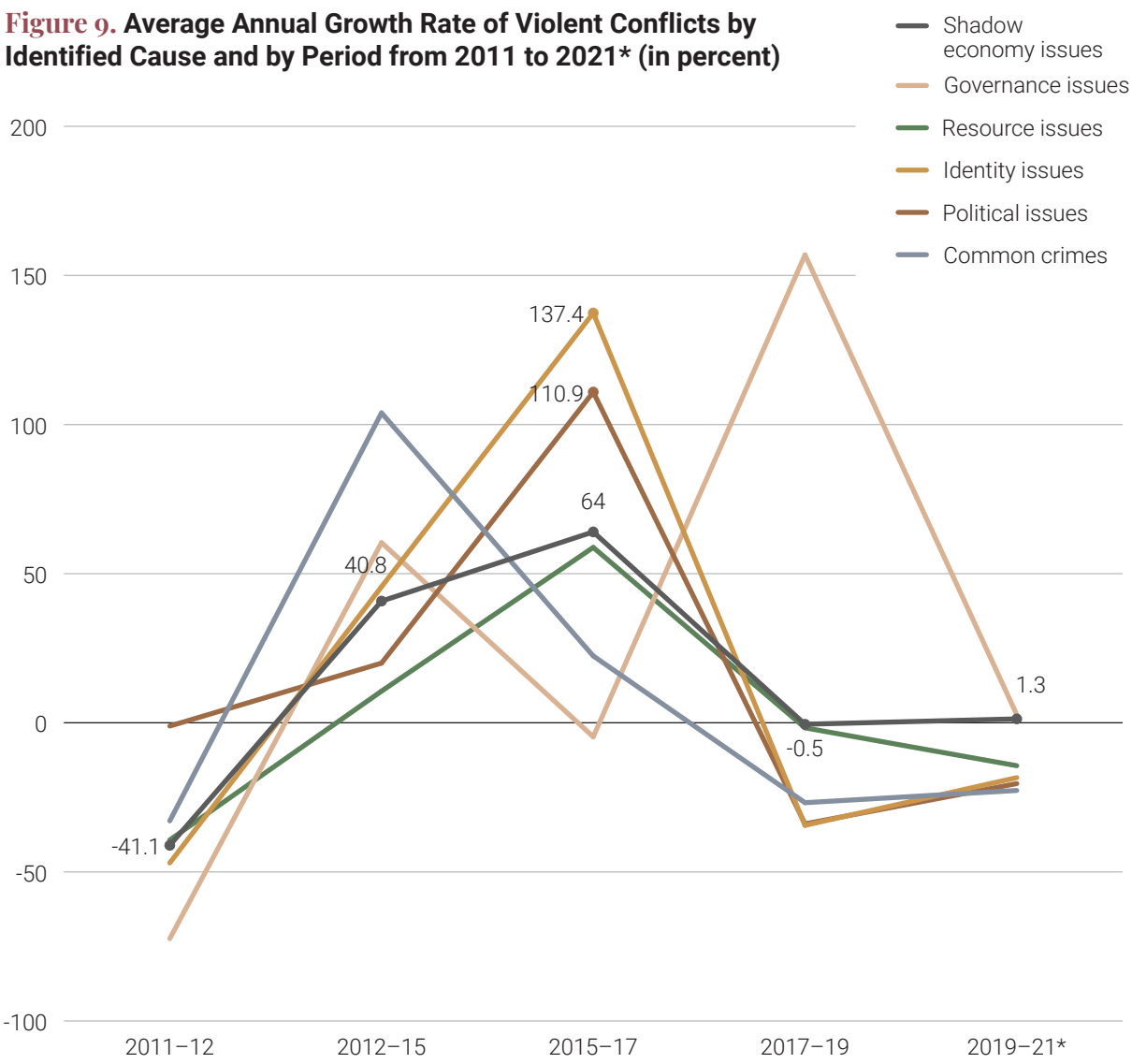
[12] As explained by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, "the postponement of elections 'provides for the flexibility' that whatever will come out of the negotiating table will not be subjected to the prejudice of a newly-elected regional government that has a term of three years." (https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2011/05/18/opapp-armm-poll-synchronization-to-2013-elections-will-aid-mindanao-peace-process/)

[13] Conflict Alert Definition of Terms define **shadow economies** as illicit or underground economies, such as the production and trade in illicit guns and drugs, kidnap-for-ransom, carjacking, cattle rustling, smuggling, illegal gambling, human trafficking, and pyramiding scams; **common crimes** as violent conflict triggered by cases of theft, robbery, rape and damage to properties, and domestic violence; **identity-based conflict** as violent conflict arising from inter- and intra-ethnic and tribal identities, violent struggles between and among families and clans, including violence emanating from gender differences, racial and religious tensions, and issues of honor; and **political issues** as those pertaining to both separatist or non-separatist armed challenges against the State, (vertical), and violence emanating from political (usually electoral) competition, abuse of power and authority or political repression, and violent struggles between rival insurgent groups or factions for politico-military influence and control (horizontal).They include violent power struggles among mainstream political parties, tribal leaders, and indigenous authorities.

Figure 9. Average Annual Growth Rate of Violent Conflicts by Identified Cause and by Period from 2011 to 2021* (in percent)



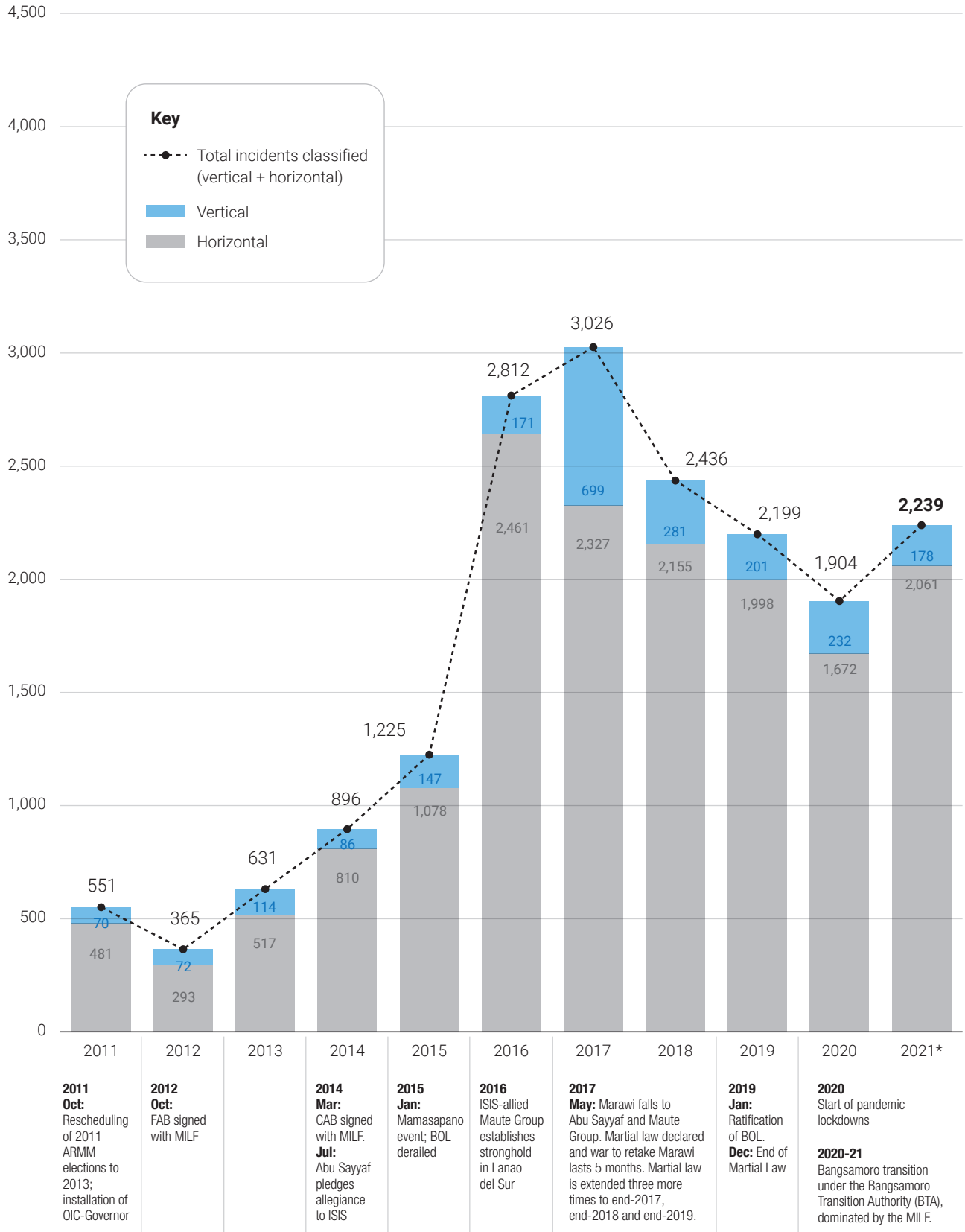
Base data: Annex. * Summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

The dance between vertical and horizontal violent conflict that characterizes a conflict trap can be seen more clearly in **Figures 10 and 11**, which classify violent conflicts by type rather than by cause. In the database, vertical conflicts are "insurgency-related, separatist or non-separatist armed struggles against the state, including terrorist actions", while horizontal conflicts are "violent struggles between clans, ethnic groups, rival insurgent factions, political parties and private armed groups or shadow authorities for control over land, natural resources, elective and non-elective positions, including government resources and rents."[14]

The figures show that the increase in the total number of vertical and horizontal conflicts between 2012 and 2017 (**Figure 10**) was first led by

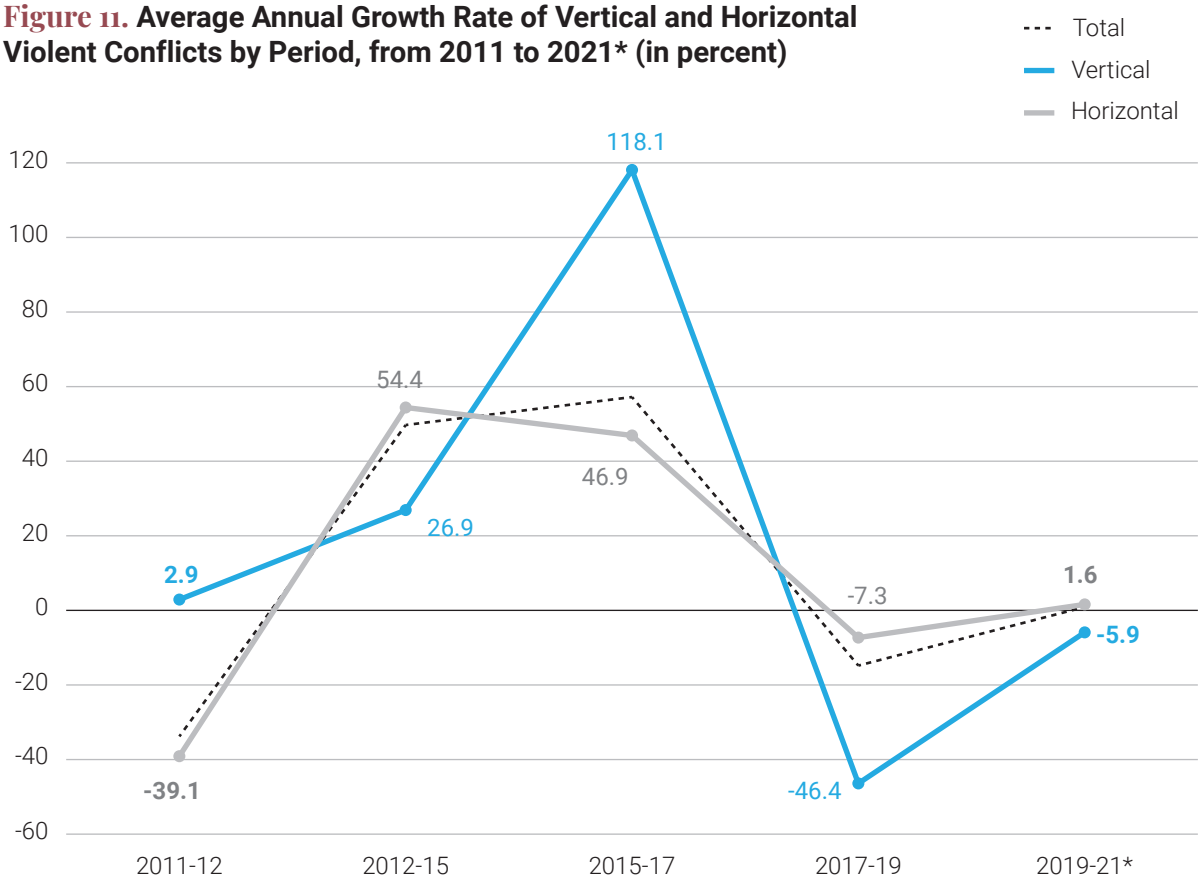
[14] Conflict Alert Definition of Terms.

Figure 10. Vertical and Horizontal Violent Conflicts, 2011 to 2021*



Base data: Annex. *Summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

Figure 11. Average Annual Growth Rate of Vertical and Horizontal Violent Conflicts by Period, from 2011 to 2021* (in percent)



Base data: Annex. * Summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

horizontal conflict, which surged relative to vertical conflict between 2012 and 2015 (while the vertical peace agreement was being completed), at an average annual growth rate of 54.4 percent (versus 26.9 percent), and then led by vertical conflict between 2015 and 2017 (while the BOL was in limbo), which grew at 118.1 percent (versus 46.9 percent) per year on average (**Figure 11**). Vertical conflict then led the decrease in total conflicts between 2017 and 2020, declining sharply under martial rule, at a rate of 46.4 percent per year between 2017 and 2019; horizontal conflict proved to be more resilient under martial rule, decreasing by just 7.3 percent per year. The incidence of both types of conflict accelerate between 2019 and 2020, after martial law and during the transition led by Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA): the growth rate of vertical conflict is a much smaller negative number and the growth rate of horizontal conflict becomes positive (also **Figure 11**).

Ultimately, the levels of violent conflict are far greater in the last three years of the decade than they were in the first three years, with horizontal conflict greater by 254 percent and vertical conflict greater by 125 percent (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Average Number of Vertical and Horizontal Conflicts in BARMM, 2012–2014 and 2019–2021*

	2012–2014	2019–2021*	change (%)
Horizontal	540	1,910	254
Vertical	91	204	125
Total	631	2,114	235

Base data: Annex. *Summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

Horizontal conflict and social peace

A key takeaway from the conflict trap literature is that political peace does not necessarily usher in social peace. That is, a political settlement is a necessary but not sufficient condition for lasting peace.

This cannot be more clearly demonstrated than in BARMM. Despite a political settlement between the GRP and MILF in 2014, violent conflict has persisted, and at far greater levels.[15] The fact that the BOL was in limbo for four years may have played a part, but neither martial rule nor a pandemic lockdown seems to have halted its momentum. Based on data up to 2021, the decrease in the level of violent conflict after 2017 is in fact slowing down.

Evidently horizontal conflict is the more resilient type, providing both kindling and fuel to "enduring wars" and, now, violent extremism in the region (IA 2020a). International Alert (2020a, 2020b) describes this in detail and argues for the BARMM and the BTA to, among others, prioritize and decisively act on the "land issue" (e.g., the creation of a law to address land-related disputes and other resource-related issues, delivery of land restitution and redistribution promises made under the transitional justice and normalization aspects of the CAB) as well as undertake a "new aim and strategy" to address shadow economies, especially the illegal drug and illicit firearms trades.

The failure to significantly deal with illicit weapons is especially puzzling given that the post-conflict normalization process precisely includes a weapons decommissioning objective as well as a commitment to disband private armed groups, both of which must be credibly and successfully pursued if social peace is to have a chance.[16] However, the weapons decommissioning objective is already behind schedule and has been reduced in target.[17]

It is of course hoped that a worry about a conflict trap is misplaced, that the yearly decrease in the level of violent conflict in recent years will not reverse course, that the observed uptick in human development outcomes in 2018 will proceed unabated, and that social peace is feasible alongside a 'culture of the gun'. Indeed, it is hoped that the recent poverty estimates for BARMM for the first semester of 2021—where poverty incidence in Lanao Sur decreased by 58.6 percentage points, from 73.8 percent in the first semester of 2018 to 15.2 percent in the first semester of 2021—will hold up to scrutiny and hold up over time.[18]

But the weight of international evidence on conflicts and the events monitored on the ground in BARMM tell us that the risk of backsliding and reoccurrence of vertical war remains high, and will remain high over at least the medium term, and that much more is needed for social peace to replace violence as the norm in the region. Decisive action on the drivers of horizontal conflict—such as land and resource-related disputes, illicit weapons, among other delayed or unrealized commitments under the transitional justice and normalization aspects of the peace settlement—is the priority.

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[15] Much the same way violent conflict persisted and grew after the 1996 settlement between the GRP and the MNLF as observed by Lara and Champaign (2009). See also HDN (2005) and Monsod (2016).

[16] The 2014 "Annex on Normalization," jointly signed by the GPH and the MILF, calls for the disbandment of private armed groups. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/04apr/20190524-EO-79-RRD.pdf

[17] IA (2020a) describes the reduction of the target as a "sleight of hand" approach that limited the numbers to those guns allegedly deployed or supplied by the MILF and allowed the exemption of weapons allegedly owned by the combatants themselves.

[18] Over time, meaning, that the drivers of any decrease in poverty are sustainable. The initial response of PSA to a query about the Lanao del Sur estimates is that average per capita incomes increased by 68.4 percent between the first semesters of 2018 and 2021, "significantly faster than the increase in the prices of food commodities based on the poverty threshold and CPI for food", with large increases in income coming from gifts like *ayuda* (153.3 percent increase), cash receipts from abroad (133 percent increase), cash receipts from domestic sources such as transfers from family and government programs (81 percent increase), wages (59 percent increase), and entrepreneurial activities (30 percent increase). PSA also noted that numerous aid/projects from government, local and international organizations after the Marawi siege, may have provided new job opportunities in the province

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Annex

Number of Recorded Incidents of Violent Conflict, Classified and Unclassified, and Associated Causes in the Conflict Alert Database for 2011 to 2021*

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Total incidents	871	643	1,059	1,500	2,303	4,362	4,132	2,898	2,679	2,361	2,696
Total incidents classified (vertical or horizontal)	551	365	631	896	1,225	2,812	3,026	2,436	2,199	1,904	2,239
Total incidents not classified (due to undetermined cause)	320	278	428	604	1,078	1,550	1,106	462	480	457	457
Classified incidents											
Vertical conflicts	70	72	114	86	147	171	699	281	201	232	178
Horizontal conflicts	481	293	517	810	1,078	2,641	2,327	2,155	1,998	1,672	2,061
Associated causes (for classified incidents)											
Shadow Economy Issues	348	205	387	498	572	1,504	1,538	1,669	1,523	1,263	1,564
Common Crimes	85	57	93	272	483	890	724	429	388	242	232
Identity Issues	134	71	102	204	219	731	1,234	602	531	490	354
Political Issues	93	92	167	98	159	257	707	353	309	258	196
Governance Issues	29	8	14	28	33	62	30	185	198	304	209
Resource Issues	28	17	20	29	23	51	58	71	56	75	41

* The 2021 Conflict Dataset is still undergoing validation and checking, so summary totals for 2021 are not final and subject to change.

Wooden footbridges connect houses and people in Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi—also called the 'Venice' of the Philippines. The municipality is close to Indonesia and Malaysia, making it a strategic port for traditional traders traveling to Sabah and Borneo from Sulu, Zamboanga, and mainland Tawi-Tawi. **Bobby Timonera**

CHAPTER 4

Untangling Conflict Strings:

The Role of Identity and Vengeance in Perpetuating Violence

Untangling Conflict Strings: The Role of Identity and Vengeance in Perpetuating Violence

Nikki Philline C. de la Rosa and Kloe A. Carvajal-Yap[1]

Peace agreements do not automatically translate into sustained peace. In fact, global experience indicates the reverse (Collier, 2010: 75).[2] The conflict-to-peace transition is fraught with violence and can perpetuate new cycles of conflict. The actions of political actors and other stakeholders determine whether the path to peace continues in the direction of stability and progress or deviates into long-term insecurity and duress.

Transitions upend the balance of power between vested interests, competing rule systems, and entrenched power. They consequently induce violent resistance, as witnessed in the Bangsamoro region. The decline in rebellion-related conflict after the ceasefire agreement in 1997; the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB); and the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law in the 2019 referendum were replaced by an intensification of communal battles between clans, tribes, and political elites.

The interface between vertical and horizontal conflict is revealed when vertical conflicts bleed into horizontal level conflicts and vice versa, exposing the plurality of identities involved in the violence.[3] To be sure, even before the ceasefire took effect, vertical violence associated with rebellion was always accompanied by horizontal conflict between rival families and clans, ethnic groups and tribes, rebel factions, and other identity-based groupings (de la Rosa, 2014:1 and Champain and Lara, 2009).

However, current trends differ considerably from the past. International Alert's Conflict Alert data (International Alert, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) reveals only a brief spike in vertical conflict against extremist groups from 2016-2017, compared to the rest of the period where renewed intensity and magnitude of horizontal violence erupted from a multitude of causes that produced strings of violent conflict (**Figure 1**).[4]

De la Rosa (2014) first hypothesized the links between multicausal violence, revenge killings, and conflict strings in 2014, providing quantitative evidence of conflict episodes to determine which causes had the greatest tendency to spiral into

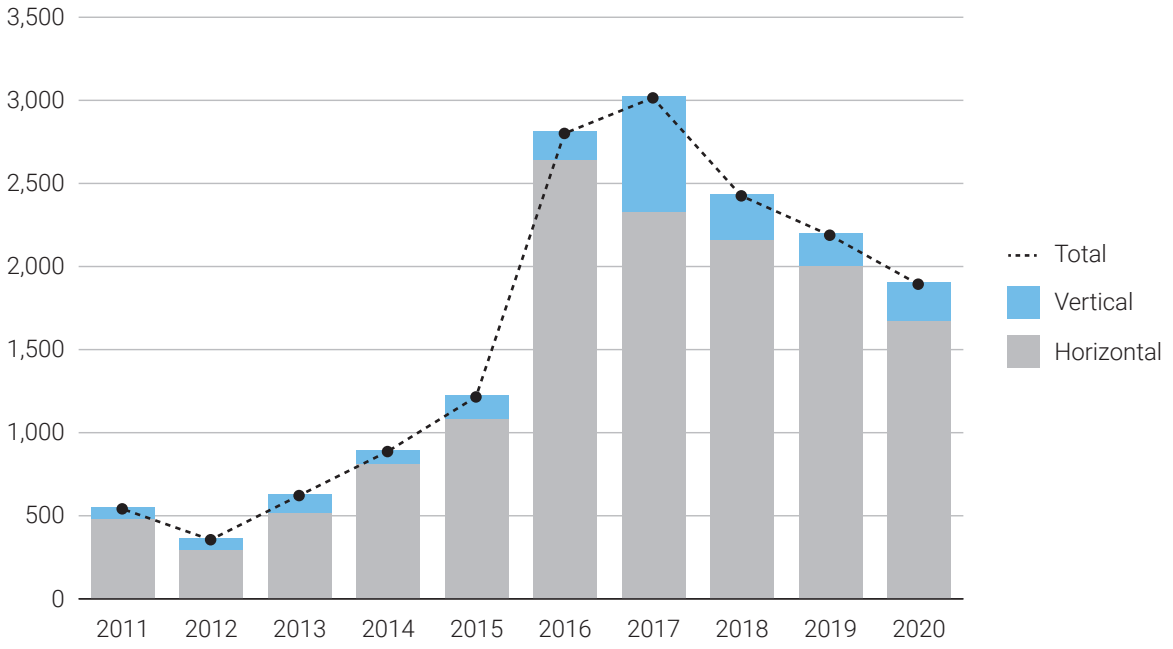
[1] The authors are indebted to Najib Zacaria for his trust and generosity in giving us an unadulterated depiction of the phenomenon as it is lived by people in the Bangsamoro. Thank you also to our long-time collaborators Mcmillan Lucman and Saripada Pacasum, Jr. for providing depth to our meager understanding of the values, rule systems, and norms that govern clan institutions. Lastly, our deep gratitude to friends Mohammad Abas and Samsoden Mona for providing further context on alliances and relationships within collectivist culture like theirs.

[2] Collier notes that 40% of political settlements revert to violence and war within a decade after a peace agreement.

[3] Vertical conflicts are separatist or non-separatist armed struggles against the State, including terrorist actions that destabilize a State. Rebellions, insurgencies and extremist violence fall under vertical conflict. Horizontal conflicts are conflicts between individuals, families, clans, ethnic groups, rival insurgent factions, political parties, private armed groups, among others.

[4] Conflict strings are protracted chains of collective violence—violent episodes that come in pairs, or even more episodes with varying causes.

Figure 1. Incidents of Vertical and Horizontal Conflicts



violent strings and inflict the highest human cost.[5] Conflict-related deaths, injuries, and displacement were variables used to determine the human costs of violent conflict or its magnitude. Specific examples of conflict strings were identified to demonstrate how a single conflict incident can spin off into a major episode comprising a series of connected events involving state and non-state armed groups.

This chapter argues that violent conflict cannot be deduced from single causes all the time. The evident causes of conflict must not be studied in isolation from other potential sources or parallel events that may be hidden or unseen, thus allowing conflict to evolve and persist even after a successful political settlement. It is crucial to examine violent conflict and its propensity to transform single and multiple cause situations into new episodes of violence or we will not be able to resolve conflicts effectively.

Several cases of conflict strings as a distinct manifestation of transition-induced violence shall be examined in this chapter.[6] The Conflict Alert 10-year panel data on violent conflict will be used to identify and investigate specific cases that illuminate the phenomenon and induce more effective means to end the violence.

Finally, the parallel strings that emerge from multiple causes will be studied and their distinct trajectories and cycles examined. The latter will require a deeper understanding of how identity, values, and socially prescribed norms converge to shape behavioral outcomes, including the use of violence as reprisal for transgressions.

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[5] Violent strings extend the reach and impact of conflict and can spiral into divergent trajectories that further complicate their resolution. (See de la Rosa, Nikki, 2014, *Disrupting conflict strings in sub-national contexts: Experience from Muslim Mindanao, Philippines*, delivered at the World Health Organization and University of Cambridge Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014 on 18-19 September 2014, Kings College, Cambridge, UK.)

[6] Transition-induced violence is the sort of violence that emanates from the conflict-to-peace transition.

Understanding revenge: an individual and collective view

Revenge killings that occur during violent clan feuds are probably the best and simplest way to explain how conflict strings operate. An act of violence is followed by an act of revenge, and the cycle of retribution spins on and on.

Why is revenge seen as an effective response to violence rather than other non-violent remedies? How formidable is *rido*, or clan feud, as a rule system and hence a necessity? How do people perceive and weigh the risks of retribution?

These puzzles are at the heart of this investigation into the architecture of conflict strings and how single or multiple causes and institutions determine their prevalence and persistence. Various themes and case studies will be presented to explore the phenomenon of revenge—its psychological underpinnings, the variables that enable the desire for vengeance to be translated into action, and why this type of collective violence persists in the Bangsamoro.

The political, social, and psychological underpinnings of revenge

The theme of vengeance is one that transcends time, culture, and religion. It features prominently in literature, art, popular entertainment, and even religious scriptures. There are those who argue that revenge is both rational and morally justifiable in the face of injustice (Schumann and Ross 2010). Indeed, in many cultures, acts of revenge, especially retaliatory aggression, are often ritualistic and considered legally and socially unacceptable.

Yet the ritual's incandescence has not removed the ambivalence towards revenge and how some people insist that it is irrational and incompatible with contemporary society. Revenge persists even when the evidence suggests that the costs of revenge (i.e., the threat of counter-revenge, adverse psychological outcomes, imprisonment and/or other forms of punishment) far outweigh its perceived benefits (i.e., seizing resources, achieving a catharsis from emotions such as anger and shame, or achieving a sense of 'justice').

The literature reveals commonplace yet important motives for revenge beyond the search for justice against a wrong that has been committed, and these are encapsulated into at least three other distinct yet interrelated reasons: 1) as a deterrent against continued violence, 2) a means to comfort the pain and suffering of a victim, and 3) as a doorstep condition to demonstrate adherence and enforce rules and social norms.

McCullough, et al. (2001) posit that revenge is rooted in the evolutionary function of deterring potential harm. This view emphasizes that revenge, or the use of violence, is purposeful and driven by the goal of attaining a higher-order status that can neutralize further retribution (McCullough et al. 2010). Rather than an impulsive act driven by emotion, revenge and the reputation to retaliate instead serve to protect groups from threats and deter attempts at counter-revenge (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt 2011).

Meanwhile, the equity theory focuses on emotional distress resulting from experiences of injustice (Adams 1965; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid 1978). Revenge, in this case, is seen as a way of alleviating distress and emotions such as anger or shame and thus aids in the restoration of equity or the balance of suffering and power between victim and transgressor (Donnerstetin & Hatfield, 1982; Frijda 1994).

Evidence suggests that revenge likewise serves an important function in maintaining social norms (Elster 1990, Fehr et al. 2002, Rieder 1984). Fiske & Rai (2014) describe how in certain cultures, taking revenge becomes a social and moral obligation. The use of violence, therefore, is not only a personal

decision but a social one, i.e., it is taken to adhere to certain norms and values.

In experimental data, this was manifested by people's increased tendency towards retaliatory aggression when they believed that an audience supports such behavior (Richardson et al., 1979). This helps explain why there is less stigma around revenge in regions with cultures of honor (e.g., the southern US, parts of the Middle East, the Italian Mafia). Certain forms of revenge are not only normative but highly encouraged (Jackson, Choi & Gelfand, 2018).

Collectivity, reciprocity, and honor in the Bangsamoro

Studies have also found that the collectivist nature of many cultures makes revenge more contagious to individuals who are embedded into groups where members are predominantly motivated by social norms and obligations (Hook, Worthington, & Utsey 2009). These include group loyalty and the provision of support to those in need of social connection and security that the group, in turn, provides. Shame and stigma are the likely outcomes for those who defect and refuse to participate in the collective violence that revenge brings.

The same is true in Bangsamoro society. The concept of the collective, of one's identity as inextricably linked to the family and clan, helps explain the sense of shared responsibility during times of crisis and vengeance-taking when the honor, prestige, and interests of one's clan are at stake. *Maratabat*, or the sense of personal honor, dignity, and self-esteem, is a shared attribute that drives relationships, interactions, and responses of individuals. This sense of pride can motivate members to strive for and maintain a positive social identity.

Consequently, an offence to one's *maratabat* results in humiliation and shame not only to the individual but to the collective. Particularly, to one's nuclear family and later, the larger clan, which necessitates retaliation to erase the shame. Not wanting to seek revenge will result in greater embarrassment and shame (Tan 1981, 295).

Clans have a powerful and enduring imprint in contexts where the administrative and politico-military reach of the state is weak or non-existent in providing security and protection, welfare, prestige and the means for vengeance for their members. In these instances, security is often organized along familial and kinship ties (Torres 2007).

The propensity for identity-based conflicts to evolve into strings of violent episodes lends credence to the hypothesis that clan institutions endure across conflict causes. For example, clans' established dominance and interest in political office make political contestation contentious and frequently violent before, during, and after elections.[7]

Figure 2 depicts the number of deaths caused by collective violence, broken down by cause. Collective violence occurs when at least three different actors are involved. Prior to 2016, the primary cause of collective violence was political issues. However, the period of 2016 to 2018 saw a surge in the incidence of collective violence driven by identity issues and shadow economy issues, aside from political issues. From 2016 onwards, identity issues and political issues became highly intertwined. Political and identity-based incidents peaked in 2018, but then declined in 2019 and 2020.

Clans are also involved in fatal struggles to control legitimate and illegal economies, in resource and land issues, which erupt into violent clashes between armed groups and government security forces as conflicts rise in intensity and actor

[7] The years 2013, 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2022 are election years.

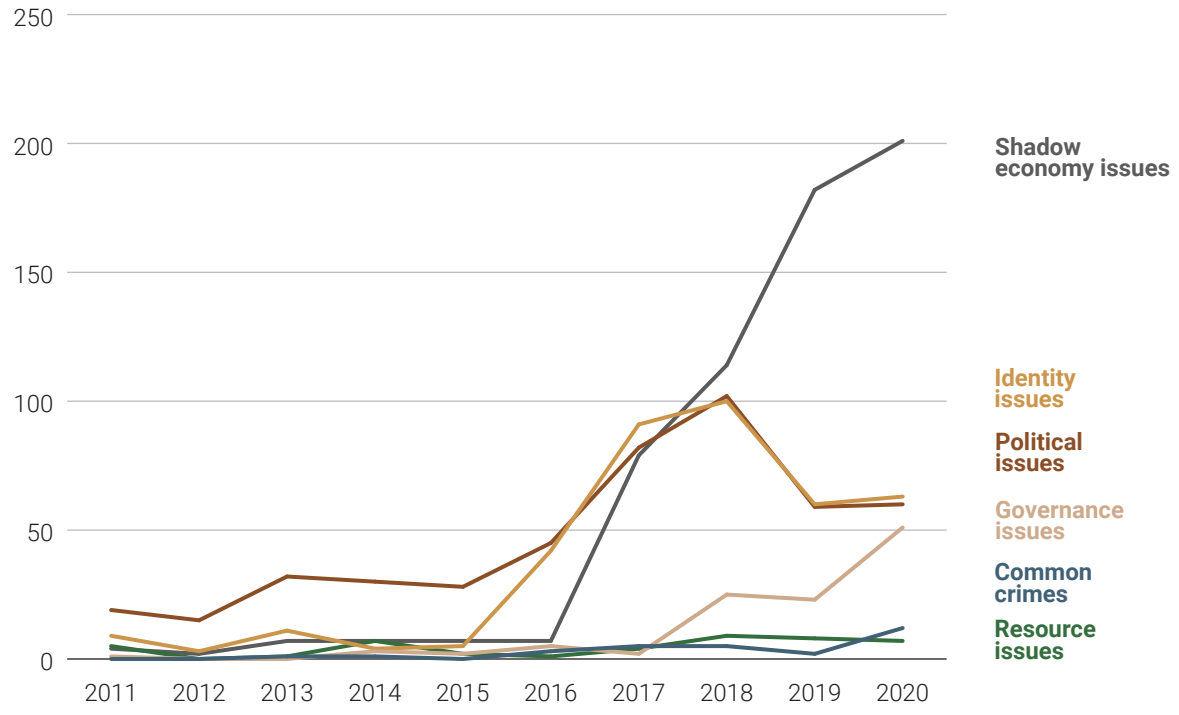
involvement. This is also reflected in collective violence driven by shadow economy issues, which saw a much different trajectory than political and identity violence from 2017 onward. The surge in shadow economy deaths from collective violence coincided with the Marawi war and has continued to rise year after year, becoming significantly deadlier in 2020 (**Figure 2**).

Add to pride or *maratabat* the principle of reciprocity that cuts across notions of honor and shame and you find kinship ties being stretched to carry the burden of undertaking revenge and retribution. It is an exchange type of relationship marked by a balance of giving and receiving that can bring people together or fragment them (Seymour-Smith 1986, 240, in Torres 2007).

For example, *awidan*, which means 'to carry,' is a distinct feature of the Maranao kinship system that governs their notion of reciprocity. In addition to one's nuclear family, a member can rely on their larger kinship network for assistance or aid in times of distress. In all cases, the clan must provide aid, and the member who received help has a reciprocal obligation when another clan member needs support. This structure provides safety and security to the collective in times of violent conflict when material assistance plus brains and brawn are necessary, and in times of peace, when mediation resources help clans obtain the settlement ransom. In times of marriage, the clan pitches in to fulfill the dowry (Matuan 2014).

In Tausug society, *buddi* is a form of reciprocity that centers on repaying one's debt of gratitude which is frequently described as "a debt that cannot be demanded." Each will attempt to pay more than what is necessary, which will make the other party even more responsible in an endless cycle of reciprocity (Keifer 1972, 66).

Figure 2. Collective Violence Leading to Deaths [8]



[8] Based on the data, an actor can be tagged as a group or individual. So when we tagged collective violence as at least three group actors in an incident, it means that there are at least three actors in the incident that were tagged as group.

Forsaking these expectations and responsibilities brings shame to an individual, the family, and the clan. It is seen as a failure to behave in accordance with socially prescribed norms and leads to being evaluated negatively by others (Wong and Tsai, 2007). The concept of shame varies greatly from one group and culture to another, particularly its location in the hierarchy of values of the group and the importance of norms that dictate how shame is to be given and used to place the blame on others.

The Tausug and the Maranao put great emphasis on using shame, particularly arising from conflict, towards individuals and their kinship networks. An individual who has been shamed is thus expected to restore the family's honor with support from his kin. The practice of *sipug* in Tausug culture is akin to the *maratabat* of the Maranao. Once elicited, the cause of conflict becomes irrelevant and avenging the shame must be achieved at all costs through a confrontation with the source (Tan 2016).

In this sense, the intersection of shame and reciprocity may lead to violence if one's group believes it is a suitable response to a transgression. The embeddedness of revenge-seeking behavior as a function of pride and shame are thus key concepts worth noting in the analysis of violent conflict and strings, especially in contexts where these are highly valued.

In sum, clans are social organizations that safeguard their members' political, economic, and socio-cultural interests. *Maratabat* (honor) and *sipug* (shame) define the reciprocal relationship that controls interactions and demands adherence to clan institutions and standards.

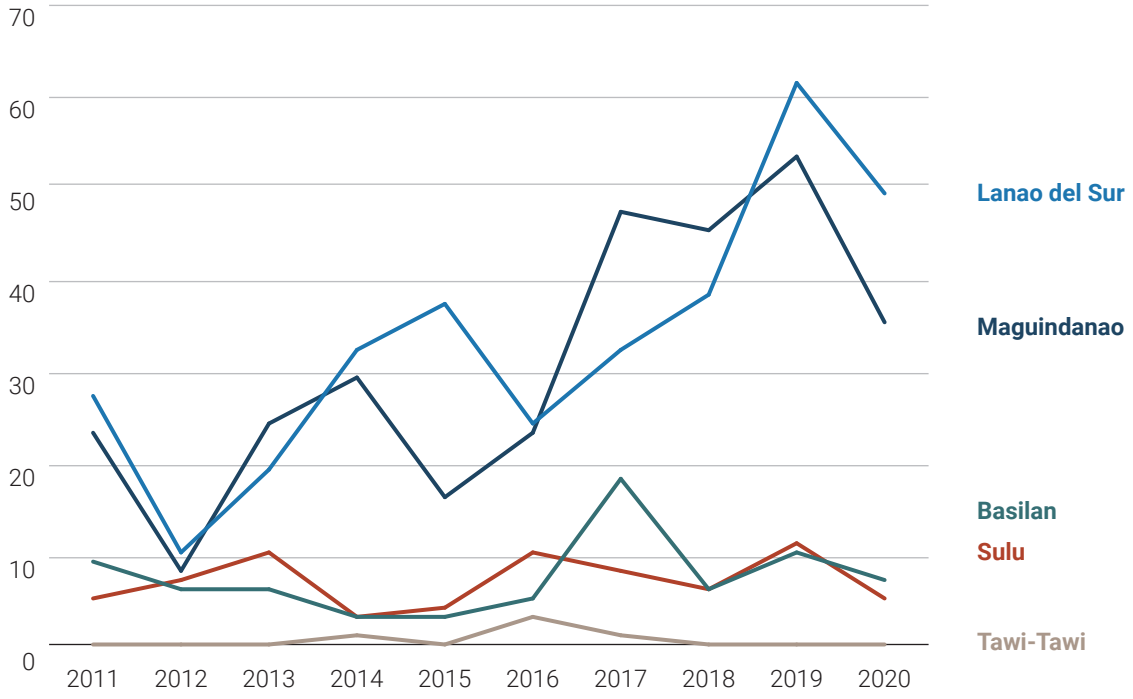
Recent clan practices have evolved to include protection even in displacement areas or camps where clan customs continue to regulate individual or family welfare and support. This explains why refugees in evacuation centers are not spared from clan dynamics that arise in internally displaced persons camps. It also explains why home-based evacuation is preferred both as a function of *awidan* and the protection of clans to their members.

Clans are likewise governed by formidable strongmen who control the 'vote banks' of the clan. These votes are channeled to candidates who are either clan members or supported by the clan. Clan feuding remains an indispensable part of clan rule, and reciprocal obligation is a necessary aspect of participation in clan feuds during major political battles such as elections.

Over the last 10 years, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao (including Cotabato City) were the two provinces that had the highest incidents related to clan feuding, with a general upward trend from 2012 to 2019 and a slight dip in 2020. Peaks in clan feud incidents were observed in 2019 for both provinces, an election year and with martial law in Mindanao still in place. Interestingly, the spike in clan feuding is within a backdrop of an overall decline in violence across provinces. In terms of conflict incidences and deaths, clan feuding increased by more than 50% in 2019 spurred by political, identity, and resource conflicts, notably over land issues. In Maguindanao's SPMS box, for instance, actors linked with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were involved in deadly land disputes (Alert 2020). The provinces of Basilan and Sulu had similar incidence levels of clan feuding with Basilan recording a slight spike in 2017. Tawi-Tawi had the lowest incidence of clan feud violence (**Figure 3**).

The examination of relationships between and among persons and groups within collective identity structures, of critical junctures and interactions that lead to the explosion of violence, and the nature and cause of such violence, which is usually long-running, necessitates a thorough interrogation of the mechanisms and processes, interactions, the level of coordination, and the costs of conflict strings over time.

Figure 3. Clan Feuds by Province and Year



Identity and collective violence

Identities are mediated by one's simultaneous membership in several groups and the formal and informal rule systems that structure these groups. Individuals are members of multiple groups all at once and subject to the norms and rules of these multiple identities.

An individual thus simultaneously identifies as a son or a daughter, a member of a larger clan, a member of an ethnic group, a community leader or religious leader, a professional, a constituent of a region, a citizen of a country, and so forth. Individuals and organisations frequently operate concurrently in multiple institutional systems, governed by different sets of incentives and interests that underpin collective decisions (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi, and Putzel 2007). The navigation from one institutional context to another is motivated among others, by self-interest, but includes the interests of the clan and the reciprocity exchanges within it.

The ascription to rule systems in a given context, corresponding to one's identity, is also governed by mechanisms of boundary activation and social control. Tilly (2003, 32-35; and 2004, 212) identified the critical factors that may activate boundaries, instead of alliances, and the step-wise process that leads to polarization and its diffusion: from the formation, transformation, and activation, towards the suppression of social boundaries in a given context. Tilly points to the web of interactions and relationships that bind people to different rule systems and incentives that bear upon individual decisions and strategies.

It is necessary to understand why identity-based conflicts tend to conflate with other causes of violence and generate strings. This requires examining how boundaries are activated within identity groupings, social control, and the role of revenge and retaliation in reproducing or expanding the entrenched political and economic power of clan elites. This is so because clans also dictate when

reciprocity is expected and how the institution of shame is instrumentalized to achieve their objectives.

The trajectory of critical events and conflict causes

Violence erupts from various causes that can evolve into violent strings and trigger the morphing of conflict actors and causes—from victims to perpetrators and clan feuding into intra or intergroup violence, including violent extremism. Incidents of violence cannot be viewed as distinct events separate from other causes and related events that can alter the nature of the conflict, spawn new episodes of violence with different causes, and enable conflict between parties to persist even after the precipitating event has been resolved. It is therefore critical to examine violent conflict in terms of its propensity to turn singular and multicausal incidents into episodes of violence.

The study of conflict strings has unveiled a distinct character of violence in the Bangsamoro.[9] An incident can reproduce violent encounters due to clan feuding or revenge. They can also occur when the singular source of violence at the outset sets off a chain reaction of other causes of conflict. For example, politically motivated conflict can induce an episode of violence that fuses with shadow economy or ethnic and clan identity issues as it spirals out of control.

Similarly, evidence from Conflict Alert data reveals that conflict strings are not purely linear, with one incident generating episodes in sequential order, but that each cause can reproduce its own sets of conflict strings, which can run in parallel and in multiple directions.

The parallel strings produced by the multiple causes of an incident adopt a trajectory of their own, thus requiring a peripheral view of conflict outcomes. In turn, cutting conflict strings will involve parallel and simultaneous action based on an understanding of the history of the conflict and the web of conflict strings it produced, the propensity of the combination of causes to produce strings, and the kinship ties and alliances of the actors involved.

In short, cutting one string may not resolve the conflict, because ending conflict is often contingent upon a resolution of the 'original' sin that persists and gives birth to various strings (Diagram 1 and 2).

Case Study 1: Political contests and identity alliances

The election season in the Philippines often serves as a battleground for feuding political clans. Propaganda, vote-buying, intimidation tactics, and violence are commonplace in the months and days leading up to elections. The 2019 midterm election was no different. It was another staging ground for identity and political-based conflicts to play out.

In two municipalities of Lanao del Sur, tensions were mounting as a new clan sought to run for office in the bailiwick controlled by a powerful political clan for more than five decades. In response, the incumbent clan filed a disqualification case against the contender, arguing that the latter had flawed residence qualifications. The authorities found cause with the complainant and disqualified the contender, prompting the latter to file an appeal and secure a temporary restraining order that stalled the judgment.

Shortly after, a letter was leaked indicating the cancellation of the contender's certificate of candidacy. The contender accused the incumbent of propagating false information and launched a propaganda campaign to promote their side of the story. They also accused the incumbent of vote-buying. Tensions between the rival clans and their followers boiled over and on the day before the elections, an altercation occurred while vote-counting machines were being tested.

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[9] Conflict strings are often nested in episodes of violence arising from discrete incidents with multiple causes and actors.

Diagram 1. Linear Multicausal Conflict String

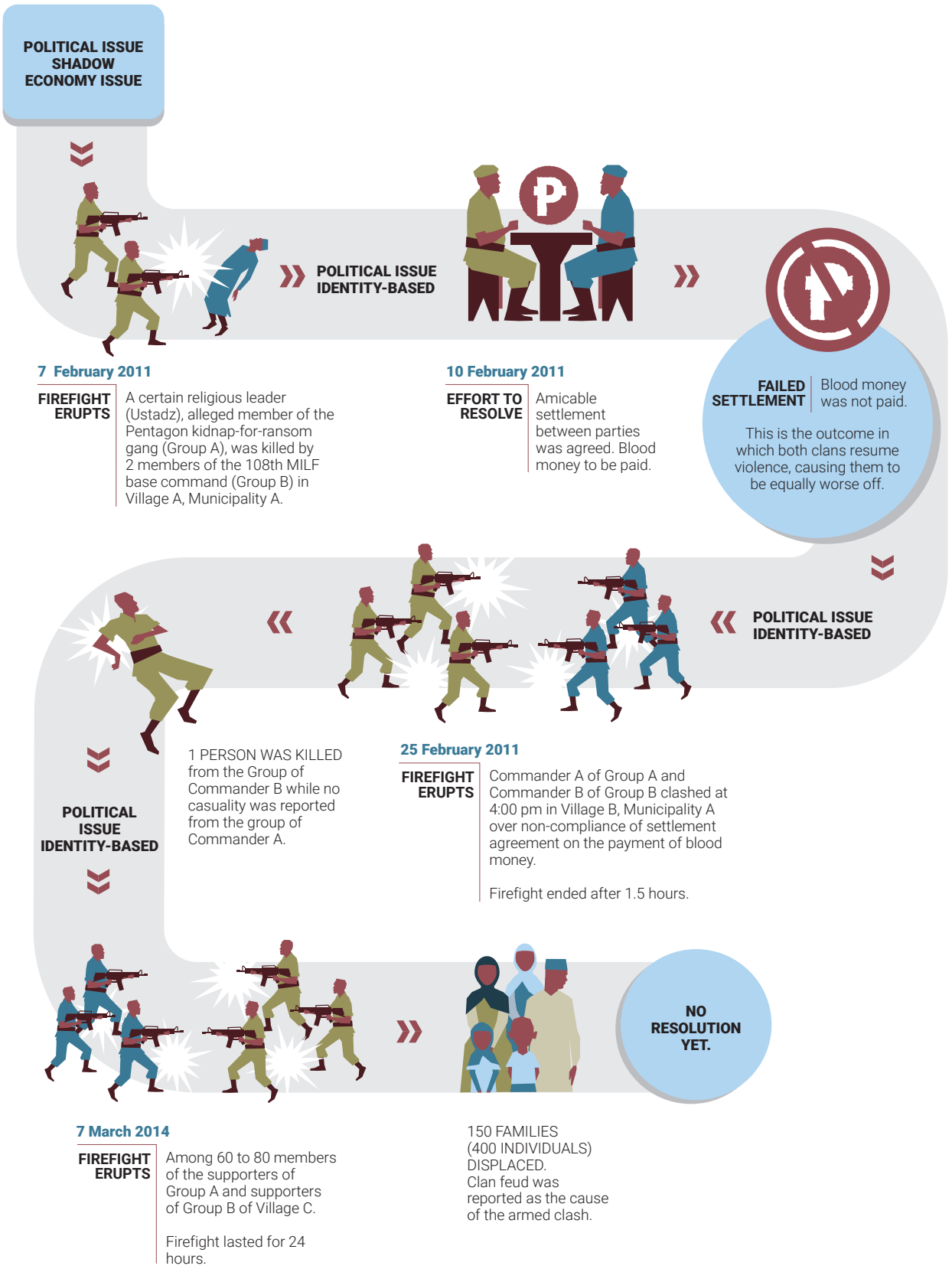
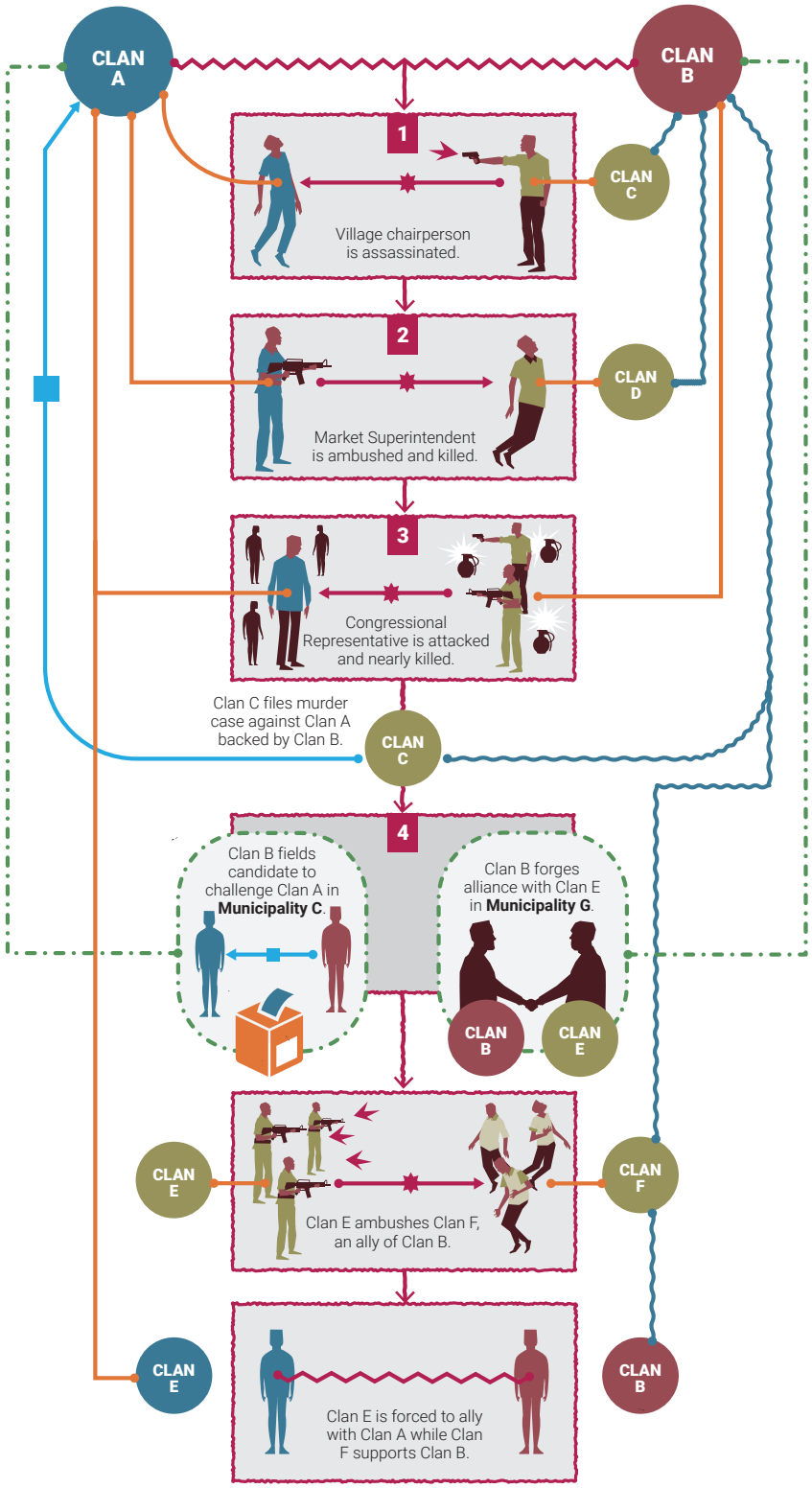


Diagram 2. Parallel Multicausal Conflict Strings



In July 2019, the contender won the appeal. His registration papers were declared valid and his candidacy legitimate. He won the election as mayor, deposing the incumbent political clan who had been in power for more than 50 years.

In many places, the victory would have led to a formal and peaceful turnover of power. But this is not always the case in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao, and particularly in the Bangsamoro. Several possible outcomes and scenarios loom, depending on the capacities of the actors concerned, their clan alliances, and their networks to higher levers of power.

Will the deposed political kingpin concede power and let democratic processes prevail? Will the parties set aside their rivalry and proceed with the business of governing the town in peace? Or will this event degenerate into clan feuding, revenge killing, and a long and drawn-out clan war?

Act 1. The flashpoint that triggers revenge

Shots broke out in the town center of municipality M in Lanao del Sur, killing a village official who was also a traditional leader. The incident sent shockwaves throughout the community. The victim was a prominent member of the previous municipal mayor's clan (Clan A), who had strong kinship ties in two municipalities of the province. The local police claim that the assassination was due to a violent feud between rival politicians in the 2019 elections, and that the assassin was linked to the new town mayor (Clan B).

The assailant was also reported to be a member of a smaller, less powerful clan (Clan C) who was out to avenge the killing of his father and his brother by Clan A. He was jailed for this incident but escaped in a jailbreak a year later. As he escaped, he joined forces with Clan B for protection. Smaller clans such as Clan C often align themselves with bigger, more powerful clans that have a blood feud with their adversary. In this meeting of mutual interests, the expression 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' is certainly apt. In fact, there were reports that the jailbreak was orchestrated by Clan B and intelligence investigations also suggest that the prisoners had ties with the clans.

Residents of municipality M anticipated the worst after the 2019 elections. Clan B had encroached on the territory of Clan A. Residents knew that the absence of a determined government response to the shooting incident would spark revenge killings and induce a succession of violent clashes that would turn the death of the village official into a larger and lengthier battle.

The strong security presence when martial law was imposed during the war in Marawi until 2019 helped dampen the retaliatory instincts of Clan A. Martial law conditions were later extended by the strict lockdowns in 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the relaxation of quarantine measures and the onset of the 2022 election season, violence reappeared, and a second pattern of episodic violence perpetrated by the two clans surfaced.

Act 2. Revenge turns conflict into a string

The assassination of the village official was followed by a clash between rival armed groups that was followed a month later by the ambush and murder of the town's market superintendent, who comes from Clan D. The alleged triggerman was said to be a relative of Clan A with an ax to grind against the market superintendent for harshly enforcing municipal rules on market vendors.

The problem is the superintendent was among Clan B's political operatives, which made him a prime target before, during, and after the elections. Worse, the murdered superintendent's wife was related by kinship

ties to a higher provincial level political clan. This vital link could potentially drive the situation out of control.

Act 3. A single string unravels parallel strings

A spate of murderous events happened soon after. Clan B used weapons and grenades in a surprise attack against members of Clan A, where a congressional representative who was a member of Clan A nearly got killed. This incident heightened tensions that triggered an evacuation of communities who were afraid of getting caught in the crossfire amid the resumption of firefights between the feuding clans.

Clan C thereafter filed a murder case against Clan A the day after the grenade-throwing incident, armed with prima facie evidence linking them to the murder of their family member, the market superintendent. Clan B likewise supported the case filed by Clan D.

Act 4. Feuding spills over and mutates into multiple causes

Clan B had political ambitions in two additional municipalities, most notably municipalities P and G. The clan sought to erode Clan A's control on municipality P by fielding a candidate for the mayoral position. Municipality G is the bailiwick of Clan B that wants to maintain their dominance and control.

Clan B thereafter forges an alliance with Clan E, a strong provincial clan in Lanao del Sur, to consolidate their hold on municipality G. Clan E's patriarch used to be an assassin himself, known province-wide for his military skills. This capacity has turned into a magnet for rival clans to go after Clan E. In the escalating conflict, Clan E would ambush Clan F who was an ally of Clan B.

A severe gunfight erupted between clans E and F days later, indicating that the conflict was likely to escalate further. The ambush severed any potential alliance with Clan B. In fact, the attack on Clan F forced Clan E to ally with Clan A, and Clan F to support Clan B.

The conflation of the blood feud between Clans A and B who had existing feuds involving other families signaled the spread of violence to other localities and the intensification of new strings of violence, each with its own trajectory.

Both Clans A and B had ties to the state's security apparatus and the regional government. The layer of identities and the possibility of harnessing them has led the conflict to mutate into multiple causes and produce further episodes of violence running parallel.

Though other armed groups may have no clear stakes in the feuding, the sightings of ISIS and ISIS adherents in the municipalities surrounding municipality M makes the threat of *rido* interacting with violent extremism very real. The interaction will spread further with shadow economies in drugs and weapons and a communist insurgency tapping into the violence and gaining adherents. Violent extremist groups and other armed actors in the area can indeed be tapped, especially in an election year. The areas in Lanao del Sur with confirmed ISIS sightings from January to March 2021 included four villages surrounding municipality M.

There has also been an increased activity among drug-related syndicates in municipality M. In the first quarter of 2021, military troops, along with the operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, have arrested an alleged large-scale shabu dealer and seized one kilogram of methamphetamine amounting to PHP 6.8 million. The suspect's ties and affiliations are still unidentified. Likewise, in the third quarter of 2021, the military confiscated high-powered firearms in a raid in the same municipality. Several individuals were arrested in the operation but were later on released.

There are still no signs of a resolution to the violent feuding between the warring Clans A and B. The fighting will only get worse as interests further collide in the run-up to the 2022 elections. Clan D just launched its first retaliatory attack against Clan A in 2021. Meanwhile, the objective of Clan A to reclaim control of the municipality continues to ripen. A member of Clan A will run for mayor in municipality M in the 2022 elections.

Municipality M is likely to host the most crucial and brutal fights relating to the 2022 elections in Lanao del Sur. The recent incident recorded was this year (2022), at the hearing of the case of the arrested suspect in the Clan D murder case. During the incident, armed men surrounded the area and shots were fired.

Clan A's recent display of force reflects its renewed determination to wrest its bailiwick from Clan B in the upcoming elections. Clan B, on the other hand, is consolidating its political alliances, as seen by its support for Clan D's court case against Clan A. It is not far-fetched that a major flashpoint between these two clans will erupt before, during, or after the elections in May 2022.

Case Study 2: Parallel strings of violence expand alliances toward extremist ends

The next case study illuminates the history and trajectory of a clan that fused extremist violence into its DNA and into the menu of clan dynamics in the Bangsamoro. In many episodes of violence, identity-based disputes through clan feuding are used to further other agendas, such as extremist violence. Two allied clans (Clan A/B) from municipality B in Lanao del Sur are alleged to have been the key instigator of the Marawi siege and were a powerful political clan enmeshed in several blood feuds before it became involved in violent extremism.

Exploiting identity-based disputes became a significant component of the group's strategies for recruitment, formation of alliances, and consolidation of power. Clan feuds were used to justify the advancement of political goals and to establish control over territory and alleged criminal enterprises. Clan A/B expanded and strengthened its power and influence in the region by lending weaponry and personnel to clans embroiled in feuds with other families.

Identity-based conflicts served as the catalyst in the reproduction of conflict strings. Using identities to justify violence against the 'other', is a recurring feature of political and social manipulation in Mindanao and elsewhere.

The series of violent episodes before, during, and following the Marawi siege revealed the sequential and contemporaneous eruptions of violence that occurred. Data from Conflict Alert 2018 expose the rise in multicausal conflicts marked by identity-based violence previously documented in Conflict Alert annual reports. The report illustrates the many conflict strings that resulted from outbreaks in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and Sulu from 2016–2018. The data also uncovers how extremist contagion had less to do with extremist violence when compared to the previous experiences of clan feuding and political infighting, including wars to control the shadow economies in drugs and weapons.

Act 1. Clan feuding consolidates various interests

Clan A/B and its allies exploited the violent environment in urban areas such as Marawi. They aligned themselves with the clan of the former mayor of Marawi City (Clan C), which was embroiled in a feud with the clan of the then vice governor (Clan D) of the province over a political rivalry during a previous election.

The family of Clan D possesses kinship ties with the adversaries of the former mayor's clan. Since Clan D possesses provincial power and resources

Soldiers patrolling outside Omar Maute's bombed-out house in the town of Butig, Lanao del Sur, on 1 March 2016, the day the military raised the Philippine flag in the seized main camp of the ISIS-inspired Maute group. **Erwin Mascarinas**

it was able to harness the military to successfully put pressure on its rival clan (clan C). In turn, Clan C sought the help of their relatives from Clan A/B whose stronghold was at the center of extremist violence in the province.

Clan A/B were a powerful clan in municipality B. They were themselves involved in several clan feuds due to multiple causes including struggles to control government projects, political competition surrounding the 2016 mayoral elections, and land-based conflicts before the siege. In the case of conflicts involving governance and political causes, Clan A/B was an instigator. In the case of land conflict, the clan was an opportunistic third party that supported one side of the conflict (Franco 2020).

Act 2. Defensive move, legitimacy, and alliances

Clan A/B experienced a crisis in 2012 when it engaged in a failed large-scale pyramiding scheme, seeking to launder funds it obtained after skimming off funds from government infrastructure projects (Franco 2020, 6). The combination of financial and electoral losses meant the collapse of a decades-long network of patronage, and therefore, they had to portray strength by forming a private army. Otherwise, the clan would have been vulnerable to *rido* waged by their creditors in the failed Ponzi scheme (ibid.).

Simultaneous with losing the mayoral election in municipality B, the group became radical and took an extremist turn when two of its key leaders studied abroad and were influenced by extremist ideology. In 2015, key members of the clan declared their allegiance to ISIS to intimidate rival clans. They used an ongoing clan feud on land to recruit members beyond familial connections and to build support. Their participation in political violence in the run-up to the 2016 elections was not restricted to the municipality. Since they were related by affinity or intermarriage with Clan C of Marawi City, they got involved in two parallel strings of conflict linked to the illicit drug economy and political violence between Marawi City's clans.

Additionally, Clan A/B are embroiled in a protracted clan war with the clan of municipality B's current mayor (Clan F), which dates all the way back to the mid-1990s due to electoral competition.

Act 3. Clan feuding morphs into ideological conflict

Alliances were brokered by the extremist leaders of Clan A/B with another violent extremist group—an alliance that would figure prominently in the string of violent events before, during, and after the war in Marawi. Their remnants continued to operate in Lanao del Sur in 2021.

The ideological subculture within Islam that Dawla Islamiya (DI) has promoted would not figure prominently in the recruitment strategies of the clan until the war in Marawi. They sharpened their skills and strengthened their support base through alliances and recruitment strategies that capitalized on kinship relations and the exploitation of clan feuding over land and governance issues.

Act 4. Fragile equilibrium: alliances disintegrate and shift

The military victory over the DI triggered a tremendous backlash against Clan A/B. Clan members and allies were accused of being complicit in the extremist violence and experienced humiliation, disgrace, and security threats as a result. Several kin members were included in the military arrest order, including the former mayor of Marawi City, a leader of Clan C who was charged with violating Article 134 or rebellion and insurrection for his alleged familial support of the extremist group.[10]

Other Clan A/B members are attempting to reclaim their foothold and have lodged a candidate, the son of the revered leader of Clan E, whose daughter married one of the leaders of Clan A/B. The Clan A/B faction whose members led the Marawi war is said to be laying low and reclaiming their honor by 'hiding' themselves behind the clan's political wing and intermarrying with other powerful clans in the province.
A fragile equilibrium is established, at least until the next critical moment, when time has passed, honor has been reclaimed, and interests from old and current alliances will again cohere.

Conclusion and implications

The chapter sought to explain why revenge is seen as an effective response to violence rather than other nonviolent remedies. What role do identity and vengeance play in the perpetuation of violence that produces conflict strings?

Untangling the puzzle led to an examination of the emerging multicausal violence, the intractable nature of resource conflicts, and the need to seize political office to secure rents and protection for the clan. It presented two graphic case studies that jointly amplified the deadly clashes between clans during elections and the weak property rights system that spawn continued resource and identity-based conflict.

Revenge persists because there is very little trust in the administration of justice and because cultural norms accentuate the strongman appeal that is gained through deadly competition. The study underscored the thesis that revenge and retaliation are a function of identity, positionality, and shifting collective interests. It is also context specific—it depends on who and where you are figuratively and geospatially, your alliances, and your links to the various levels of the state.

The chapter highlighted how violence is perpetrated and prolonged as a function of identity and rule systems that govern collective behavior. The fact

[10] Clan members asserted that the list was polluted by political maneuvering, with rival politicians exploiting the situation and the military to weaken their political opponents (*Mindanews* https://bit.ly/38QYKNm).

that violence tends to be a mainstay in collectivist cultures where clans wield extensive control over political and economic affairs, as well as in the enforcement of socially prescribed norms and obligations, reveals several implications and potentially significant intergenerational repercussions.

There are at least four important implications for development and peacebuilding policy and practice.

First, because of the multiple causes and the web of strings it reproduces, the cutting of one string of violence may not necessarily resolve the conflict. Conflict resolution requires a solution to the 'original' conflict that endured because the string it unleashed was not cut at the outset. The second case study showed how 'conflicts before' that were founded on land issues, or the unequal allocation of rents should have not been allowed to fester. Ignoring these led to extremist violence that decimated a whole city and resulted to massive deaths and displacement.

Second, parallel strings are often unleashed by multicausal violence, with each string adopting a trajectory of its own. Cutting the first conflict string is not enough. It is necessary to forge a broader political settlement that can sever the other strings, requiring parallel and simultaneous action based on an understanding of the history of the conflict, the web of conflict strings it has produced, the kinship ties and alliances of the conflict actors involved, and the propensity of the combination of causes to produce strings.

Third, examining conflict strings makes visible the key issues that reproduces violence and why it endures, the relationship of these issues with clan institutions, and effective hybrid institutions and corresponding approaches that can effectively cut strings of violence over the short and the long term.

Fourth, the increased risk of younger cohorts in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) perpetrating and perpetuating cycles of violence in the name of preserving honor or erasing shame, or to reproduce political and economic power, including control of shadow economies, necessitate an intergenerational approach at the household, clan, and community level. Opportunities and resources that model behavior on the positive aspects of honor, shame, and retribution, including education on transitional and restorative justice principles are warranted.

Case study findings

The case studies showed how those who have acquired power and status are the ones who often want more. These individuals and their clans have access to kinship ties and political resources that enable them to take revenge and block attempts by the transgressor to retaliate. Their access to high-level networks that go beyond their kinship relations and geographical locus of power, such as with the national government and the security sector, make them formidable. Their access to timely information and guaranteed redress through the justice system enables the sort of power that makes them untouchable.

Those who lack strength and weaponry (i.e., smaller clans) align with larger, more powerful clans that are at odds with the clan that wronged them. These small clans can only counterattack through alliances and bargains with stronger clans with the capabilities to engage in violent conflict. The smaller clan provides 'human resources' to the larger clan against their common enemy. The larger clan lends their political connections and other resources.

Conflict strings open the door to a relentless campaign of horizontal violence that can turn against the state, as is the case with violent extremist groups. There are instances too when community-level violence involving shadow economy actors, resource-based conflicts, identity, and politics are as fierce and unrelenting as state repression or wars between states.

Two families in Maguindanao's Iranun Corridor hold a traditional *kanduli* ceremony or thanksgiving to mark the resolution of their clan dispute or *rido*. **Meriam Pantacan**

To be sure, the conjunction of interests across both kinship networks and ad hoc coalitions are tenuous and subject to interest shifts at any given time. Interests may cohere or collide at critical junctures with different players having distinct interests. Constant bargaining is the key to survive retaliation.

Rido functions as a foil for more insidious causes of violence

Clan feuding and the episodes of violence that result correspond not only to *maratabat* and *sipug*, but also to the need to consolidate and increase power. The multiplicity of actor identities and its corresponding menu of rule systems (institutional multiplicity), provide options and allow them to engage in a type of forum shopping where actors choose from a diverse array of norms and values, including invented traditions that can legitimize their behavior.

Conflict actors with access to armed organizations, such as the MILF, the Moro National Liberation Front, communist insurgents, extremist or criminal groups, can prolong the conflict because of their access to ready resources: combatants, large machinery, and firearms, making the conflict more violent and resulting in civilian casualties and mass displacement.

Collective violence is oftentimes justified by the calculation that the benefits outweigh the costs. However, alliances are fragile, and cooperation becomes conditional among parties. They will cooperate so long as all share the risks and costs of violence. If the various interests in an alliance are no longer served, elite bargains will have to be renegotiated or these alliances will collapse. It is probably the reason why there is an increase in the number of mediation activities and *kanduli*[11] gatherings before a major political battle such as an election. Election seasons

[11] A thanksgiving celebration after a *rido* is settled.

are sources of instability, but they are a harvest season for alliances too. A clan-supported *kanduli* effectively widens alliances among numerous families and clans involved in a power struggle.

Conflict strings are not zero-sum games

The examination of conflict strings reveal that the reproduction of power is the ultimate end goal. However, there are many chances for mediation and peacebuilding—the logic of the conflict string itself is the unraveling of violence over time. 'Winner takes all' outcomes are seldom achieved—a hard lesson learned by the Ampatuan clan in the case of the 2009 Maguindanao massacre.

Mediators of violent conflict brought about by multiple causes soon discover that one string rises above the rest and its resolution will impact on parallel strings. Conversely, working on parallel strings can help put an end to the original sin. The key is to not lose sight of the various strategies available—from the building of formidable alliances, appeals to a multiplicity of institutions, or even intermarriages.

Mediators will also need to sense when retaliation and revenge becomes counterproductive to both sides in a string of violence. Therein lies the opportunity to combine various approaches and arrangements—including hybrid ones. The typologies of strings showed elements of both competition and cooperation where parties compete to ensure optimum gains. Identifying the strategic interests of the parties is critical and will enable the onset of strategies and tactics that can pressure both parties into a political settlement.

Intergenerational learning to model a different way of gaining honor and redress.

Aggression is a learned behavior from personal experiences as well as through observation of the consequences of violence—how it is done, to whom it should be directed, and when appropriate. It can avenge the death of a family member, demonstrate military strength to consolidate power, and expand the politico-economic monopoly of a clan over a given territory. The intergenerational transmission of violence suggests that early exposure to violence not only provides children with social scripts for violent behavior but also teaches them the suitability and consequences of violence.

This suggests that the Bangsamoro youth are not inextricably bound to the same fate, norms, and way of life as their forebears. They can make informed choices. The evidence confirms that socialization processes are decisive in contexts marked by social divisions and a history of conflict. That is, intergroup dynamics are more pronounced, increasing the likelihood of negative or prejudiced attitudes toward the other to harden and lead to violence.

What takeaways are there for peacebuilding practice?

There are opportunities for tempering the violent tendencies that arise from rule systems such as *rido*, and for reinforcing the positive qualities of *maratabat*. While clan practices and social divisions borne of the region's history of war and instability allow a reliance on clans for welfare and protection, much has been done in recent years to establish effective and inclusive justice and good governance institutions. The following are important for ensuring that these take root:

Examine the propensity of conflict causes to produce violent strings.

The examination of conflict strings has revealed a distinct character of the Bangsamoro violence landscape. Shadow economies are the dominant sources of conflict in terms of frequency and political-identity issues in magnitude. Evidence suggests that 1) political issues, particularly competition for political office; and 2) identity issues such as clan feud or *rido*, as these fuse

with resource-based issues (land and territorial boundary disputes), have the highest propensity for inducing conflict strings. This implies that incidents of political violence, identity-based conflicts, and resource issues must be addressed at the outset before they result in a series of parallel conflict incidents and morph into different forms.

The proclivity of certain types of causes to proliferate and mutate into strings of violence demonstrates that local, regional, and national government, the security sector, and civil society should explore new priorities, approaches, and strategies. One that tailors conflict resolution strategies to the specifics of the dispute.

Critical political events such as elections, for example, necessitate a multipronged approach that combines informal and formal rule systems. Land and property rights related programs such as cadastral surveys, land titling, and redistribution must consider the existence of informal land markets that can contribute toward alleviating tensions and settling land disputes before they escalate. New policies that curb the proliferation of illicit weapons is most critical and decisive. Strings are easily cut when illicit weapons are not part of the context.

Hybrid arrangements and institutions can disrupt the spread of conflict strings.

The phenomenon of conflict strings and the morphing of violence should pave the way for the development and support of existing effective measures that can break and disrupt these strings. To prevent the spread and escalation of conflict, hybrid arrangements such as anti-clan feuding coalitions or the use of traditional institutions of justice and restorative justice practices should be explored. With identity issues remaining a major source of violence, an examination of clan rules that govern revenge and retribution must be forced down to allow other institutions for self-help, sustainable development, and inclusive peacebuilding to flourish instead.

Tripartite mechanisms and whole-of-government approaches can only be effective if people trust these mechanisms. Their formation must be nuanced to explore and consider other modes of cooperation based on gender, ethnicity, even language.

Composition will have to be carefully handpicked and managed to harness each member's strategic utility to the process. The individual or the entity that leads the process should possess the material foundation, legitimacy, credibility, and authority recognized by the warring parties.

The lesson remains simple – a multi-stakeholder approach to conflict resolution increases the likelihood of favorable outcomes. Hybrid arrangements and mechanisms showcased for replication must be informed by the scale of violence and the actors involved in violence. Hybrid processes are medium-term solutions that must eventually transition into the state formal structures. The state cannot have rival institutions that provide governance and social control over its citizens.

The regional government can model inclusive behavior and work to collectively define and strengthen a Moro people's shared identity that transcends tribes and clans.

This will necessitate parallel efforts to promote reconciliation and aid in the repair of relationships that were fractured by years of war and hardship. Since the establishment of the BARMM, the goal of restoring peace and promoting social cohesion has taken a back seat to pursuing what are often perceived as more urgent politico-economic agendas. The case studies demonstrate the importance of these activities as doorstep conditions for emulating good governance strategies. However, they are inherently divisive and may cause a widening, instead of a narrowing, of ethnic cleavages early in the political transition. The ongoing transition presents opportunities to reshape the Bangsamoro's collective identity and

An MILF soldier takes his son on patrol within their camp in Al-Barka, Basilan. **Veejay Villafranca**

therefore, the values and social norms that govern people's behavior. Decreasing social boundaries through a shared positive common identity should help redefine how honor can be upheld and emphasize positive rather than violent expressions of reciprocity.

Mechanisms for justice that people perceive to be fair should also be established to reduce people's desire for violent retribution that allows cycles of violence to persist.

The case studies show how revenge-seeking behavior is most prominent in contexts where formal systems that penalize or punish the transgressor on behalf of the victim are weak, illegitimate, or nonexistent. Addressing identity as a risk factor for revenge and violent behavior is thus insufficient. Effective systems must be put in place to increase the likelihood that people will choose nonviolent responses to transgressions and achieve a sense of justice.

Finally, as people are socialized into violence at an early age, it is important to intervene to prevent the intergenerational transmission of violence among the youth.

The youth must be given opportunities to learn the methods and positive outcomes of negotiation and conflict resolution as viable alternatives. Investing in education raises human capital, making violent retaliation a less desirable option. Long-term interventions to keep young people in school are thus imperative. Their leadership role must also be used in promoting social change and developing concrete actions to address conflict causes, in addition to local, regional, and national efforts to support the conflict-to-peace transition.

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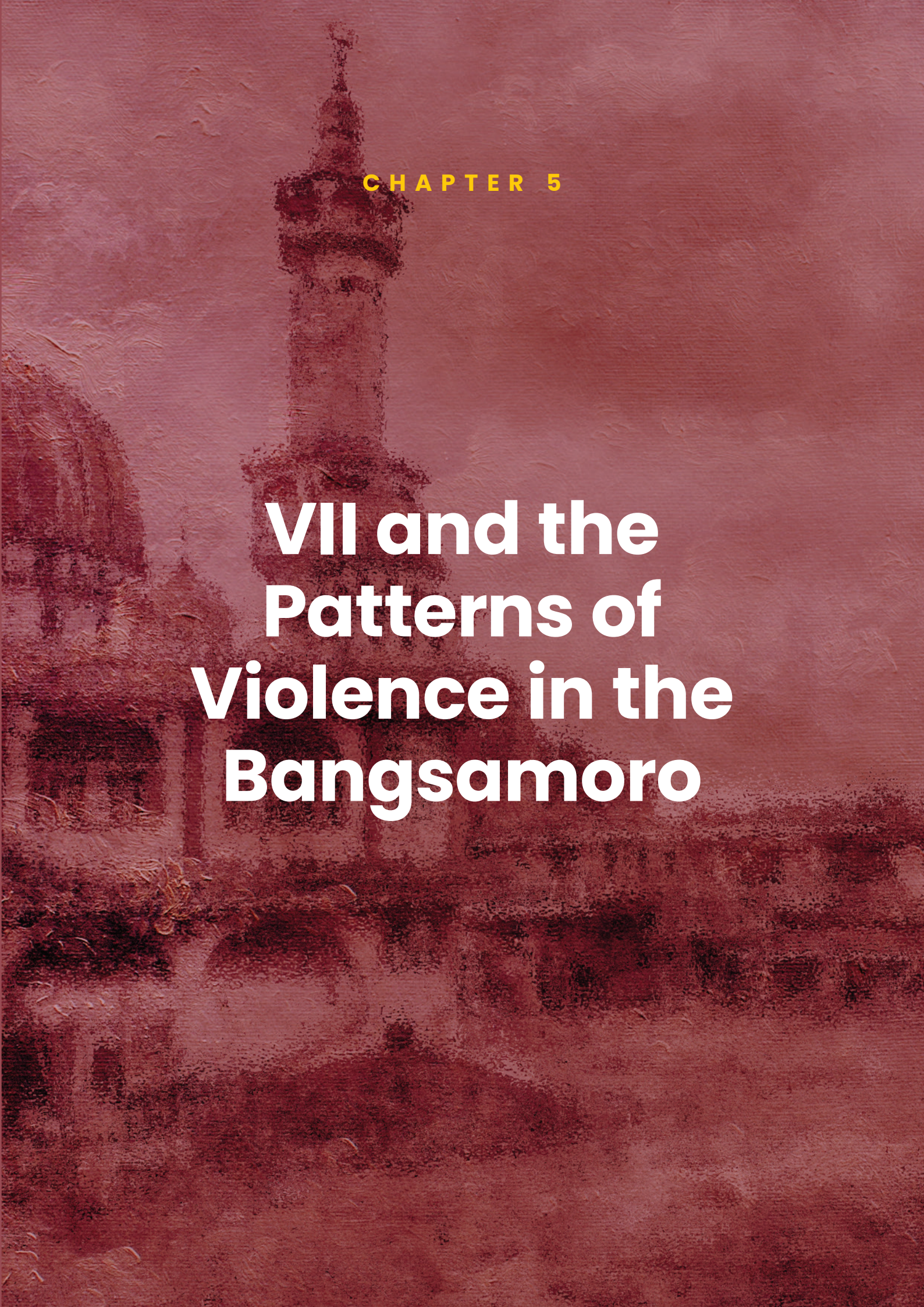
Schoolchildren walk on a muddy path to their homes in a town in Basilan province. Poverty, patriarchal norms, and violence pose barriers to girls' education. **Veejay Villafranca**



CHAPTER 5

VII and the Patterns of Violence in the Bangsamoro

VII and the Patterns of Violence in the Bangsamoro

Ever J. Abasolo[1]

The Bangsamoro region fits the narrative of a fragile state with enduring conflict as its main backdrop. For decades, this fragility came at a high cost: limited economic growth, high incidence of poverty, poor health, and low levels of education. The post-conflict transition that saw the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the implementation of martial law, and the onset of a deadly pandemic, manifested significant declines in rebellion-related violence as well as horizontal conflict in general. However, conflict on land persisted, accompanied by a rise in political violence in the run up to the 2022 elections.

The political settlement helped improve the regional peace and security situation and was accompanied by parallel improvements in economic growth in the Bangsamoro owing to structural changes in the economy.[2] In 2018, the region posted 7.7% growth rate, which was higher than the national average of 6.3%. In 2020, the start of the pandemic, the region registered the smallest decline in the country, which was −1.4%. In 2021, the region registered the second highest economic rebound at 7.5% following the pandemic.

The chapter aims to measure and evaluate the shifting intensities and causes of violent conflict across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) provinces over the past 10 years using the violence intensity index (VII). In the process, patterns of violence will be established that can be used to inform actions to prevent violence and identify areas for further investigation.

This study examines intensity of conflict by province and by conflict cause from 2011 to 2020 based on the data gathered from the Philippine National Police and media reports. There are seven general classifications of conflict types, which are the causes or the precipitating factors. These are: 1) common crimes, 2) governance issues, 3) identity issues, 4) political issues, 5) resource issues, 6) shadow economy issues, and the 7) undetermined. However, special emphasis or focus was placed on rebellion, land disputes, *rido* or clan feud, identity-based violence, illicit drugs, and illicit weapons.

This study covers the provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and the cities of Cotabato and Isabela. It does not include the 63 barangays in North Cotabato that joined the BARMM after the 2019 referendum. The level of disaggregation is at the provincial level. These limitations are mainly caused by data constraints.

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1 The author was the team leader of International Alert Philippines' Bangsamoro Conflict Monitoring System and the creator of the VII.

2 The structural change refers to the shift from agriculture, fishery, and forestry to services as the leading sector of the economy and the substantial growth of the industry sector.

Methodology of the Violence Intensity Index

The violence intensity index (VII) is an aggregative technique that uses frequency and magnitude as dimensions in measuring intensity. Frequency is the number of violent incidents, while magnitude is measured through human cost. Human cost refers to the number of persons killed, wounded or injured, missing or kidnapped, arrested or surrendered, and the number of individuals displaced. The VII is a weighted index with the following estimation framework:

Frequency and Magnitude

The VII is expressed as:
VII = f (frequency, magnitude)
VII = 0.4 (frequency index) + 0.6 (magnitude index without displacement) + displacement data

where: Magnitude Index without Displacement = 0.6 (death index) +
0.4 (injury/missing or kidnapped/arrested or surrendered index)

Displacement Data:
0 = no individuals displaced
1 = 1–1,000 individuals displaced
2 = 1,001–10,000 individuals displaced
3 = 10,001–100,000 individuals displaced
4 = 100,001–1,000,000 individuals displaced
5 = 1,000,001 or more individuals displaced

To complement the VII, death-incident ratio and displacement-incident ratio were used.

Limitations

The use of VII as an aggregative tool has limitations. **First**, the technique does not capture vulnerability. Vulnerability is a multifaceted concept that is highly contested and the processes for uncovering its various features and dimensions would require resources and a separate and distinct research initiative and economic model. In addition, the various dimensions of vulnerability require extensive analytical work to identify effective proxy indicators that are not themselves vulnerable to endogenous effects.

Second, the technique does not include economic cost. Economic cost is not included in the estimation process because of limited and absent data. The guidelines for hypothesizing the economic costs of destroyed roads and bridges may be available, but the foregone revenues from stalled investments or jobs lost are more difficult to ascertain. There is neither any state nor non-state agency in the Philippines that has taken on the task of generating estimates of economic cost from conflict and war.

The Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer (MDRRMO) of Kapai, Lanao del Sur, who is also a member of the volunteer group Early Response Network (ERN), performs thermal scanning on individuals entering the town.
MDRRMO and **ERN** of Kapai, Lanao del Sur

Third, there are inherent limitations in the techniques used to measure displacement. Data on displacement covers only the number of families displaced in a year. The data available does not account for the distance and duration of displacement incidents.

Finally, the absence of global goalposts reflects the usefulness of the VII as a comparative tool for conflict intensity ***only*** to the Bangsamoro provinces. The implication is that the VII values cannot be used to make effective comparisons elsewhere in the Philippines or beyond.

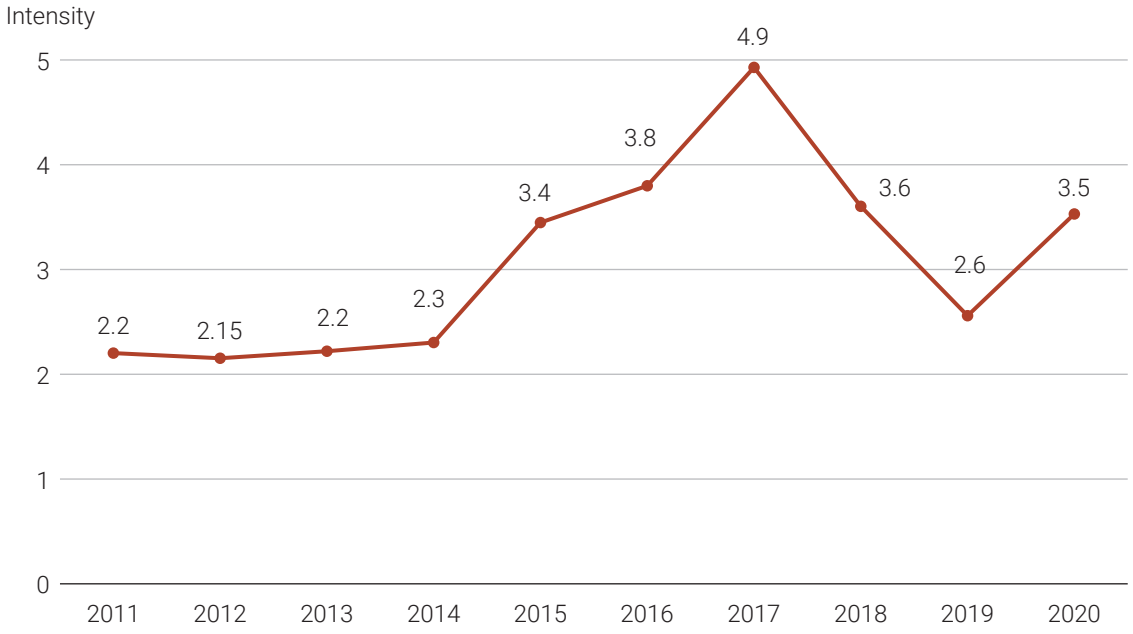
Findings and patterns

The most significant finding is the declining trend in the intensity of violence starting from 2017 to 2019, the period after the peak in both vertical and horizontal violence in the Bangsamoro in 2016. There was a rising trend in violence intensity at the beginning of the 10-year period, from 2013 to 2016 (Figure 1). Multiple factors explain the rising trend, including the war on drugs launched by the government in 2016, plus the rise in extremist violence. The highest points were observed in 2016 and in 2017 when the violent encounters between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the various Dawla Islamiya groups peaked, culminating in the Marawi siege that resulted in the deaths, injury, and displacement of thousands of civilians.[3]

However, the biggest contextual change was the declaration of martial law across the Bangsamoro region from 2017 to 2019, later accompanied by the ratification of the BOL.

[3] These include the Maute Group in Lanao, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao, and the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu and Basilan.

Figure 1. Violence Intensity Index in the Bangsamoro



More significantly, three months after martial law was ended in December 2019, a total lockdown and quarantine was reimposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors all contributed to the decline in violence. In terms of frequency, a downward trend was observed from 2017 to 2019 (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Number of Violent Incidents

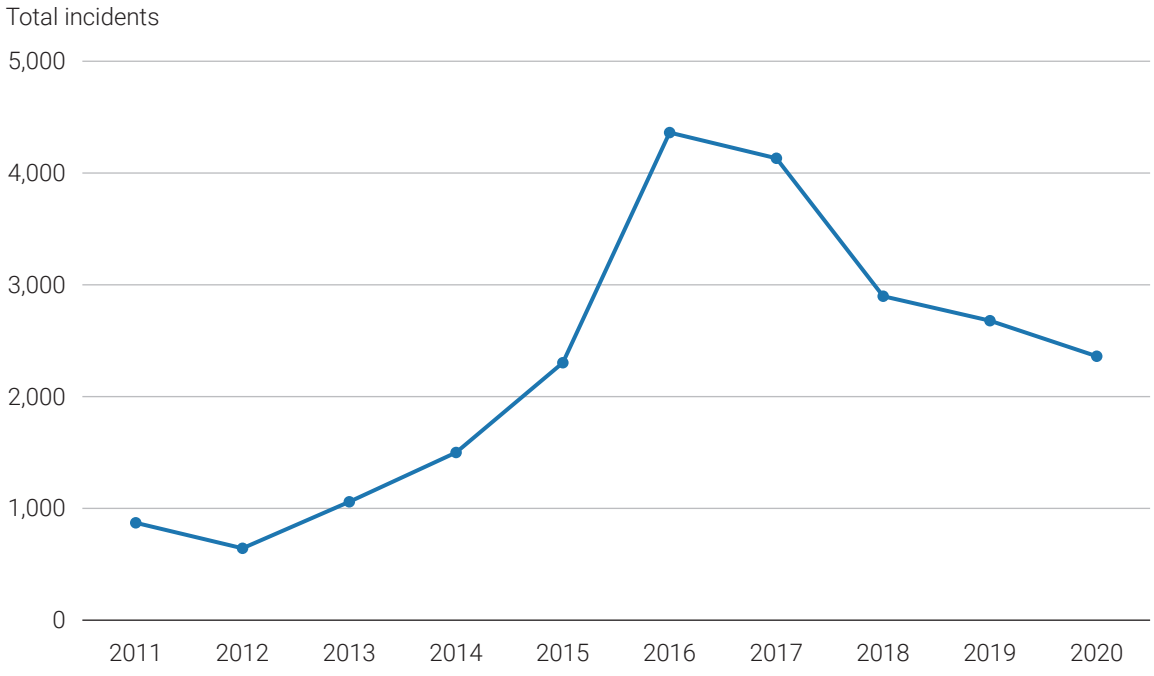
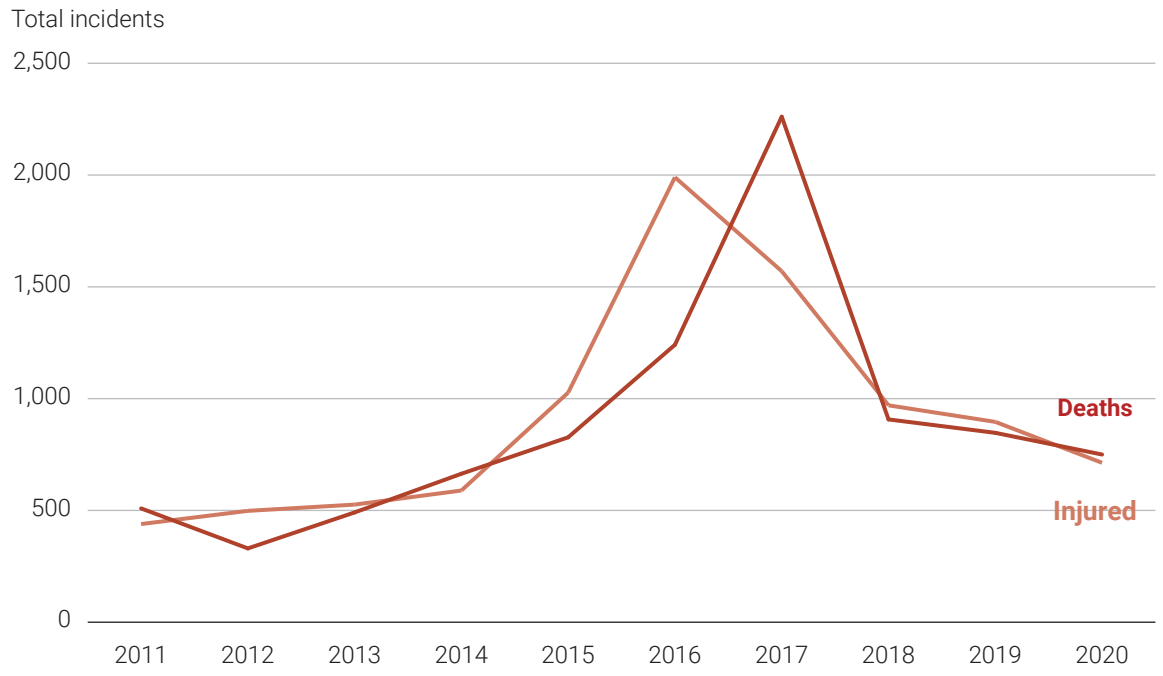
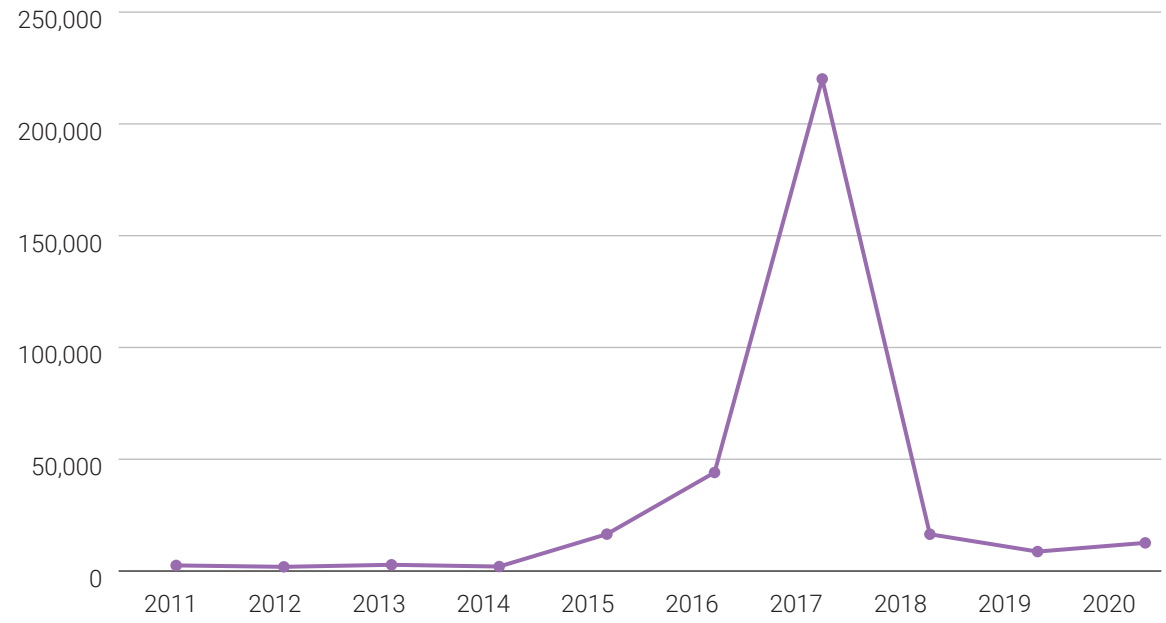


Figure 3. Number of Deaths and Injured Individuals, BARMM



However, the intensity of violence increased in 2020 despite of the declining trend of the number of violent incidents and fewer deaths and injured individuals (**Figure 3**). The main reason was the significant rise of the number of internally displaced individuals due to land conflict (**Figure 4**). Arrests and individuals who surrendered rose as well since President Duterte waged an all-out war against illicit drug trade and illicit weapons.

Figure 4. Number of Displaced Individuals, BARMM



Identity-based issues and political conflicts were the consistent and dominant source of violent flashpoints over the 10-year period.

High intensities of violence registered by identity-based and political issues can be explained by the propensity of these causes to result in deaths and displacement (Figure 5). Average death-incident ratio of political issues was the highest in the 10-year period, followed by identity-based issues (Table 1).

Figure 5. Violence Intensity Index by Cause

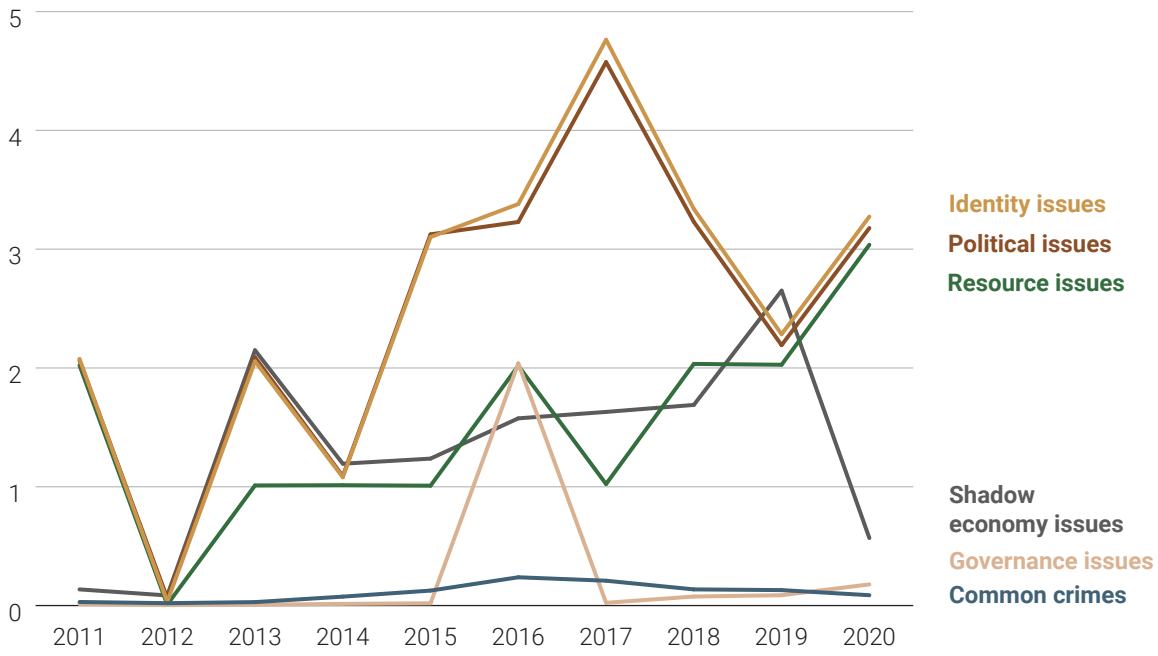


Table 1. Annual Average Death-Incident and Displacement-Incident Ratio by Cause

Rank	Cause	Annual Average Death-Incident Ratio	Annual Average Displacement-Incident Ratio
1	Political Issues	1.283	76.91
2	Identity Issues	0.749	41.84
3	Resource Issues	0.640	40.28
4	Governance Issues	0.568	2.31
5	Shadow Economy Issues	0.196	0.67
6	Common Crimes	0.101	0.00

Figure 6. Violent Incidents by Cause

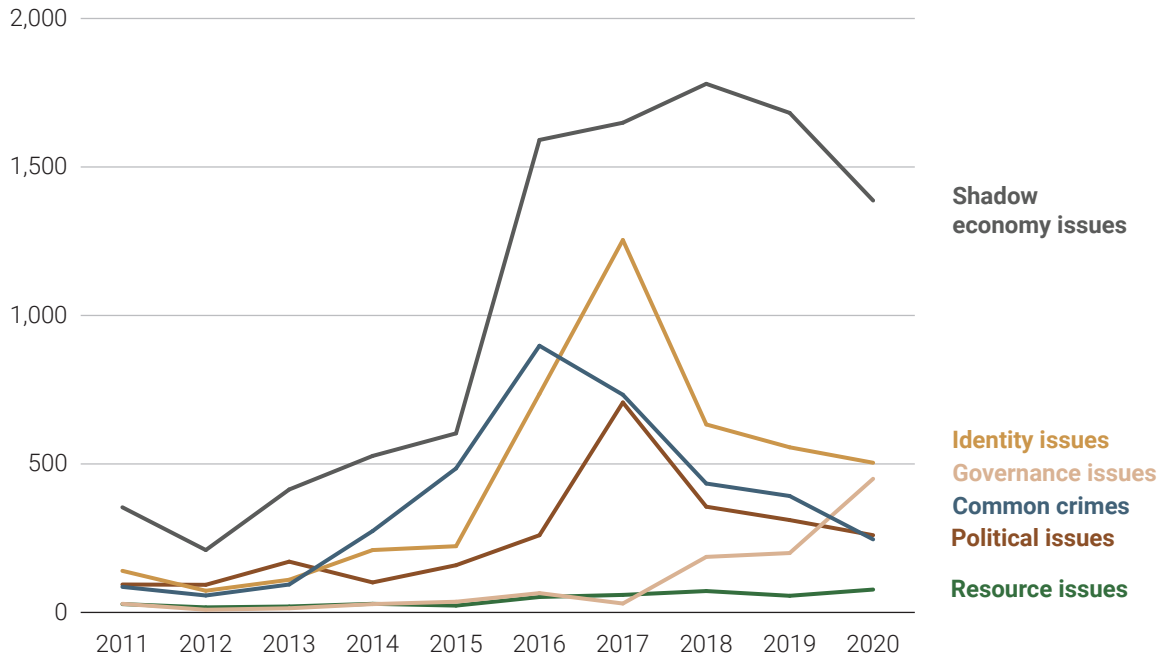


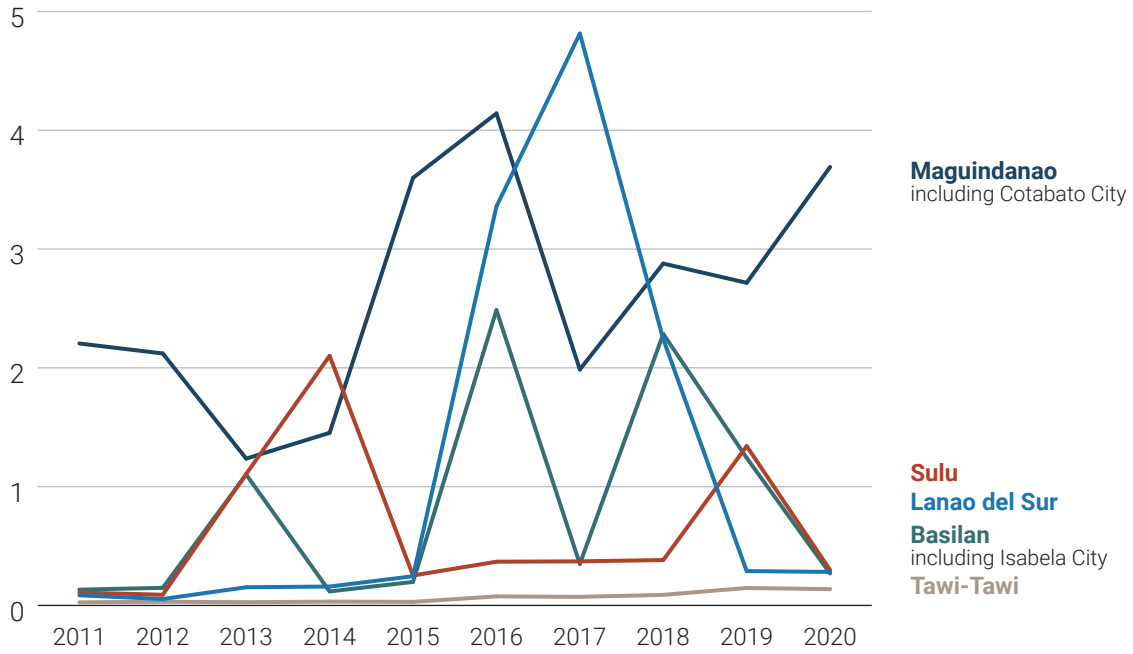
Table 2. 10-Year (2011-2020) Annual Average VII, by Province

Rank	Province/City	Ten-Year Average Violence Intensity Index (2011–2020)
1	Maguindanao	2.388
2	Lanao del Sur	1.168
3	Basilan	0.744
4	Sulu	0.642
5	City of Cotabato	0.214
6	City of Isabela	0.089
7	Tawi-Tawi	0.067

The third highest intensity of violence was registered by resource issues such as land in 2020 despite having the lowest frequency (Figure 6). A high death-incident and high displacement-incident ratios (Table 2), ranked third from the highest, explained the relatively high violence intensity of resource issues, particularly land disputes.

Shadow economy issues registered the highest number in terms of frequency, accounting to as high as 62% in 2019 (in contrast to 26% in 2015). This is attributed to more than a fourfold increase in illicit drug cases in 2016 when the then newly elected President Duterte launched his war against the illicit drug trade. This was followed by a spike in illicit firearms related violence by 104% in 2016 due to the national elections and the surge in extremist violence. However, the same shadow economy issues had the second lowest average death-incident ratio among the causes.

Figure 7. Violence Intensity Index, by Provinces/City



Highest annual average violence intensity index registered in Maguindanao in a 10-year period. In a span of 10 years, Maguindanao registered the highest annual average VII in the BARMM (Table 2). The different causes of violence were reproduced in the province and most had the highest death-incident ratio and displacement-incident ratios, such as political issues, identity issues, and resource issues (Figure 7). Though rebellion-related incidents substantially declined in the province, land issues intensified and resulted in deaths, injury and displacement of thousands of civilians. In 2020, there were 21 land-related incidents that led to 26 deaths, 16 wounded or injured, and 12,601 displaced individuals. Meanwhile, Tawi-Tawi had the lowest annual average intensity within the 10-year period.

Maguindanao ranked first in four out of five deadly causes of violence based on a 10-year annual average of the VII. These deadly causes were rebellion, land disputes, clan feud, and illicit firearms. The province was ranked second in terms of illicit drugs, with Sulu registering the highest intensity (Table 3).

Table 3. Rank, 10-Year (2011-2020) Annual Average VII, by Cause

Province/City	Cause				
	Rebellion	Land disputes	Clan Feud	Illicit Drugs	Illicit Firearms
Isabela City	6th	5th	6th	7th	7th
Cotabato City	5th	6th	5th	3rd	4th
Maguindanao	1st	1st	1st	2nd	1st
Lanao del Sur	4th	2nd	2nd	4th	2nd
Sulu	2nd	4th	3rd	1st	3rd
Basilan	3rd	3rd	4th	6th	5th
Tawi-Tawi	7th	7th	7th	5th	6th

On 25 January 2015, Special Action Force (SAF) personnel of the Philippine National Police carried out an operation to extract Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, alias Marwan, in Barangay Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao. The operation, codenamed Oplan Exodus, resulted in the deaths of 44 SAF commandos, 17 MILF members, and five civilians, including an 8-year-old child.
Ferdinandh Cabrera

Violence Intensity Index in Local Planning and Programming: The Case of the Provincial Government of Maguindanao

A local government unit has two main sources of income: 1) national tax allocations (NTA), formerly the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), and 2) locally sourced incomes. The Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas-Garcia case increased the share of local governments in the NTA, and starting in 2022, a local government unit will receive, on the average, an increase of 27% in NTA. For the provincial government of Maguindanao, this implies more resources to be allocated in funding the priority programs and projects.

Starting August 2022, the provincial government of Maguindanao will commence the updating of the Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP) that will run for five months. The PDPFP will reflect the strategic directions of the province for the next six years. From December 2022 to February 2023, the province will formulate the Provincial Development Investment Program (PDIP) which reflects the priority programs and projects to be implemented for three years, consistent to the term of the newly elected local chief executive. The ranking of priority programs and projects can be informed by the Conflict Alert violence dataset disaggregated at the municipal level.

Maguindanao has the highest annual average violence intensity index (VII) for the 10-year period. Among the deadly and persistent causes of violence witnessed in the province was *rido* or clan-feuding. **Table 4** shows the rank and the VII per municipality in 2020.

Table 4 reveals that Parang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Cotabato City, Mamasapano, and Pagalungan are the top five municipalities/city with the highest intensities of *rido*-related violence in 2020. This implies that the priority programs and projects of the provincial government of Maguindanao, as reflected in the PDIP, should include investments in monitoring and resolving *rido* incidents in the said municipalities/ city. The 2023 Annual Investment Program and Annual Budget of the Provincial Government of Maguindanao and of the five municipalities/city should already cover initiatives in monitoring and resolving *rido*-related violence in their respective areas.

In addition, it should be noted that *rido*-related violence should continue to be monitored in the municipalities of Upi, Talayan, Guindulungan, Pagagawan, Sultan Mastura, and other municipalities to avoid escalation and to be provided with preventive measures.

Table 4. Rank, Violence Intensity Index, *Rido* or Clan Feuding, by Maguindanao Municipality or City, 2020

No.	Maguindanao Municipality	Rank	VII
1	Parang	1st	0.600
2	Datu Odin Sinsuat	2nd	0.488
3	Cotabato City	3rd	0.400
4	Mamasapano	4th	0.312
5	Pagalungan	5th	0.288
6	Upi	6th	0.168
7	Talayan	7th	0.160
8	Guindulungan	7th	0.160
9	Pagagawan	7th	0.160
10	Sultan Mastura	8th	0.152
11	Datu Salibo	9th	0.112
12	Pandag	9th	0.112
13	Sultan Kudarat (Nuling)	9th	0.112
14	Talitay	10th	0.080
15	Ampatuan	11th	0.040
16	Buldon	12th	0.000
17	Buluan	12th	0.000
18	Datu Paglas	12th	0.000
19	Datu Piang	12th	0.000
20	Shariff Aguak (Capital)	12th	0.000
21	Matanog	12th	0.000
22	Sultan Sa Barongis	12th	0.000
23	Kabuntalan	12th	0.000
24	South Upi	12th	0.000
25	Barira	12th	0.000
26	Gen S.K Pendatun	12th	0.000
27	Paglat	12th	0.000
28	Datu Saudi Ampatuan	12th	0.000
29	Datu Unsay	12th	0.000
30	Datu Abdullah Sangki	12th	0.000
31	Rajah Buayan	12th	0.000
32	Datu Blah T. Sinsuat	12th	0.000
33	Datu Anggal Midtimbang	12th	0.000
34	Mangudadatu	12th	0.000
35	Northern Kabuntalan	12th	0.000
36	Datu Hoffer Ampatuan	12th	0.000
37	Shariff Saydona Mustapha	12th	0.000

Rebellion-related violence dipped in 2016 as extremist violence surged.

The highest intensity of violence was registered in 2013, but it was in 2015 that the highest number of rebellion issues and rebellion-related deaths were registered (**Figures 8–10**). The displacement data indicates that around 2,284 individuals were displaced in 2015 in comparison to only 305 individuals in 2013 (**Figure 11**).

Figure 8. Violence Intensity Index, Rebellion

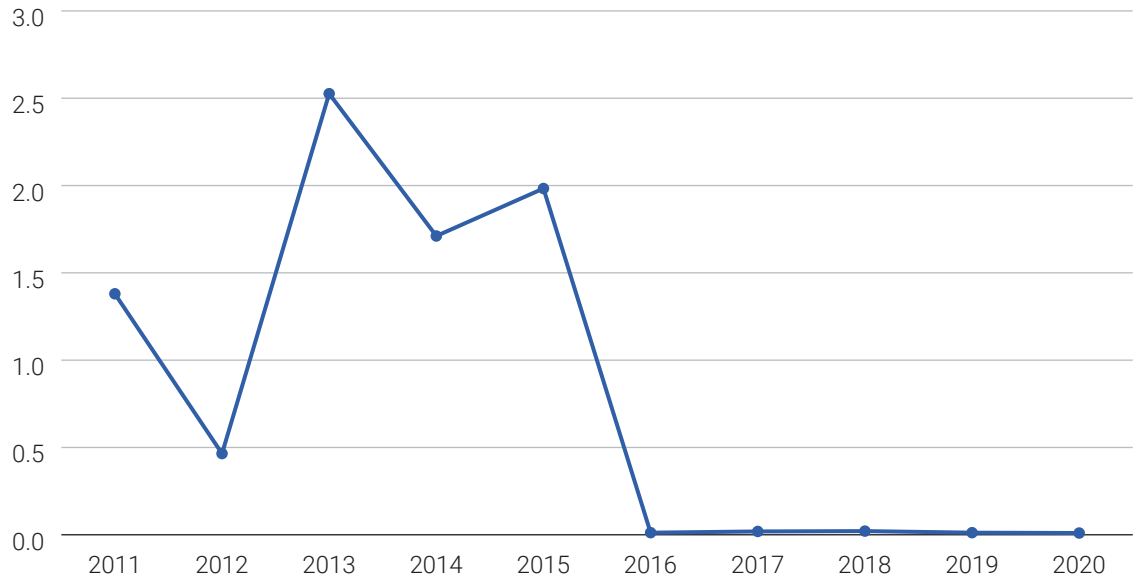


Figure 9. Frequency of Rebellion Issues, BARMM

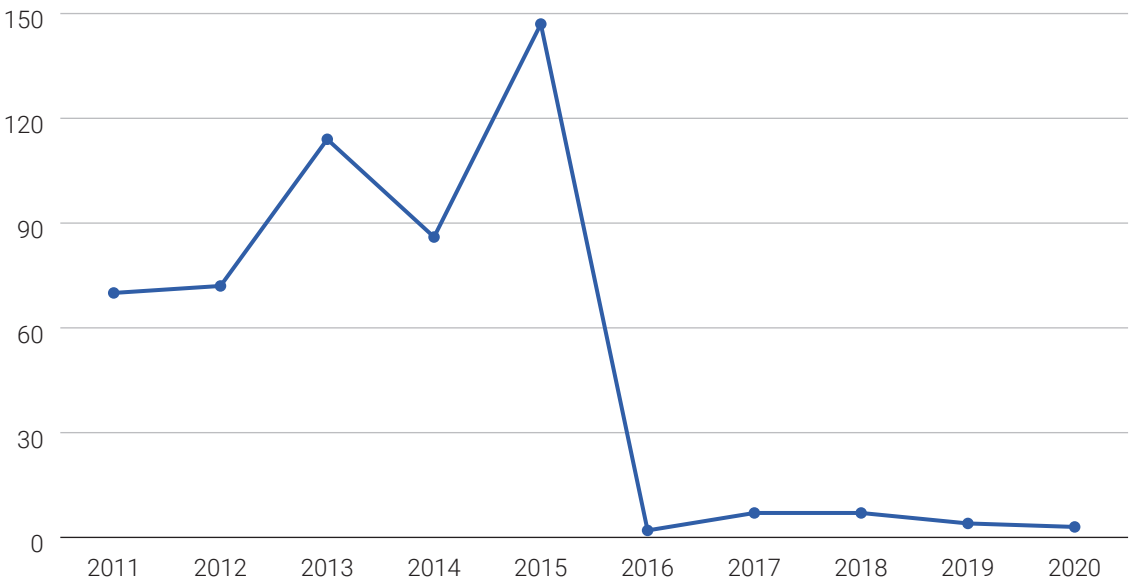


Figure 10. Rebellion-Related Deaths, BARMM

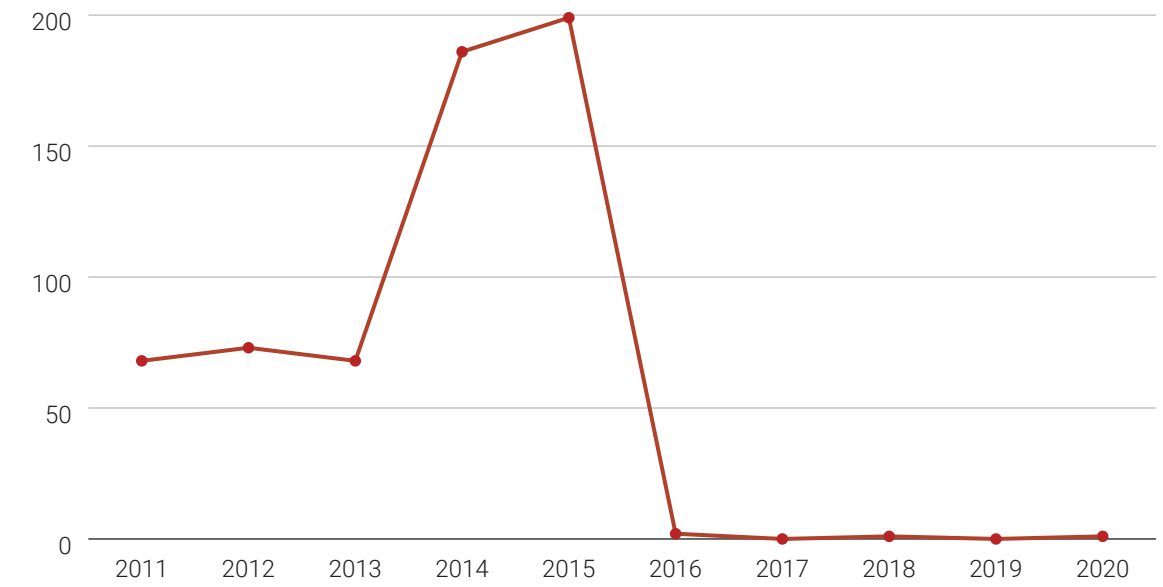
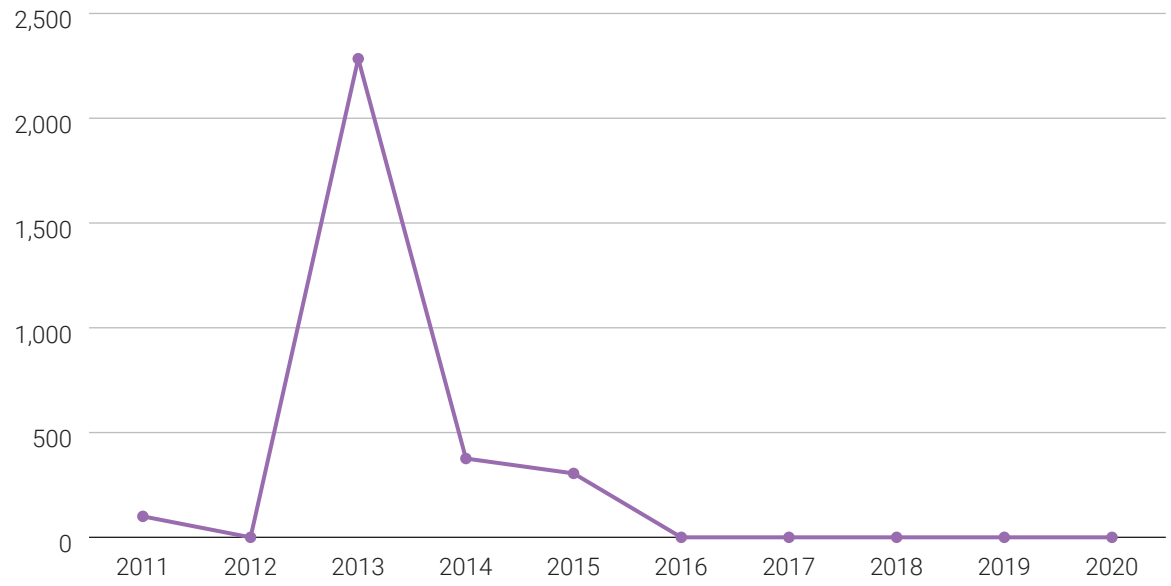
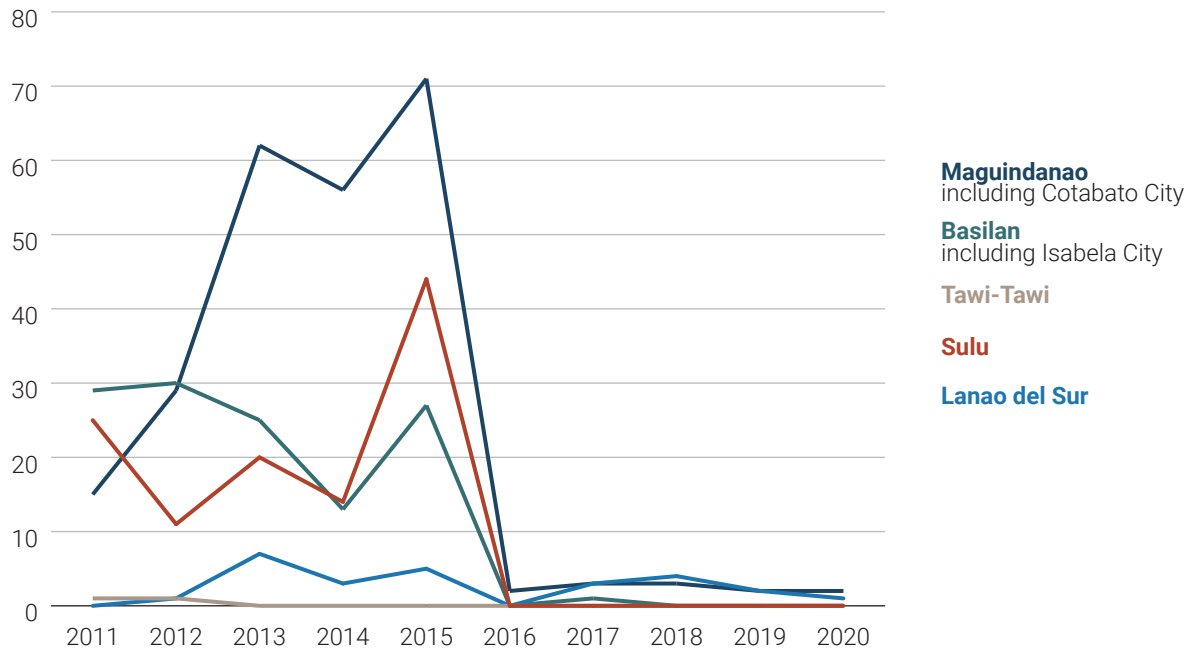


Figure 11. Number of Displaced Individuals, Rebellion



Maguindanao, Basilan, and Sulu used to be the epicenters of rebellion-related incidents, but the numbers have declined substantially starting 2016 (**Figure 12**).

Figure 12. Number of Rebellion-Related Incidents, by BARMM Province/City



While other causes declined, resource-related land issues persisted and became deadlier.

It was at the time of the pandemic in 2020 when the highest intensity of land issues in the past decade was witnessed in the BARMM. Spikes of violence were recorded on May 2020 between the Teduray–Lambangian indigenous people (IP) and Maguindanaoan Muslims who had competing claims on land historically occupied by Teduray IPs in South Upi, Maguindanao. The clashes between the two groups led to the displacement of nearly 1,000 Teduray families.[4] Most of the Maguindanao Muslims had links to Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commanders. The MILF commanders' families and allies were occupying these contested lands and could do so because of their access to weapons and political power.[5] The continued high weaponry and firepower indicates the slow pace and the challenges in the decommissioning process. This enabled them to engage in long-standing land disputes in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and elsewhere.[6] Maguindanao remains the epicenter of land-related violence (**Figure 13**).

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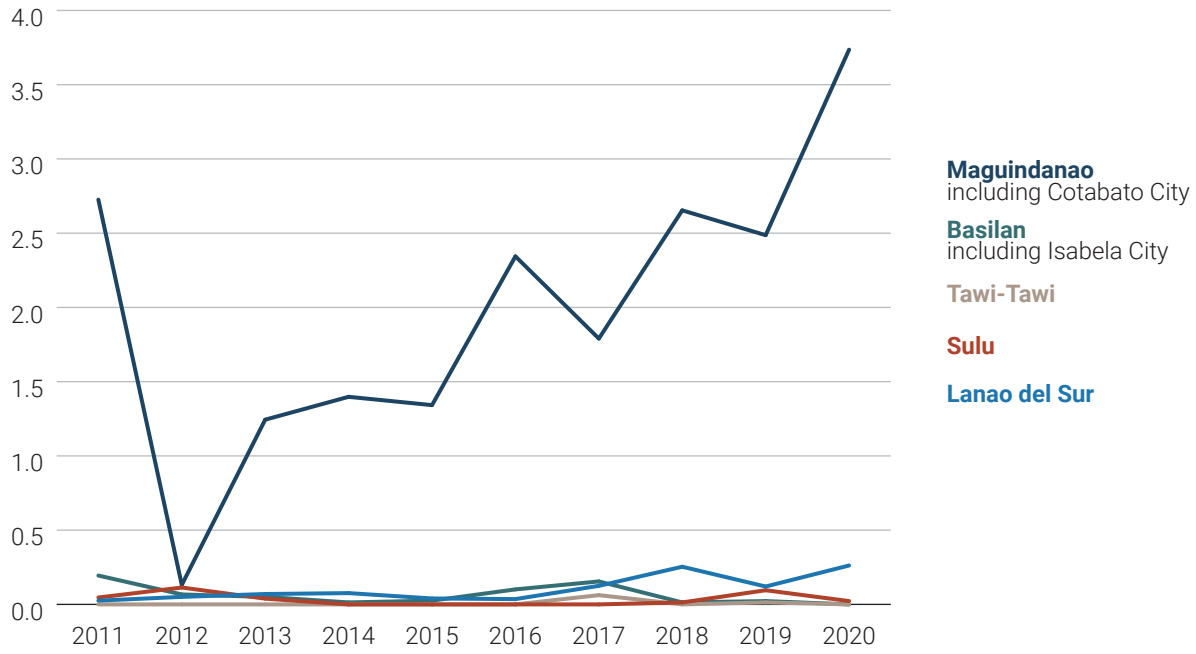
[4] International Alert. 2020. *The Lay of the Land: Viral Violence and the Threat of a Wider War*. Quezon City: International Alert. available at https://conflictalert.info/cems-bulletins2019/cems-bulletin-april-may-2020/ (date last accessed: 10 October 2020)

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

Figure 13. Violence Intensity Index, Land Issues, by BARMM Province/City



Clan feuding remains impervious in the conflict-to-peace transition in the BARMM.

The scale of *rido* or clan feuding has not diminished in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur and remains a fixture of Muslim social and political life in Basilan, Sulu, and Cotabato City. The practice remains embedded and functions as dispute or conflict

Figure 14. Death-Incident Ratio, ***Rido*** or Clan Feud, BARMM

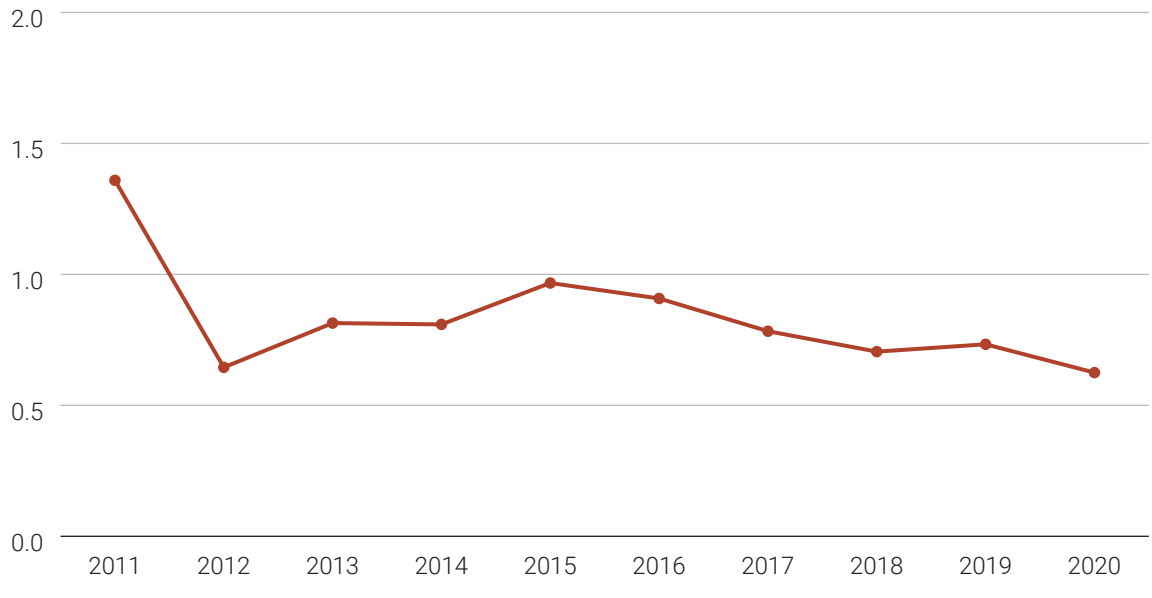


Figure 15. Violence Intensity Index, *Rido* or Clan Feud, BARMM

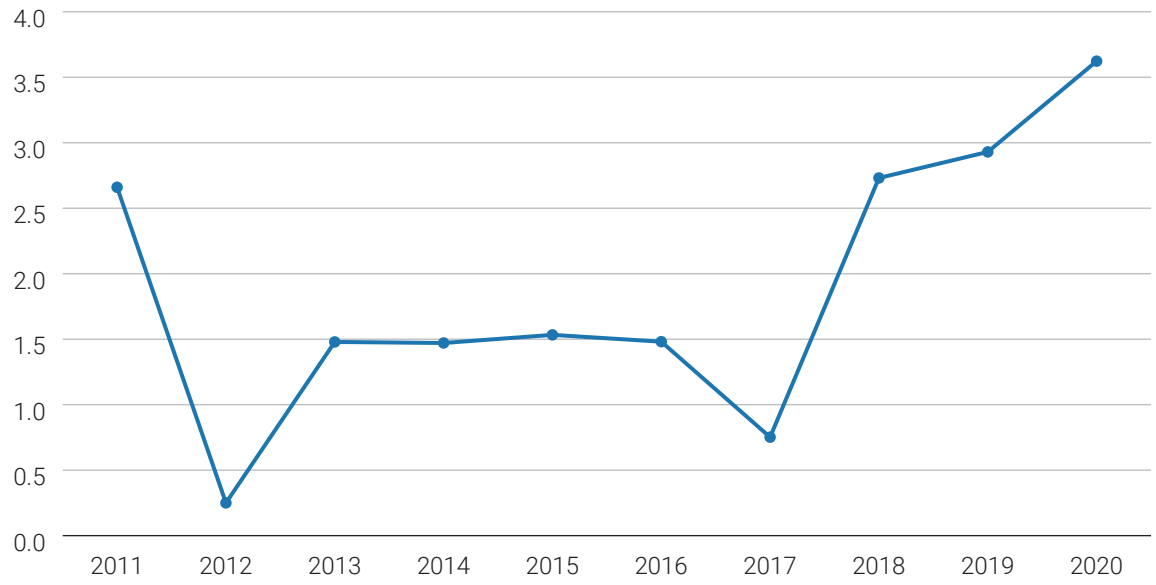
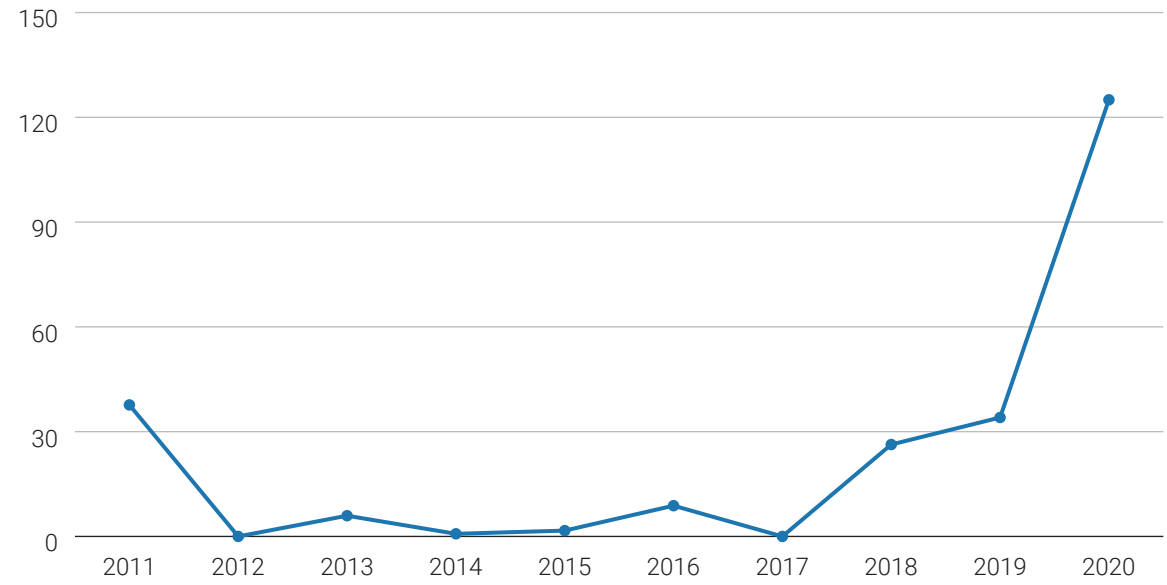


Figure 16. Displacement-Incident Ratio, *Rido* or Clan Feud, BARMM



resolution mechanism. Oftentimes, however, clan feuding can disable a clan and its members for years.

Though a declining trend was observed in terms of death-incident ratio of clan feuding in recent years, it remains as the highest among the causes (**Figure 15**). The intermittent spikes in the intensity of clan feuding is associated with the equal rise in displacement-incident ratios (**Figure 16**).

Conclusions and Implications

The patterns in violence intensity, or the lack of it, over the past few years can be explained using various events that transpired during the period. They include the original causes of violence that remains impervious, including clan feuding, land-related conflict, and political violence from electoral competitions that explain the violent episodes from 2011-2020. In short, unraveling the various interconnections between horizontal conflicts will be critical.

Meanwhile, the interconnectedness of martial law lockdowns, pandemic restrictions, demographic transitions, and the barrage of aid that accompanied the Government of the Republic of the Philippines-MILF peace process can all contribute towards reducing violence. It is difficult to ascertain the actual effects of the political transition that only began in 2019 when the BOL was ratified and the Bangsamoro Transition Authority was established, and it is doubly difficult to point the agency of change and the conflict-to-peace transition to a peace agreement that is not yet embedded in the Bangsamoro consciousness.

A wealth of factors will require further exploration and some of these may not appear to be directly related to the intensity of violence. For example, they may be natural or biophysical, ideological, or geopolitical in nature, etc. There are other related factors to consider such as deprivation and inequality, where follow up research will need to be conducted. The search for instrumental variables will have to proceed apace.

In the meantime, the violence intensity index can be used as a tool to target conflict by looking beyond the number of incidents, to the causes and the magnitude of those incidents. Resources such as land and development aid are scarce, and the VII can help ensure that they are put to their most effective and efficient use.

Thousands of residents flocked to Marawi City's main road on Cabili Avenue on 1 February 2016 to condemn the failure of Congress to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law, accusing former President Benigno Aquino III of failing to uphold his promise to the Bangsamoro people.
Erwin Mascariñas


NOY NOY,
NOR YOUR
MITMENT TO
ANGSAMORO
NOY NOY,
TRAYDOR KA
NOY NOY,
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TRAYDOR KA
Levi's

A family takes cover in the shade after playing under the sun in Barangay Kuya, South Upi. **International Alert Philippines**

CHAPTER 6

Violence in Borderlands:

What Explains the Difference in Intensity and Magnitude?

Violence in Borderlands: What Explains the Difference in Intensity and Magnitude?

Eddie L. Quitoriano

This chapter examines why violence intensity and magnitude is higher in the borderlands than in other conflict locations in the Bangsamoro region. Heatmaps from the Conflict Alert conflict database demonstrate this geographic characteristic of violent conflict. Ten-year panel data across the region were examined to compare conflict intensity and magnitude within and outside borderlands, supplemented by ocular surveys, key informant interviews, and other secondary data. Two borderland cases were investigated to determine the causal links between violence and geography using the lens of power, space, and time. The study discovered that political institutions, geography, and management of collective identities and identity claims influence violence intensity per unit of time. Underlying identity and territorial claims are rooted in the historical formation of borderlands that can trigger scale shifts in violence when used by external actors or local elites aiming to secure power by leaning on the predominant ethnic group. The study further reveals that eruptions and persistence of violence are connected to contingent and transgressive events that involve autonomous actions of external agents such as security forces of the central state, rebel groups, and others that are not native to the political resources of local communities.

1. Conflict intensity and magnitude in the Bangsamoro borderlands

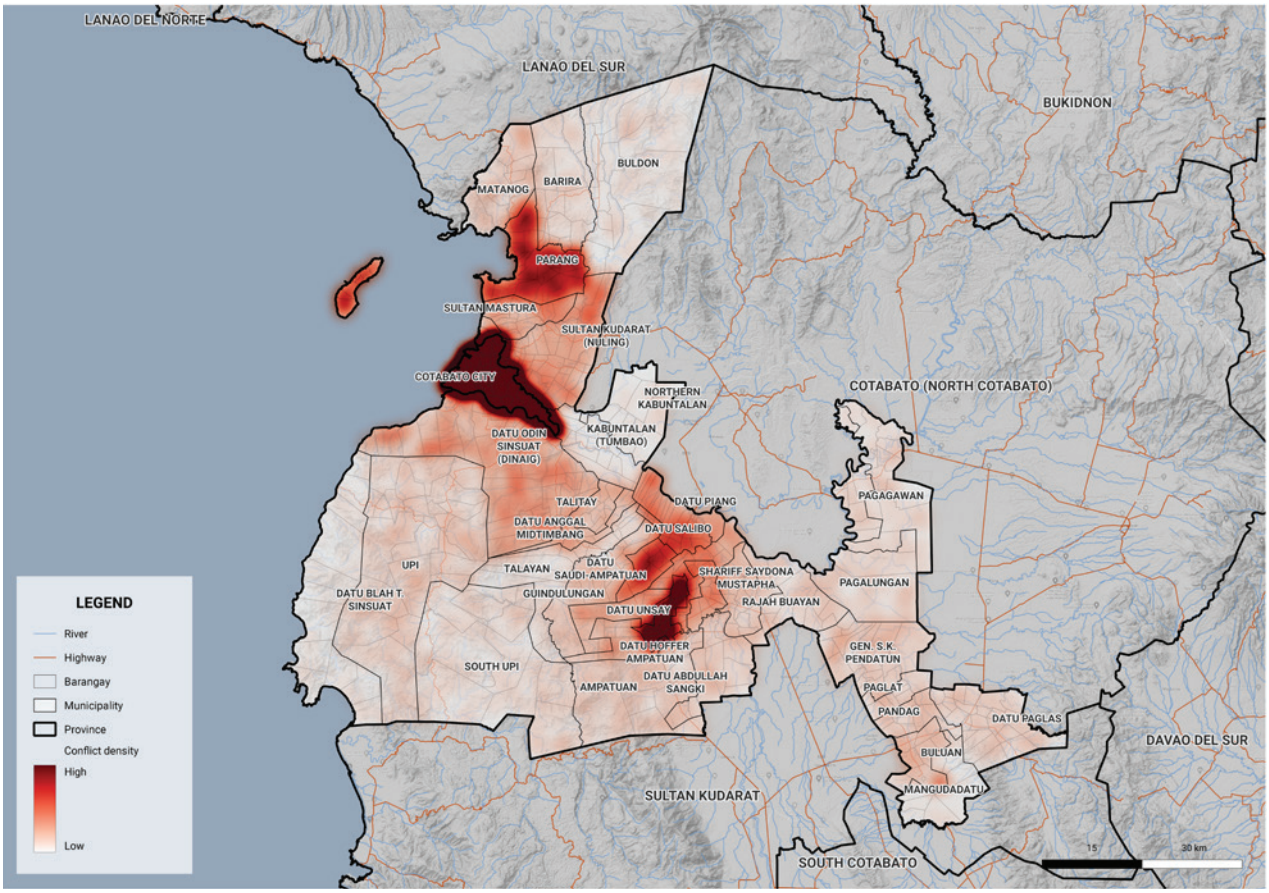
A cursory look at the Conflict Alert 2011–2020 database reveals the spatial characteristics of different types of conflicts in the region and exposes the higher intensity and magnitude of violence in areas straddling border areas, referred to as borderlands, within the Bangsamoro region.[1] Heat maps were used to indicate the intensity of conflict in these borderlands.[2]

In Maguindanao, these heat maps point to borders within the Parang corridor and the SPMS box, including Cotabato City that lies at the border between Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat province. In the SPMS box, borderlands include

[1] Borderlands are variously defined based on the nature and characteristics of borders and the lens being used to study these borders. They can be described as "geographical places demarcated and defined by state-designed boundaries", and hence, are socially constructed boundaries between states and societies (Chan 2016; Foucault, 1978). They are also defined as areas where dwellers negotiate tensions, disputes, or conflicts atop a diverse set of identities based on ethnicity, culture, language, including gender (Vila 2003). Political scientists refer to them as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas, and people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state (Wilson and Donnan,1998). Historians view them as "the contested boundaries between colonial domains" (Adelman and Aron, 1999) International relations people see them as "subnational areas whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary" (Hansen 1981).

[2] A heat map generalizes and visualizes data based on the clustering of point data in an area. It assumes continuous distribution of point data across the area. It is also called an isopleth map where data drawn shapes depict hotspots or concentration of value on a map (e.g., Map 1). This study also uses another type of map called choropleth map. In Map 6, the choropleth map of Wao and Amai Manabilang is shown. It is a thematic map where the colors correspond to categories defined by numeric ranges and the shapes are defined by standard geographical boundaries, not by the data itself.

Map 1. Conflict Heat Map of Maguindanao



Datu Piang and Datu Salibo that share borders with Midsayap and Pikit in North Cotabato (**Map 1**).

An interesting case is South Upi, on the southern tip of Maguindanao province, which shares borders with Lebak, on the northern tip of Sultan Kudarat province (**Map 4a**). On the following map, the incidence of violence in South Upi is remarkably more intense than the neighboring Maguindanao municipalities of Upi, Datu Blah Sinsuat, and Talayan. The question is whether the violence in South Upi is confined to the municipality or has anything to do with being a borderland to Lebak.

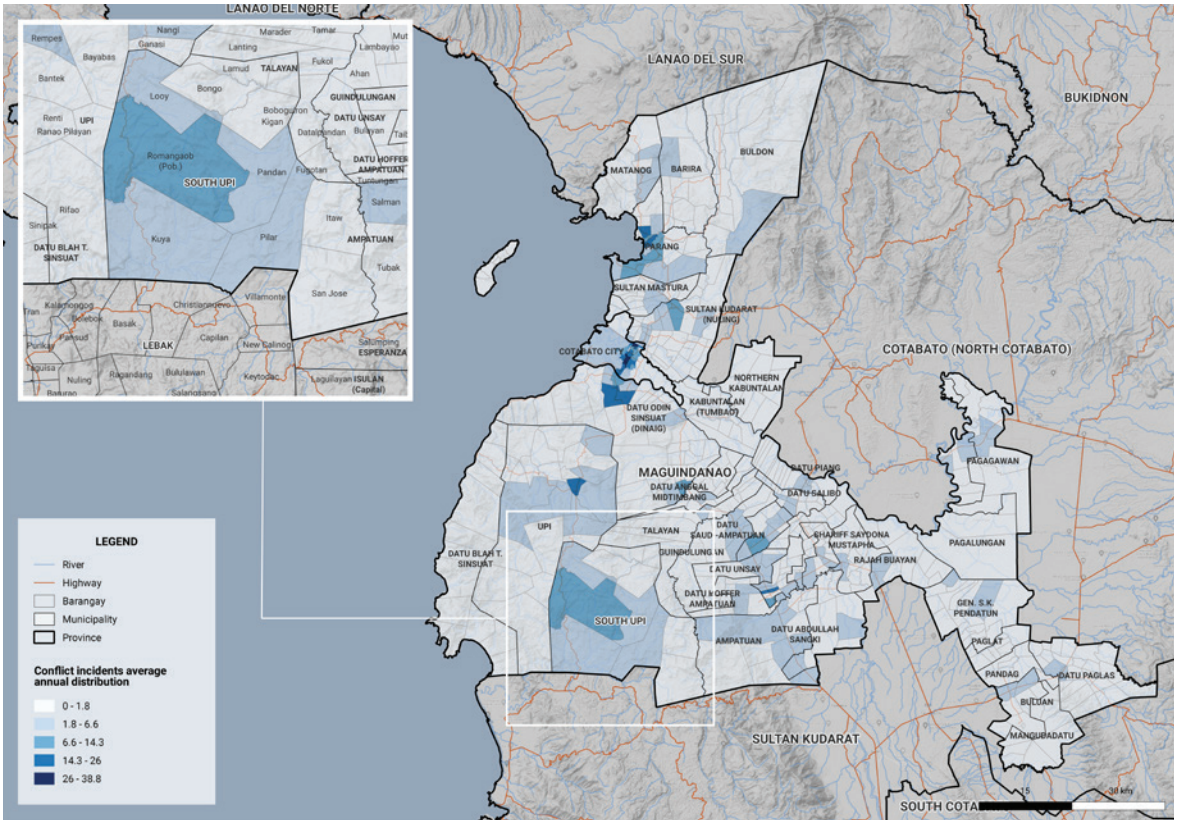
Meanwhile, the Lanao del Sur heat map shows very high concentrations in Marawi City and the adjacent towns of Ditsaan Ramain, Marantao and Saguiaran; the adjoining lake towns of Mulondo, Taraka and Tamparan; and, Wao (**Map 3**).

Note that Wao shares borders with Kalilangan and Kadingilan (Bukidnon) and Alamada and Banisilan (North Cotabato). Adjacent to Wao is the Municipality of Amai Manabilang, which also shares borders with Kadingilan and Alamada (**Map 4b**).

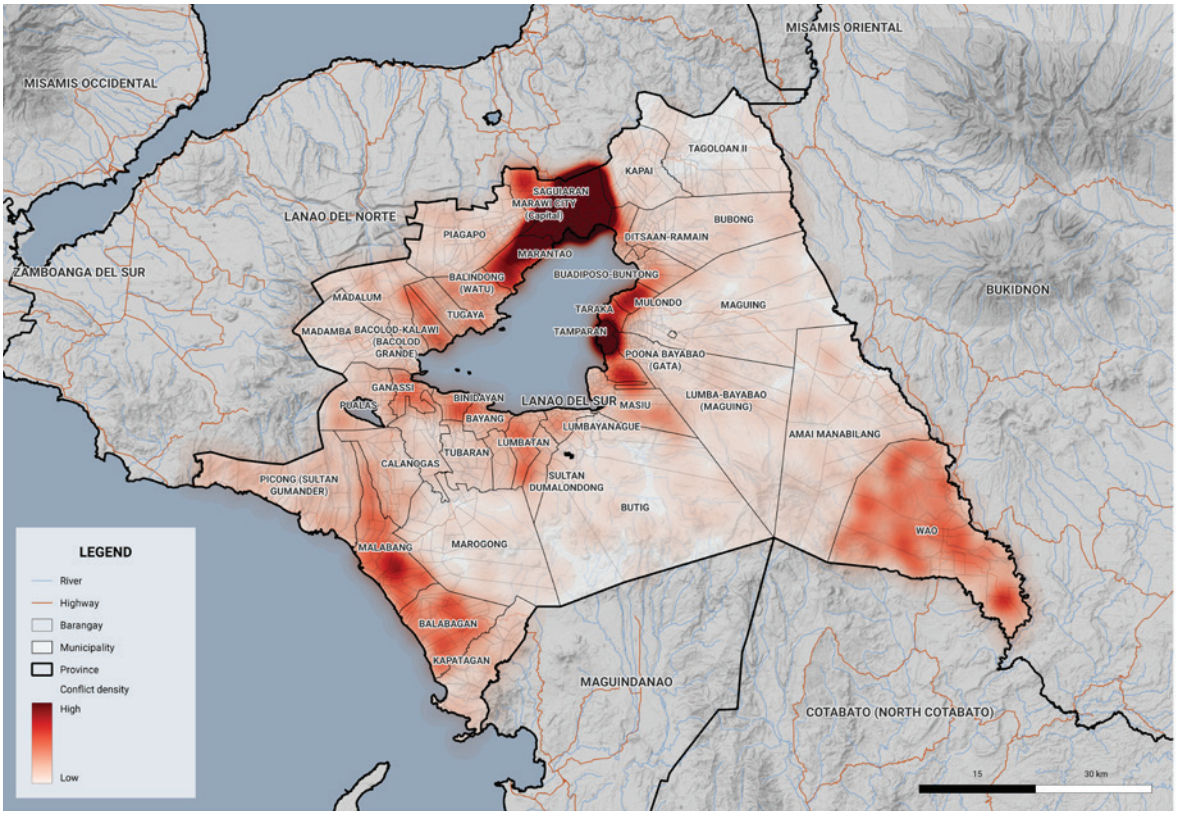
The heat maps of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao present two striking images: high concentration of violence in capital cities of Marawi and Cotabato as well as in border municipalities. Of 3,950 violent incidents in Lanao del Sur, 34.8% were concentrated in Marawi City. In the case of Maguindanao, 40.1% of the 10,695 violent incidents in the province were concentrated in Cotabato City.

Conflict studies have pointed to at least four specific characteristics of urban areas that make them vulnerable as sites of violent conflict (Putzel and Di John 2012, 27–32; Beall and Fox

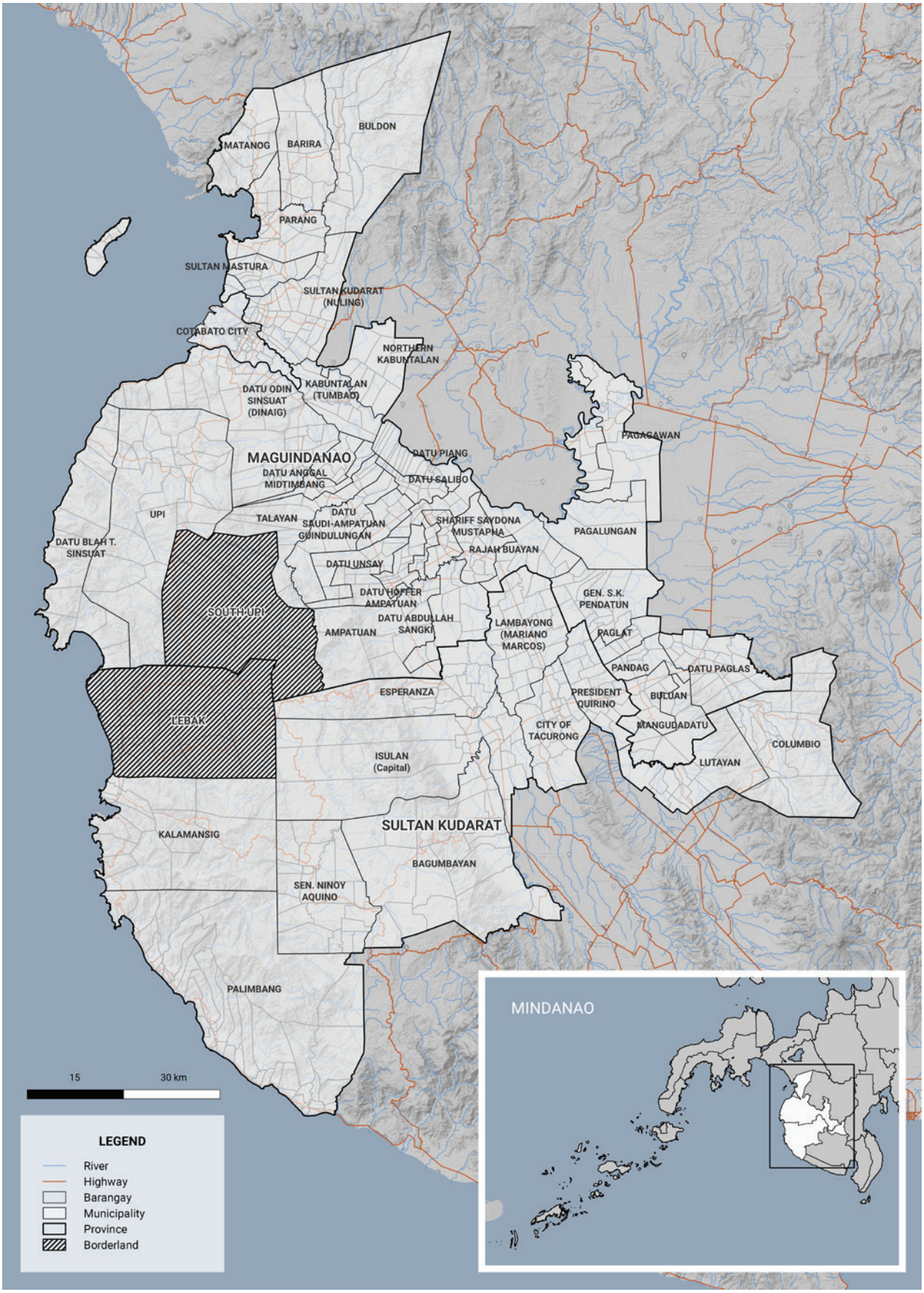
Map 2. Spatial Distribution of Violent Incidents: South Upi and Lebak (inset), 2011-2020



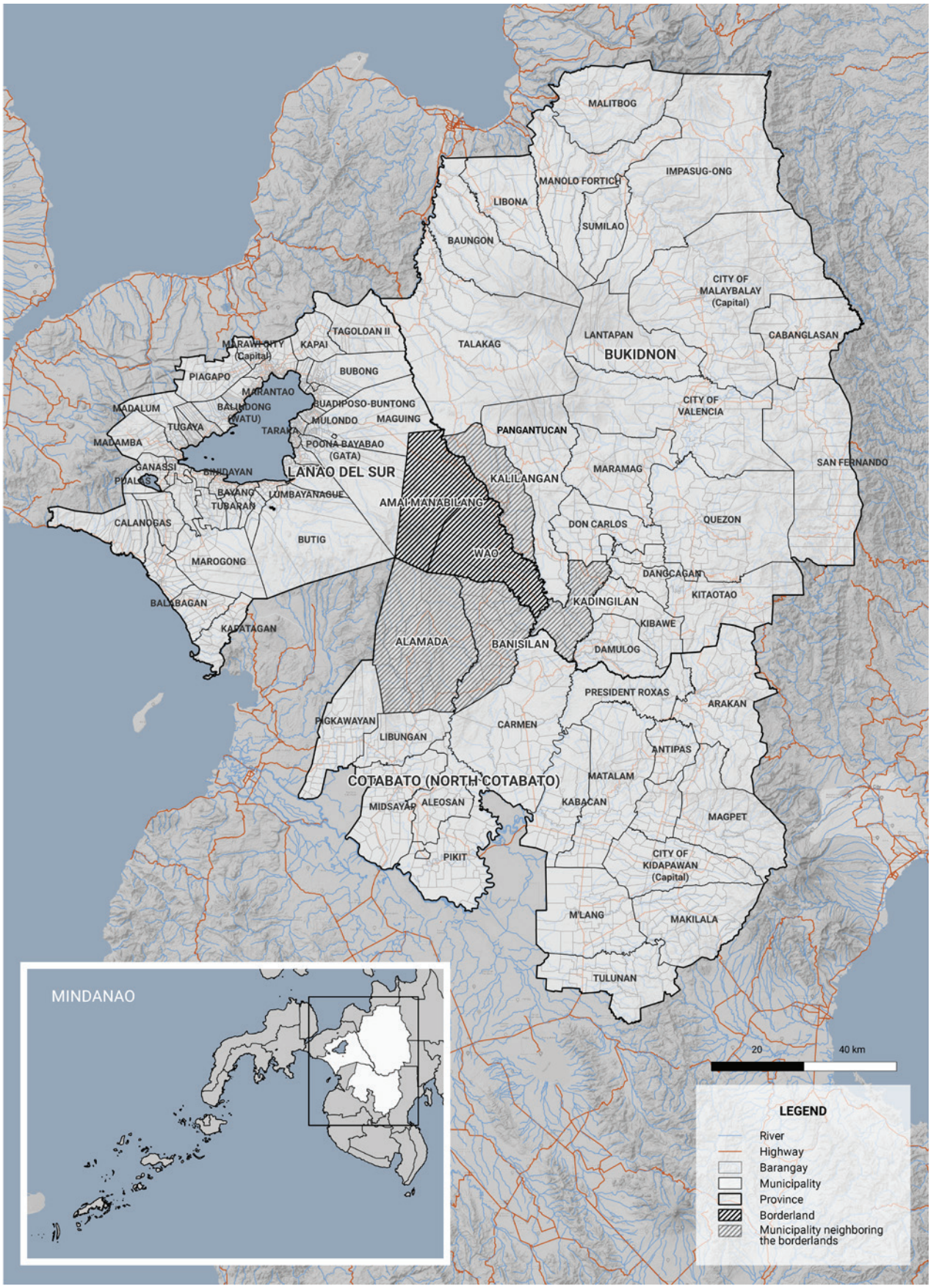
Map 3. Conflict Heat Map of Lanao del Sur



Map 4a. Borderlands Between Two Provinces



Map 4b. Borderlands Between Two Provinces

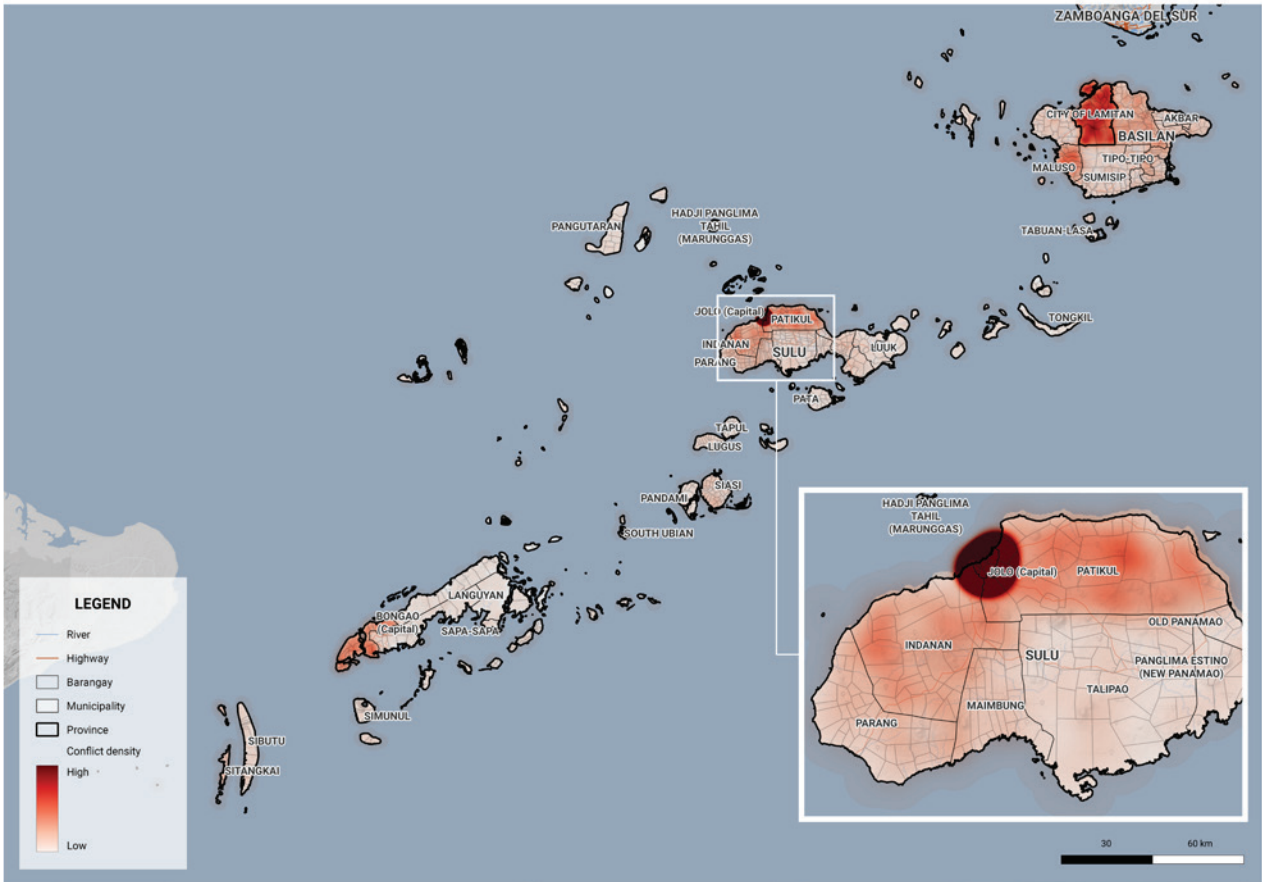


2009, 171–179). The first has to do with the demographics of cities and adjacent municipalities. The population of a province is concentrated in urban locales, particularly in capital cities or municipalities. The second has to do with the heterogenous distribution of the population in a city that is often a source of violent cleavages across ethnic, tribal, and language groups. The third has to do with the concentration of wealth and other resources that attract predation and destruction. The fourth has to do with the tendency of warring factions to act out their violent clashes within cities for maximum projection and impact, even if their struggles are horizontal in nature and may be in the form of clan feuding and land disputes.[3]

However, borderlands exhibit the same levels of violence comparable to cities without the characteristics of the latter. In the province of Lanao del Sur, for example, there were 24 incidents in the non-borderland area of Marogong compared to 517 in Wao. In Maguindanao, there were 54 violent incidents in the non-borderland area of Datu Blah Sinsuat compared to 235 in the borderland area of South Upi.

The Conflict Alert database also exposes a high concentration of violent incidents in other towns and cities of the BARMM, such as in Jolo, Sulu and Bongao, Tawi-Tawi (**Map 5**).

Map 5. Conflict Heat Map of Island Provinces



[3] Beall and Fox (2009, 172) argue that cities and other urbanizing areas provide opportunities for maximum propaganda impact especially with the "advent of new wars", involving "asymmetrical" tactics such as terrorist attacks or massacres designed to maximize civilian deaths and inculcate fear. Beall (2006) also notes that crime rates are rising, social conflicts with historical roots in rural areas are being transferred to urban centers, cities are increasingly the primary battlefield for "new wars", and terrorists use cities both as bases and targets for their activities. Even in countries where conflict remains primarily focused in rural areas, there are important spillover effects into cities, which become spaces of refuge for displaced populations

A farmer prepares seedlings for transplanting to his paddyfield in Wao, Lanao del Sur. **Najib Zacaria**

2. Conceptualizing borderlands

Research question

The concentration of violent incidents in borderlands is striking. The question of why borderlands are more dangerous than other areas that do not straddle borders needs to be asked. Second, this observation should be examined to determine whether this holds for all border areas, and if not, why some borders are dangerous and why others are not.

These are relevant questions in determining the means for ending or reducing violent conflict in borderland areas specifically, and the Bangsamoro generally. The study also enables early response and prevention of potential flashpoints that can spill over to a wider set of areas, locally and internationally.

It is common knowledge that the bordering of lands in the public domain, untitled lands in alienable and disposable (A&D) areas and common pool resources (such as lakes, rivers, watersheds, municipal fishing grounds) are influenced by violent struggles for dominance—i.e., between the rules of the State, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government, the local government units, and the many shadow actors and authorities in these border areas.

The challenges are even greater for places in transition from conflict to peace. BARMM is still in flux and the new formal structure of subregional local governments is not yet instituted. Local elites and clan institutions are bound to bargain for the redivision of territories and re-demarcation of interprovincial, inter-municipal, and inter-barangay territories.

Ethnicities within the aspired Bangsamoro national identity will continue to shape the determination of borders and their orders.[4] The dynamics not only pertain to the interactions among Muslim ethnic groups, but also between them and non-Muslim ethnic groups in the region. Resolving these issues before they explode into violence will be critical. It will require various actors to collectively resolve border and borderland factors that engender violent conflicts, to recognize the contribution of local institutions in borderlands to state-building rather than treating borderlands as an appendix problematized by the central state, and prevent violence in the process of ordering and bordering.

Finally, an answer to the "why" question will require an exploration of the overlapping meanings and values that various actors place on borderlands—e.g., as signifiers of identity (ethnic, clan, and language) boundaries, as barriers or bridges for economic integration or exclusion, and, as checkpoints or gates to allow or prevent the flow of resources. These are only a few of the potential signifiers that borderlands possess, the rest of which can be found in the rich literature.

Review of literature

Extensive literature on borderlands shows that the scholarship on the issue have long ago rejected the notion that these boundaries are singularly geographic in nature. Migdal (2004) argued that boundaries are more than simple borderlines represented in maps. They incorporate 'checkpoints' or physical or virtual separators that differentiate members from others, as well as 'mental maps' that divide the included and the excluded, home from alien territory and loyalties, emotions and other meanings attached to the physical space.[5]

One way of balancing the physical characteristics of borders with other elements such as nationalism, identity, and resources is to see borderlands from the prism of power, space, and time. Goodhand (2018) puts forward three related propositions: first, borderlands and frontier regions are frequently central to the dynamics of conflict, state building and development; second, state-centric analytical frameworks and ways of working influence policy makers to view borderlands as marginal; and third, taking borderlands seriously would challenge mainstream approaches and necessitate significant changes to development and peacebuilding policy and practice.

Akin to Goodhand's notion of power, space, and time is the notion that territorial compartments and social groups are part of a mutual feedback relationship in which group identities are responsible for creating boundaries and forming hierarchical processes of ordering (Harvey 2001). Examining borderlands in this manner goes beyond the deterministic perspectives of territorial configuration and focuses on the fluidity of identities, borders, and orders. The Identities-Borders-Orders (IBO) frame offers a conceptual approach that departs from the deterministic perspective and pays attention to marginal sites where new perspectives on the creation of identities, borders and orders can be gained (Wilmer 1996).

The IBO approach asserts that identity formation, bordering, and ordering are socially constructed. One is challenged to relinquish the notion of borders as static demarcation lines in favor of the notion that borders are zones where lives and landscapes are shaped by the presence of the border (Newman 2001, Rea 2018). They are spatial and temporal records of relationships between local communities and between states (Wilson & Donnan 1998).

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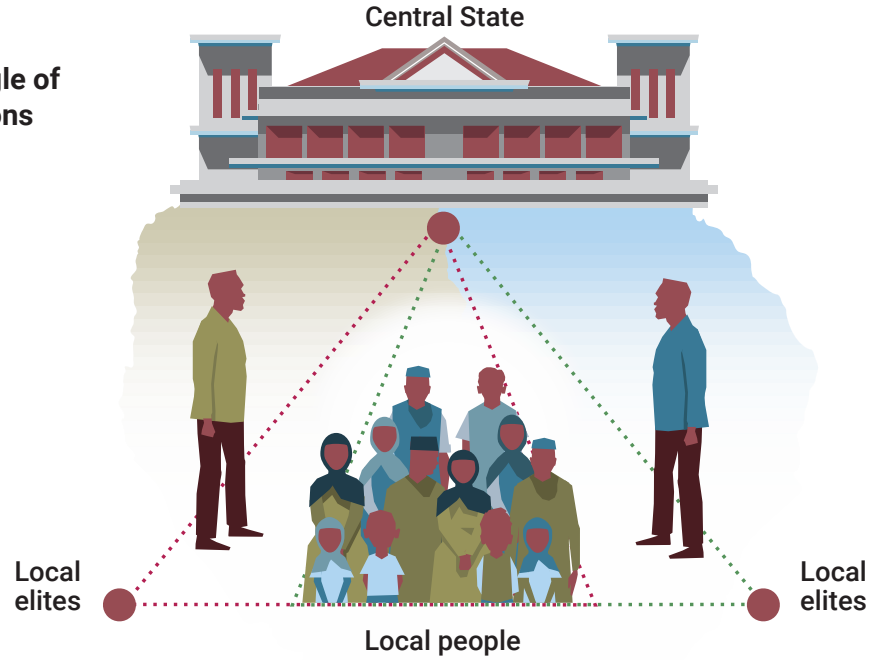
[4] Orders refer to the institution of rules governing the behavior of people in the territory. Local institutions are shaped by the rule making of the central state, local elites, and the people in the territory.

[5] Other descriptions are aligned with Migdal's argument. For example, Del Sarto's (2015) definition of borderlands as areas in closest geographic proximity to and affected by a border informed by the notion that territories and borders are sites too of shared practices (Adler & Pouliot 2011), where reciprocal ties between the social and cultural definition of belonging to a nation and the bureaucratic regulation of the state are worked out (Sparke 2004).

Figure 1.
Double Triangle of Power Relations



The challenge to the study is to establish the association between identity, border, and order on the one hand, and violent conflicts on the other. Indeed, the relationship between the central state and the periphery is a constant feature in rebellions, insurgencies, and wars of secession and nonviolent political actions. These are vertical conflicts that comprise part of the data in Conflict Alert. Others are horizontal conflicts, some of which are linked to or instrumentalized in vertical conflicts. The object of this chapter is to explain how violent conflicts of various typologies are differently distributed in subnational spaces and why.

Depending on type and configuration of borders, borderlands either become zones of transition from one set of rules to another or zones of socioeconomic, legal, and cultural separation (Del Sarto 2015). Baud & van Schendel (1997) describe borderlands as a "double triangle of power relations", with the state, regional elites, and local people as actors meeting at the international crossroads of two political entities (Figure 1). The overlaps and intersections involve processes that can evolve rules for managing conflicts or transgressions that can drive violent conflicts.

Similar triangles of power relations may be seen in the relations of the Philippine central state with subnational borderlands. Local people in this regard are not homogenous communities whose identities are not necessarily tied to a single national identity as Filipinos but also to their ascribed or self-ascribed ethnic identities with bounded social networks and informal norms. Being distant from the central state, they may be viewed as marginal sites and object of 'conquest' for extension of administrative reach from the center. Zooming in, they may be viewed as sites of horizontal bargaining, relationship building, and forming of local institutions.

Analytical framework and methodology

The study uses a political economy approach that looks at the links between natural and economic resources in borderlands and notions of **power, space,** and **time**. In this approach, borderlands are seen as rich yet "unruly spaces that need to be incorporated and pacified", where "lagging regions" need to be integrated through improved infrastructure, better connectivity, and investment in people; and "as exemplars

of the temporal hybridity of institutions, with the sedimentation of new institutions on top of older ones" (Goodhand 2018).

Goodhand (2018) adds that there are important differences between borderlands, and not all borderlands are violent. He argues that borderlands may have comparative advantages in illegality, but this does not mean that illegal activities are inherently violent. It is more likely that external policies play a role in inflaming and catalyzing cycles of violence.

The study uses descriptive statistics from Conflict Alert 2011–2020 to illustrate intensity and spatial distribution of violent incidents over a 10-year period. This is complemented by case studies on two types of borderlands: **one**, inter-municipal borderlands between two provinces; and **two**, inter-municipal borderlands within one province. Data for the case studies were drawn from interviews, ocular surveys of communities in the case study areas, and official data shared by local authorities.

3. Findings from the borderland cases

Wao and Amai Manabilang comparative features

Table 1 shows the comparative features of Wao and Amai Manabilang, two borderlands within the province of Lanao del Sur.

Map 6 shows the heat map of Wao and Amai Manabilang (inset). The color legends indicate intensity, specifically, per barangay. In Wao, violent incidents were recorded in 17 (out of 26) barangays; in Amai Manabilang, in 6 (out of 17) barangays.

Map 6. Spatial Distribution of Violent Incidents: Wao and Amai Manabilang (inset)**, 2011-2020**

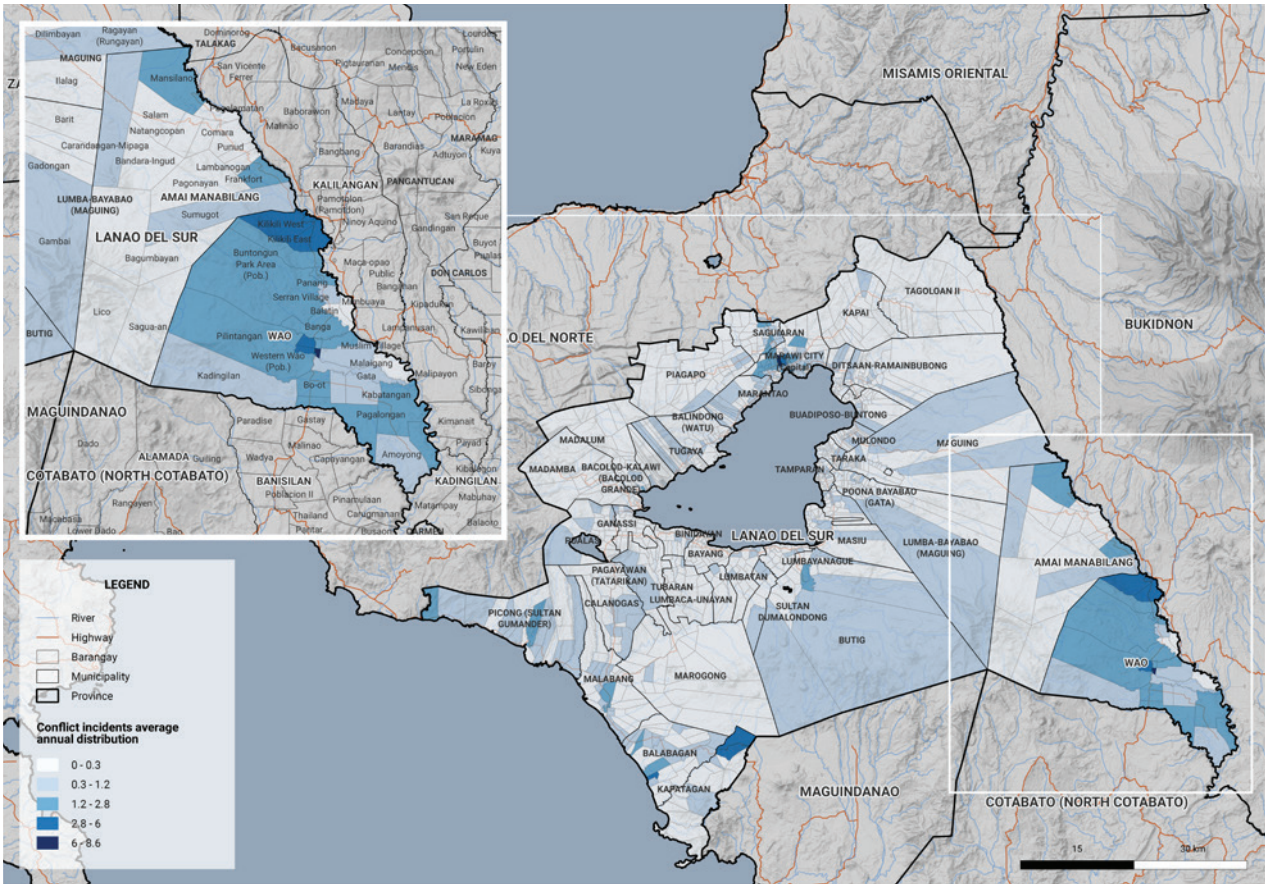
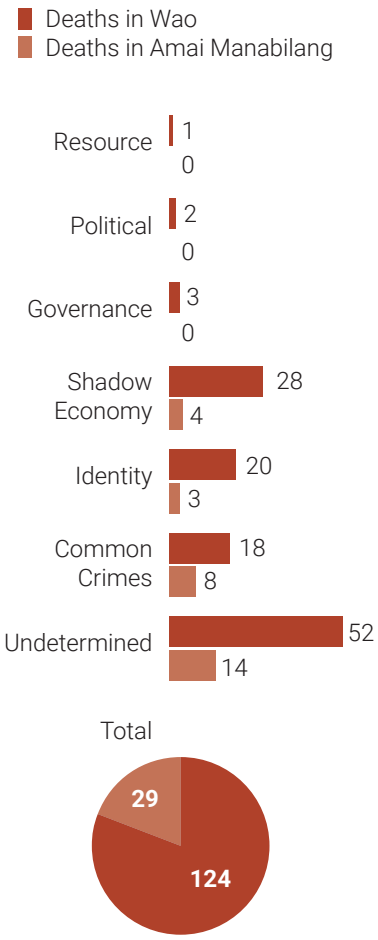


Table 1. Comparative Features of Wao and Amai Manabilang

Selected Statistics	Wao	Amai Manabilang	Lanao del Sur (Province)
Population (as of 2020)	50,366	12,124	1,195,518*
Land area, in square kilometer (sq km)	363.88	544.10	13,574.24**
Population density (per sq km)	138	22	88
Total number of violent incidents, 2011–2020	517	73	3,950
Annual average	51.7	7.3	395
Violent incidents per sq km (2011–2020 average)	0.14	0.01	0.03
Violent incidents per 10,000 persons (2011–2020 average)	10.26	6.02	3.30
Total number of deaths, 2011-2020	124	29	2,531
Deaths per incident	0.23	0.39	0.64
Deaths per square kilometer (2011-2020 average)	0.34	0.05	0.19
Deaths per 10,000 persons (2011-2020 average)	24.62	23.92	21.17

* Republic of the Philippines, Philippine Statistics Authority. http://rssoarmm.psa.gov.ph/provincial-office/lanao-del-sur.
** Source: Province of Lanao del Sur. https://lanaodelsur.gov.ph/about/history/

Figure 2. Conflict Deaths by Cause of Conflict: Wao and Amai Manabilang, 2011–2020



Violent incidents were more widely spread in Wao (65% of total number of barangays) compared to Amai Manabilang (35% of total number of barangays). Also, in comparison, there are no 'blue' barangays in Amai Manabilang. The three 'blue' barangays in Wao are barangays East and West Kili-Kili and Manila Group. Manila Group is in the center of the township. Kili-Kili (east and west) are the farthest barangays and the crossroad toward the border with Amai Manabilang and the municipality of Kalilangan. Community members are mostly Ilocano from the same ethnic group that occupies Barangay Sumogot in Amai Manabilang.

In terms of per unit of time or frequency, violence is more intense in Wao with an average of 51.7 incidents per year (or 4 per month) compared to Amai Manabilang at 7.3 per year (or less than one incident per month). So is spatial density with 0.14 incidents per square kilometer (sq km) compared to Amai Manabilang at 0.01 and higher than the 0.03 provincial average.

Impact on human life was larger in Wao. During 2011–2020, 124 people were killed in violent conflicts—four times more than the 29 conflict deaths in Amai Manabilang. Almost one-half of the

deaths in both areas are of undetermined causes. Excluding these deaths with undetermined causes, most of the causes are due to shadow economy issues, identity issues, and common crimes. Amai Manabilang has no conflict deaths due to resource issues, political issues, and governance issues (**Figure 2**).

The top three causes of violence shared by both municipalities are shadow economy issues, common crimes, and identity issues. The difference lies in the intensity, spatial distribution, and magnitude of violence.

There is no comparable data on violent conflict between South Upi and Lebak in the Conflict Alert monitoring system because Lebak falls outside the BARMM. Examining whether the borderlands between the two provinces in this case had anything to do with conflict intensity and magnitude required an analysis of other available data sets—such as crime data and manifestations of violence from police reports.

A total of 235 violent incidents were recorded in South Upi during 2011–2020, almost 50% occurring in the three years before, during, and immediately after the 2016 elections (**Figure 3**).

The total number of incidents is less than the total number than that of Wao but three times higher than that of Amai Manabilang. The violence incurred 89

Table 2. Top Causes of Violence (excluding undetermined causes)

Top Three Causes of Violence	*Proportion to total cases (in percent)*	
	Wao	**Amai Manabilang**
Shadow economies	44.9	37.9
Common crimes	33.3	37.9
Identity issues	21.7	24.1
Total	100	100

Table 3. Top Single Causes of Violence

Top Three Causes of Violence	*Sub-categories**	**Wao** (in percent)	**Amai Manabilang** (in percent)
Shadow economies	Illegal drugs	55.2	48.0
	Illegal weapons	22.4	32.0
	Carjacking	22.4	20.0
Common crimes	Robbery	40.4	54.5
	Alcohol intoxication	39.7	40.9
	Child abuse	19.9	4.5
Identity issues	Gender related	67.6	78.5
	Personal grudges	23.8	14.3
	Clan feud	8.6	7.1

* In proportion to total cases in the category

Figure 3. South Upi: Number of Violent Incidents, 2011–2020

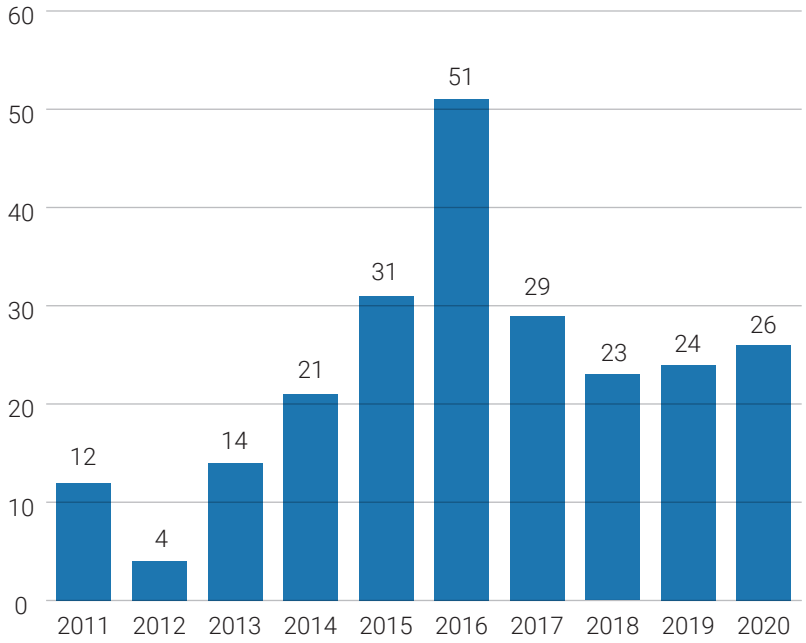
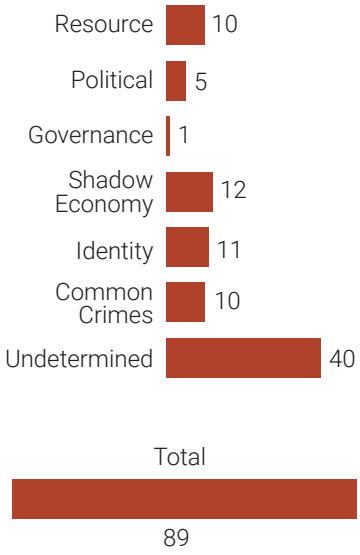


Figure 4. South Upi: Number of Violent Deaths, by Cause of Violence, 2011–2020



deaths, almost one-half due to undetermined causes. Again, if the deaths from undetermined causes were excluded, the common causes are shadow economy issues, identity issues, resource issues, and common crimes (**Figure 4**). Except for resource issues, the main causes of death are the same with those found in Wao and Amai Manabilang.

The three municipalities share the same dominant causes of conflict, i.e., shadow economies, identity issues, and common crimes, except for South Upi.[6] The prevalence of resource issues in South Upi is corroborated by Gulane (2013) who documented 14 boundary disputes and 20 other land conflicts during 2009–2012 in one barangay alone. The local government of South Upi also recorded 45 cases of resource-based conflicts and overlapping claims on land during 2013–2016 (South Upi 2017–2022 Comprehensive Development Plan).

This study looked at the record of crime and manifestations of violence in Lebak as an alternative source of data for comparison with South Upi. From January 2017 to August 2020, 469 crime incidents were recorded in Lebak. Over 32% of these were index crimes and 43.9% crimes related to special laws.[7] These special laws include the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, and the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act of 2013.

If the crime data on manifestations of violence and rule-breaking were used in relation to the special laws, data shows that Lebak had a higher intensity of violence per year at 156.3 compared to 23.5 per year in South Upi. Lebak incurred 206 conflict incidents in three years compared to 12 incidents in South Upi in 10 years. Moreover, those violent incidents had something to do with the shadow economies in illicit drugs and illegal guns.[8]

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[6] In 2011–2020, Wao recorded only one resource issue and none in Amai Manabilang.

[7] Index crimes, as defined by the Philippine National Police (PNP), involve crimes against persons such as murder, homicide, physical injury and rape, and crimes against property such as robbery, theft, carnapping and carjacking, and cattle rustling. Meanwhile, special laws refer to the Special Penal Law that categorizes certain acts as crimes. The Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (RA 9165) and the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act of 2013 (RA 10591) are examples of special laws (See: https://ralblaw.com/what-is-a-special-penal-law/).

[8] Lebak is not included in Conflict Alert. There is no comparable 10-year conflict data. The three-year data on crimes related to special laws is used as proxy for violence related to shadow economy issues.

Table 4. Amai Manabilang and Wao Key Actors and Roles

Political Clans	In Wao, they evolved from pioneer settler elites seeking monopoly of local rule through elections and brokerage with regional elites in the BARMM. In Amai Manabilang, the non-native Manabilang political clan that established monopoly in the absence of competition from home-grown political clans.
Philippine National Police (PNP)	Extension of central authority with regard to peace and order and enforcement of penal laws and special laws. It is a primary actor influencing the intensity of violence related to illegal drugs, illegal firearms, armed robbery, carnapping, and other crimes.
Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)	Extension of central authority for suppression of rebellion and collective violence. It intervened in the July 2000 massacre of 22 Christian villagers in Amai Manabilang. It also intervened in the April 2015 massacre of Maranao villagers in Wao.
National Chief Executive	In the context of post-World War II resettlement programs and prior to the Local Government Code of 1991, source of authority in creation of and bordering of local political territories and establishment of civil administrations.
Local Chief Executive	In this study, the mayor, holder of formal authority legitimized through elections and, in certain cases, appointed by the national chief executive.
Shadow Economy Actors	Key actors involved in informal economic exchanges, either as suppliers, go-betweens, and consumers of goods covered by special laws (such as illegal guns and illegal drugs).
Private Investors	External actors and holders of financial capital that instigate shifts from smallholder agriculture to plantation economies as well as fuel the dynamics between and among political clans. In this area of study, they refer to Dole Philippines and Unifrutti and their subsidiaries as well as other external investors engaging in financing of corn, sugar, and rubber production. They play a big role in changing land ownership, and use arrangements and fueling resource conflicts.
National Land Management Agencies	Primarily referring to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) mandated to allocate access and tenure in lands of the public domain and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) mandated to allocate ownership right to agricultural lands and adjudicate contestations of ownership.
Private Security Contractors	Formal and informal groups of security providers primarily serving the needs of private investors.
Ethnic-Based Community Influencers	Preachers, teachers, entrepreneurs, traders, and community organizers whose thoughts, attitudes, and behavior influence others from the same ethnic group.
Non-state Armed Actors	Armed individuals not affiliated with any rebel group but easily malleable into a local armed group to pursue collective violence under informal authority of local elites. In Wao and Amai Manabilang, they act on behalf of local political elites offering protection to private investors.

Key actors

The key actors that shape conflict dynamics come from the State, including shadow authorities, the private sector including actors engaged in shadow economies, communal groups, and non-state armed groups including rebels, insurgents, and terrorists engaged in both vertical and horizontal violence.

These actors play important roles in shaping the dynamics of conflict in borderlands (**Table 4**).

The evolution of the Wao and Amai Manabilang borders

The precolonial history of Wao is largely unknown even to local people. The municipal profile disseminated by the municipal tourism, planning, and development offices cite probable beginnings based on legends.[9]

What is commonly known is its beginnings as a resettlement area in the early 1950s. The first batch of settlers arrived in 1954. More appropriately, they were homesteaders—beneficiaries of homestead patents that included an 8-hectare (ha) farm lot and 600-square meter home lot. They came from different provinces and various ethnicities. They included former *sacadas* (sugarcane farmworkers) from Panay Island, landless peasants from Bohol, Pampanga, Batangas, Cebu, Batanes, Ilocos, and some from the Tagalog region of Luzon who were later collectively identified as the Manila Group. They were brought to Wao in batches of 60 people through the port of Cagayan de Oro, then by road through the Cagayan de Oro–Malaybalay highway and the road connecting Malaybalay to a Base Camp near Maramag. Succeeding batches arrived in 1956.

The Base Camp was the staging ground for final entry to the promised land. From there, they were brought to Wao via Pangantucan and Kalilangan in World War II relics—American weapons carrier vehicles that were fitted with iron chains to traverse muddy roads. In some cases, settlers had to walk from Kalilangan to Wao with state-provided sacks of rice, draft animals such as carabao, and farm tools. The difficult journey is depicted in a monument at the Wao central plaza. Homesteaders were awarded lots (e.g., Lot No. 725 PLS) identifying location and size of land and the legal reference (e.g., Homestead Patent No. 01418) and, subsequently, the original certificate of title (e.g., Original Certificate of Title No. PAF-136).[10]

While the resettlement administrators tacitly recognized that there were native inhabitants of the place, the resettlement program viewed Wao as frontier land for homesteaders. The resettlement administrators facilitated the 'meet and greet' but there was no explicit recognition of the existence and territory of the native inhabitants. In the mental map of the sultan and his people, Wao was their territory. Unlike other resettlement areas where Maranaos were recognized as "special settlers",[11] it was not clear how the resettlement administration treated lands already in the hands

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[9] A more official version of the community history is being prepared in cooperation with the University of the Philippines in Los Banos (Interview with Bella Bobadilla, Wao municipal planning and development coordinator). Some Maranao leaders deplore the inaccuracies in many internet accounts (Interview with Acmad Saripada, barangay *kagawad* and grandson of Sultan Mamaco Saripada).

[10] Republic of the Philippines, Supreme Court, Manila, Third Division. G.R. No. 131099 20 July, 1999. Domingo Celendro, petitioner, vs. Court of Appeals and Leonila vda. de Guevarra, respondents. https://lawphil.net/judjuris/juri1999/jul1999/gr_131099_1999.html.

[11] The experience of the Maranao native inhabitants of the Sapad Resettlement site in Kapatagan (Lanao del Norte) was unique. The resettlement site was established in 1953 under the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR), which was directly under the administration of the AFP. Prior to establishment of the resettlement site, a field inspection was conducted in October 1952. The inspectors found three Maranao native inhabitants. Still, the site was classified as virgin public land based on the recommendation of the District Land Officer of Kapatagan. EDCOR did not recognize prior ownership. Instead, the three Maranaos were categorized as "special settlers" added to the 118 move-in settlers brought in by EDCOR (NEDA Region XII 1997).

of the Maranao.[12] As was common in the history of resettlement to Mindanao, Christian settlers had the edge over Muslim and non-Muslim natives in terms of access to state laws on land and agricultural capacities (Abinales 1996).

In the early 1970s, lives were disrupted by the violence of the Ilonggo-dominated 'Ilagas' coming from North Cotabato and Moro 'Black Shirts'. A Muslim village called Barangay Gata was burned to the ground and has since been occupied by Batangueño settlers.[13] New migrants arrived in due course, as the original homesteaders sold, mortgaged, or simply allowed other settlers to occupy portions of awarded lots to those in need. The result became a pockmark of settlements: Muslim villages within predominantly Christian villages and small groups of Muslim households within Christian villages. As the state-sponsored settlers gained the upper hand in land acquisition and access to law and power, the native Maranao settlers gave way and moved to enclaves within the larger settlement.

It took time for the homesteaders to form communities owing to varying ethnicities and dispersion of farm lots. The best site for assertion of identity was the township. The home lots formed the basis of physical proximity of similar ethnicities and the naming of some barangays based on ethnicity. Thus, the forming of groups such as the Cebuano Group, Batangas Group, Manila Group, Christian Village, and others. These communities became barangays. The native Maranao accommodated the siting and internal bordering process and secured their own Muslim villages on the outer rim of the township. One barangay called Muslim Village sits by side with Ilonggo-dominated barangays called Barangay Extension, Barangay Middle Village and Barangay Christian Village. Other groups opened new settlements within the forested area.[14]

Formation of the political territory

For almost a decade since the arrival of the settlers, Wao was not defined as a political territory. Under the prevailing administrative code of the period, it did not pass the criteria of progress in civilization. It was only converted into a municipality by virtue of Executive Order (EO) No. 418 in 1961. By then, the settlers of Wao had fulfilled the progression of siting to a new subnational territory where, as defined by the Revised Administrative Code of 1917 and Republic Act 1515 of 1956, citizens have "progressed sufficiently in civilization" to have surpassed the "remoteness and smallness of non-Christian settlements".

While these laws defined the external borders of the municipality, the internal borders of communities—inclusive of boundaries of farm lots and home lots, were not technically secured. The property borders of native Maranao inhabitants and poorer settlers remained informal. Individual possessions of land remained vulnerable to unregulated transfer, sale, or outright encroachment and/or divestment.

After 16 years of existence as a political territory, the central state changed the bordering and ordering of Wao. In November 1977, by virtue of a martial law decree (Presidential Decree No. 1243), 21 barangays of Wao were carved out to form a new municipality called Bumbaran. The logic was to enhance economic progress and secure peace and order.[15]

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[12] Records at the DAR show that Sultan Mamaco Saripada, the first appointed mayor of Wao, was the owner of a farm lot (Lot. No. 494) and a male horse sold in 1966 for P5,000 to a certain Francisco Montanez, who also owned the adjoining lot (Lot. No. 493) (See http://lis.dar.gov.ph//documents/2693). It may well be that Saripada was awarded a farm lot because he was the mayor and not because he was classified as a "special settler".

[13] Settlers coming from the southern Luzon province of Batangas.

[14] For example, Sitio Magampong in Barangay Park Area.

[15] The decree stated that Wao was "so vast a territory that the present strength of the local Integrated National Police Force is far from adequate to patrol outlying communities for the maintenance of peace and order," and to "expediate optimum development thereof," especially the "vast agricultural lands capable of producing variable crops which would provide sufficient food and income to its population."

Table 5. Mayoralty Succession in Wao, 1961–2022

Term of Office	Mayor	Ethnicity	Mode of Assumption to Power
1961–1963	Datu Mamaco Saripada	Maranao	Appointed
1963–1967	Datu Mamaco Saripada	Maranao	Elected
1967–1982	Capt. Silverio Eleazar	Ilocano	Elected
1982–1986	Dionisio Baldeviso	Ilonggo	Elected
1986–1988	Wilfredo Villalba	Ilonggo	Appointed
1988–1998	Atty. Remedios Guiab	Ilocano	Elected
1998–2007	Elvino Balicao Sr.	Ilonggo	Elected
2007–2016	Elvino Balicao Jr. (son of Elvino)	Ilonggo	Elected
2016–2019	Bobby Balicao (son of Elvino)	Ilonggo	Elected
2019–2022	Elvino Balicao Jr.	Ilonggo	Elected

Source: Wao Municipal Hall

The remaining barangays in Wao and the 21 barangays transferred to Bumbaran were identified based on their physical location in the divided territory. The Maranao in Wao remained minoritized as well as the Christian settlers in Bumbaran.[16] Over time, settler communities and Maranao communities evolved into barangays with elected local governments: 26 in Wao and 17 in Bumbaran. In 2018, the local officials of Bumbaran renamed their municipality as Amai Manabilang to cement the legacy of the clan.

Clan rule and competition

Amai Manabilang and Wao are both ruled by strong political clans, i.e, families who see political office as an economic resource and a source of power. In Wao, the Balicao clan has been in power since 1998. In Amai, the Manabilang clan has ruled the town since 1992. The mayor and vice mayor of Wao and Amai are both siblings. In 2022, the siblings only switched places. In Wao, the siblings compete with each other and with two other aspirants.

The emergence of clan rule in the two borderlands followed different historical paths. Upon its creation as a municipality in 1961, political rule in Wao was determined by the central government through appointment. Sultan Mamaco Saripada, leader of the native Maranao, was recognized by the central government as the political leader and became the first appointed mayor. He subsequently became the first elected mayor during the 1963 election and ruled the town until 1967. New political elites soon emerged from the pioneering settlers in the place. Political rule eventually transferred to the settlers (Table 5).

Wao is the only majority Christian municipality of Lanao del Sur. Christian settlers would have opted for exclusion from the BARMM but there was no room to exercise the vote. The whole of Lanao del Sur was automatically included under the BARMM when the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) was ratified.[17] While Saripada's rule lasted six years, it did not cement the dominance of the Maranao in a predominantly non-Muslim municipality.

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[16] In December 1986, President Corazon Aquino signed Executive Order No. 108, s. 1968, abolishing thousands of barangays in the country. Four barangays of Bumbaran (Lama, Mirorod, Bulantacan, and Semiorang) were abolished.

[17] The BOL was ratified in 2019. Interview with Bella Bobadilla, municipal planning and development coordinator (MPDC), Wao; and Mariela Jane Garita Gicole, municipal tourism officer, 6 April 2022.

Since 1982, the mayoralty has been mainly in the hands of the Ilonggo settlers. In 1998, the mayoralty fell under the control of the powerful Ilonggo Balicao clan. The patriarch, Elvino Balicao Sr., was one of the first batch of 60 settlers received by Datu Saripada. He ruled the town for three terms (nine years) and was succeeded by his sons Elvino and Bobby. The only longest-serving Ilocano mayor was Atty. Remedios Guiab, wife of the local health officer of the resettlement administration. The doctor's role in providing health services at a time when this service was scarce earned the family a lot of respect. She has continued to serve the poorest of the poor, including Muslims from as far as Banisilan.[18] Wao now has six doctors, but Dr. Guiab is still the local favorite.

Meanwhile, Bumbaran was established as a separate municipality in 1977 and its rulers appointed by the central government until 1988. There were no Maranao local strongmen that the central government could appoint as mayor, so most appointees were outsiders, chosen from political clans in the lake area of Lanao del Sur.

After the downfall of the Marcos regime, the appointments by the new Aquino government became more frequent. There were three appointed mayors between 1986 and 1988. A new mayor, Hadji Sarip Dimaporo was elected in 1988. He was from the Sultanate of Binidayan and brother of the Binidayan Sultan Muliloda Datumulok. He ruled Bumbaran by remote control and monitored developments through his cousin.[19]

It was during Dimaporo's term that Bumbaran was described as a lawless town and local government presence was hardly felt by citizens.[20] It was also during this period of instability and hopelessness that Mastura Manabilang, then a staff sergeant of the Philippine Constabulary/Integrated National Police (PC/INP) made his presence felt as chief of police and enforcer of laws. He filled the gap in governance and became the de facto ruler in lieu of an absentee mayor. Effectiveness in settling clan feuds, reducing crime, and pacifying the town earned him popularity that led to his election as mayor in 1992 of the now renamed Amai Manabilang. Since most drug addicts were also Muslims, Mastura demonstrated an ability to impose discipline by establishing a private 'prison' for nephews involved in illegal drugs.[21]

Since 1992, town rule has been in the hands of the Manabilang clan, first by the patriarch, then his wife, back to the patriarch and then by his son (**Table 6**). Control over both the elective and executive positions in the municipality remains distributed among members of the clan.[22]

How do the Wao and the Amai Manabilang clan rulers differ? Essentially, the Balicao of Wao and the Manabilang siblings in Amai are both non-natives of the places they rule. They were able to take power by different means beyond electoral success. They followed clan rule systems though they differed in their methods.

The Manabilang clan monopolized all power. The succession—from patriarch, to wife, to sons and between the two sons—is negotiated within the family and without opposition from any other Maranao clan. Local elites from the minority Christian settlers in two barangays are content with running barangay local government units or getting appointments at some offices in the municipal government. In fact,

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18 Interview with Nida Settier, 5 April 2022.

19 Interview with Junail Dimaporo, 4 April 2022.

20 Interview with Junail Dimaporo.

21 Interview with Junail Dimaporo and Sal Bacallan, 4 April 2022.

22 Republic of the Philippines, Commission on Elections. 2022. Certified List of Candidates (Municipal) Lanao del Sur - Amai Manabilang. 9 May. https://comelec.gov.ph/php-tpls-attachments/2022NLE/TentativeListsofCandidates/BARMM/LANAO_DEL_SUR/BUMBARAN.pdf

Table 6. Mayoralty Succession in Amai Manabilang, 1977–2022

Term of Office	Mayor	Ethnicity	Mode of Assumption to Power
1977–1986	Sultan sa Malungun Baulo O. Magandia	Maranao	Appointed
1986–1987	Pundarola Lomonog	Maranao	Appointed
1987–1988	Asalan Macabando & Tawagun Macarambon	Maranao	Appointed
1988–1992	Hadji Sarip M. Dimaporo	Maranao	Elected
1992–1998	Sgt. Mastura C. Manabilang	Maranao	Elected
1998–2007	Hedjarah Lydia E. Manabilang (wife of Mastura Manabilang)	Maranao	Elected
2007–2013	Sgt. Mastura C. Manabilang	Maranao	Elected
2013–2022	Jamal James Manabilang (son of Mastura)	Maranao	Elected

Source: Wao Municipal Hall

the mayor's most trusted aide and secretary to the Sangguniang Bayan is a Christian whose college education was supported by the clan.

Meanwhile, in Wao, the Balicao clan is riven by factions. They compete within themselves and with elite challengers from outside the clans. In fact, the Balicao brothers competed for the mayoral post in the 2022 elections.

Political rule and economic competition

The Manabilang clan distances the political rulers from the clan's economic interests. It is the internal agreement of the clan that the female siblings take charge of business interests.[23] Conversely, it is also agreed that the female siblings do not interfere in the political contests.

The Manabilang clan women manage Manabilang Services Inc (MSI), a freight forwarding company that also provides manpower and security services to the Unifrutti banana agribusiness corporation.[24] They also manage the town's only modern and secular café business.[25]

In 2003, the clan invited a banana plantation company, Unifrutti, through its subsidiary Mt. Kalatungan Ventures Inc. - 2 (MKAVI-2) to operate in the municipality.[26] This move was facilitated by a Maguindanao clan leader, Datu Toto Paglas, who pioneered large-scale cavendish plantation economies in Maguindanao in partnership with Unifrutti.[27]

When the La Frutera-Unifrutti model was introduced to Amai Manabilang in 2003, various local leaders in Amai were sent to other Unifrutti plantation areas to acquaint them with the

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[23] Interview with Junail Dimaporo.

[24] Interview with Junail Dimaporo and Sal Bacallan, 4 April 2022.

[25] Inaya's Café is owned by the female siblings of the Manabilang clan. The café is a regular hangout and is usually visited by Maranao LGBT customers who are tolerated despite the strict and conservative customs prevailing in the municipality.

[26] The MKAVI-1 plantation was established in 1999 in ancestral domain areas of the Talaandig indigenous people in Lantapan, Bukidnon (RSM, 2020).

[27] The La Frutera-Unifrutti banana agribusiness venture in Maguindanao has been described as a success story in doing business in conflict-conditions in Mindanao (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 10 December 2012). See Habito again in *Braving It and Making It: Insights from Successful Investors in Muslim Mindanao*. A joint publication of Australian Aid, ARMM Regional Board of Investments, ARMM Business Council and Management Association of the Philippines. Available at: https://documents.pub/download/braving-it-and-making-it-it-and-making-it-case-study-of-agumil-philippines.html.

A worker prepares washed Cavendish banana for export in a processing plant in Amai Manabilang. Transnational companies start to expand their plantations in the border areas of Lanao del Sur. **Wilven Pinili**

business and to assuage fears of the Unifrutti's Jewish connection (Balaoing-Pelkmans 2020). By 2004, the 504-hectare MKAVI-2 plantation and packing facility had been established.

The project was preceded by negotiated arrangements on rents and other incentives. The customary 20%–30% share of the construction contract in favor of the Manabilang clan was waived in favor of auxiliary contracts for services related to the establishment and operations of the plantation (Balaoing-Pelkmans 2020). In lieu of rents, the clan, through MSI, would have monopoly of leasing, staffing, and logistics services. MKAVI-2 has no other political and economic elite to deal with. In fact, since 2006, Mastura, the patriarch, assumed direct management of the agribusiness owing to the difficulty of the previous manager to enforce discipline on the Maranao workers (Balaoing-Pelkmans 2020).

Meanwhile, in Wao, large-scale investments in plantation agriculture, mainly in pineapples care of Dole Philippines were negotiated. The investments formed part of the economic agenda of the BARMM. In 2019, the BARMM Regional Board of Investments (RBOI-BARMM) approved the registration of the Wao Development Corporation (WDC) for the establishment of a P306 million pineapple packing plant in Wao (BARMM Information Office 2019).

The plant has a packing capacity of six million boxes per year with current capacity of two million boxes per year from a preexisting 1,200-hectare plantation in Wao (*MindaNews*, 12 February 2022). With below optimum utilization of the plant, WDC plans to expand production with an additional 1,400 hectares (*Manila Times*, 14 February 2022; *MindaNews*, 12 February 2022).

Unifrutti dealt with a single clan which eased its business entry into Amai Manabilang. In contrast, DOLE had to deal with competing political elites in Wao. A group of local elites formed a management company called PABE. The acronym is derived from three elite families: Alexis Pablico, Al Belopendos, and Elvino Balicao, Sr. Pablico and

Belopendos are former vice mayors and Balicao is a former mayor.

In the early years of the pineapple agribusiness, PABE had monopoly of land leasing, trucking services and staffing services.[28] In fact, the PABE office has become a landmark characterized by the boom of workers' lodging houses in the vicinity. Recently, WDC assumed direct management of staffing services. PABE's income streams have been reduced to land leasing and trucking services, which are currently experiencing tensions.

Management of collective identities and claims

Migration is often blamed for order-disrupting changes in host societies and highlights tension, connections, and generation of centrifugal and centripetal forces (Heisler 2001). The same is true for the two case study areas. Resettlement meant exchanging one's home community for another, and native inhabitants adapting to the presence of new inhabitants.

The Wao homesteaders were of different ethnicities. They included Ilonggos, Cebuanos, Boholanos, Batangueños, Ilocanos, Ivatans, and others. The administration of the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) did not leave information on the exact ethnic distribution of the settlers and the population count of native Maranaos upon arrival of the settlers. However, during this study the municipal planning and development coordinator (MPDC) issued a certified copy of the population distribution by barangay identifying the location of the Maranao.

The settlers are collectively identified as 'other conglomeration'. Of 40,479 population recorded in 2010, 7,783 (19.2%) were identified as Maranao. They are distributed in 12 of 26 barangays. There are no Maranaos in the other 14 barangays, including a barangay called Gata, which used to be a Maranao village. Gata was burned down years ago during an Ilaga attack from Cotabato in the 1970s.[29] The barangay is now home to settlers from Batangas who are under constant pressure from Maranao claims of prior ownership. In Barangay Park Area, the site of the killings in 2015, the Maranao comprise 16% of the local population.

The Maranao have come to terms with the demographic reality while reserving claims of prior rights to land linked to the preexistence of the Saripada sultanate.[30] The spread of the Maranao in 12 barangays is partly due to intermarriages. However, these mainly involve male Maranaos marrying non-Muslims rather than Maranao women getting married to non-Muslims.[31] Alongside intermarriages is the adoption of Ilonggo as common language. Non-Ilonggo settlers tend to adjust to Ilonggo in daily communication instead of asserting their own language. Hence, in this case the Maranao were the ones who had to learn to speak Ilonggo, instead of the other way around.

In Amai Manabilang, non-Muslims are concentrated in only two out of 17 barangays, with their housing units aligned along narrow ridge plateaus along the highway. By mother tongue, majority are Bisaya. The Manabilang Municipal Profile collectively describes Ilonggo, Cebuano, and Boholano settlers as "Bisaya". They comprise 22% of the municipal population.

The Christian settlers have come to terms with being a minority in a predominantly Muslim town. They are not prevented from practicing Christian traditions and rules, such as preparing food that Muslims call *haram*, including pork lechon though they had to informally agree not to display these

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28 Interview with Nida Settier and Winnie Settier, 5 April 2022.

29 Interviews with Bella Bobadilla and Mariela Jane Garita Gicole, 6 April 2022; and Nida and Winnie Settier, 5 April 2022).

30 Interview with Acmad Saripada, grandson of Datu Mamaco Saripada, 5 April 2022.

31 Interview with Nida Settier, April 5, 2022; Dominimark Jack Jaco, 4 April 2022.

food preferences.[32] Some food sellers hide *haram* food in freezers and reserve these only for Christian buyers. Most others have agreed to sell halal food. This is partly due to economic logic. Enterprise growth and survival leans on the larger Maranao market.

Muslim-Christian accommodation in Amai Manabilang extends to public services and private employment. The mayor and vice mayor both rely on Christians as their most trusted aide.[33] Although the banana agribusiness has brought in Maranao workers from outside the municipality, there are indications that the clan prefers the work ethic of Christian workers.[34]

Behind the Muslim-Christian mutual tolerance and accommodation is the porous nature of the Manabilang clan's kinship ties: the patriarch is married to Christian wife from Bicol. The Manabilang siblings studied outside Muslim Mindanao and are comfortably ensconced in the social life of Cagayan de Oro City.[35] Their tolerance for non-Muslim culture, including LGBTI groups is well known. Another son-in-law organized a music band composed of non-Muslims and plays non-Muslim music, apart from being the organizer of a tennis association and a motorcycle bikers' club in Cagayan de Oro City.

Indeed, the clan maintains good relations with the non-Muslim minorities. Educated Catholic civil servants work in the municipal government. In fact, the mayor's most trusted aide and concurrent secretary to the town council is a non-Muslim. In the two predominantly Christian barangays of FrankFort and Sumugot, the barangay local government units are predominantly Christian. Instead of one politico-economic center, two were promoted in Amai. The original FrankFort barangay is called the 'Christian población' while ApartFort barangay is known as the 'Muslim población'.[36]

The rise of the Manabilang clan to power was driven by citizens' trust when the physical and personal presence of the ruler was scarce and filled-in by the town's police chief. The police chief was Mastura, the patriarch of the clan. He resolved clan feuds, pacified the town, and established an environment of peace. He gave new significance to the preexisting communal ties of Maranao and Christian settlers that had negligible political influence in shaping local institutions (see Abinales 2000). He filled the vacuum of political leadership and became the new broker with the central government.

Manabilang's legitimacy was certified in the 1992 elections and reinforced in two succeeding elections for a three-term service. His wife and successor showed the same mettle in the aftermath of the July 2000 massacre of 22 Christian villagers and the burning of six houses in Barangay Sumugot attributed by the AFP to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.[37] Sumugot was, and still is, a minority Christian village and did not retaliate.

The clan patriarch arrived in the area 30 years after Wao was created as a municipality and 15 years after Bumbaran became an independent municipality. His rule was not rooted in the tradition of the Maranao sultanates. He was originally from

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32 Interview with Junail Dimaporo and Sal Bacallan.

33 Interview with Junail Dimaporo, 4 April 2022.

34 Interview with Mr. Banza, Ilocano settler, and owner of a pizza shop in Amai Manabilang, 7 April 2022.

35 Musmera Manabilang-Dimaporo, daughter of the Manabilang patriarch and manager of Manabilang Services Inc. is a college graduate from Xavier University. She considers Amai Manabilang as a workplace. Her family resides in Cagayan de Oro City.

36 There is no official record on the naming of FrankFort and ApartFort as barangays. They are derived from the names of resettlement administrators at the time. The 'Fort' refers to Fortich, the family of the first district governor of Bukidnon.

37 *Kyodo*. 2000. "Muslims rebels massacre 22 villagers, military charges." 17 July. https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Muslim+rebels+massacre+22+villagers%2c+military+charges.-a063674197.

Raya Madaya, a small village in Marawi City that had no social and political connection with Bumbaran. He did not invoke the traditional authority of a sultanate, nor the politics of identity, utilizing his nonpartisan and autonomous mode of rule to create direct linkages with the national government, particularly the PNP and AFP.

Clan rulers in Amai also created a new narrative. In April 2018, a plebiscite was held to change the name of the municipality from Bumbaran to Amai Manabilang. The purpose was to promote a distinctly Manabilang identity with direct lineage to Sultan Amai Manabilang. The initiative drew almost 100% yes votes (Municipal Profile of Manabilang).

Datu Amai Manabilang was regarded as a hero and leader of the *Americanistas* that rejected the inclusion of Mindanao from the planned Philippine Republic during the Commonwealth Period (Municipal Profile of Amai Manabilang).[38] Edgerton (2020) described him as the intermediary between Pershing (the American military commander of the disarmament campaign in the Lanao area in early 1900s) and other local chieftains. In fact, he cunningly redirected the violent attacks of the colonial United States forces toward his political rivals and other strongmen to expand his turf and his power. The Amai Manabilang legacy is now written in the official history of the town, as well as the evolution of the FrankFort and ApartFort barangays.

In the meantime, in Wao, the management of competing identities was different and more tense. In contrast to Amai Manabilang, the Wao rulers tended to support the interests of the Christian settler majority against the land claims of the Maranao, accentuating their muted aspirations to be excluded from the BARMM. The growing animosity between the Maranao and the Christian settlers was exposed in April 2015 when two teenage children of Christian settlers were killed, one of them allegedly raped in Sitio Campo Dos, a Christian settlement in Barangay Park Area (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 May 2015; *Cagayan de Oro Sun Star*, 17 August 2016).[39] This barangay had a population of 2,858 Christian settlers and 544 Maranao Muslims who inhabited a forested enclave called Sitio Magampong.

Witness accounts alleged that the perpetrators ran to Sitio Magampong. Despite inadequate evidence over who the real perpetrators were, a Christian armed group allegedly associated with the Balicao clan retaliated against the Maranao, killing five (including two pregnant women) and wounding seven others (including children).[40] Two Balicao siblings and two others were indicted by the Marawi Regional Trial Court for murder (*Cagayan de Oro Sun Star*, 17 August 2016).

While the Maranao minority of Wao are adapting to Ilonggo rule and language, they are reserving the right to claim black presettlement ownership of lands and recognition of the Saripada sultanate.[41] After the 2019 ratification of the BOL, the Maranao feel empowered. There are reports of bullying and the outright occupation of areas covered by land claims by the Maranao who insist that all future litigation be conducted in the city of Marawi.

The South Upi and Lebak borderlands

Origins of the borderlands

The creation of South Upi as a municipality was triggered by two distinct yet interrelated objectives: the aspiration of the non-Muslim Teduray

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38 During the period, the opposing pole, the so-called Pilipinistas, was headed by the late Sultan Alauya Alonto, former Sultan of Ramain, who was later appointed senator.

39 Also mentioned during the interview with Bella Bobadilla (Wao MPDC) and Mariela Jane Garita Gicole (municipal tourism officer), 6 April 2022.

40 Based on recovered empty shells, the armed group had access to high-power weapons such as Cal. 5.56 mm and 7.62 mm high-powered rifles and 40mm grenade launchers.

41 Interview with Acmad Saripada, 6 April 2022.

indigenous peoples for its own territory, and the anti-secessionist pacification drive in Mindanao carried out by Marcos's martial law regime. The municipality was carved out of the municipality of Upi in 1976, by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 1011.[42] The justification bore similar aims with the redivision of Wao and the establishment of Bumbaran in 1977.[43]

The clamor for a separate Teduray municipality was brokered by the Teduray Welfare Association and the Mindanao Highlanders Association (South Upi CDP 2017–2022). This clamor was driven by grievances against the forcible displacement of the Teduray from the lowlands (of Cotabato City and Datu Odin Sinsuat) toward the upland areas to avoid conflict. Eleven highland barangays were separated from Upi to constitute the new municipality of South Upi.

The urgency was also spurred by Teduray fears that a barangay that they were claiming was being eyed by Talayan Muslim datus to form part of the planned new municipality of Talayan.[44] In fact, the prime movers of the resolution were leaders of the Gunsi clan who ruled the barangay since the early 1950s. The move was negotiated with the ruling Sinsuat clan in Upi, hence the Municipal Council endorsed the resolution to the central government with the proposed name of 'South Upi' instead of 'Teduray Municipality'.

In contrast, Lebak had a longer history of political formation. An object of American colonial expansion to Mindanao, it was designated as a military district in the early 1900s. In 1908, the American military governor appointed a Muslim, Amanildong Guiabar, as 'Presidente' of Lebak and Kalamansig. Amanildong's adopted son married the daughter of a Manobo chieftain, Sultan Dewig. Subsequently, Sultan Dewig allowed Amanildong to expand his territory in the areas of Kati and Kebitic in Sultan Kudarat.

The evolution of political institutions came side by side with predatory economic expansion from the center. In 1927, two plantations established a base in Lebak: an American-owned plantation—the 1,024-hectare Barurao Plantation (also known as American Land and American Land Commercial Company), and the Taguisa Plantation.[45] Both plantations were engaged in coconut, timber, and timber milling.

Migrant workers from the Visayas arrived beginning 1925. They were recruited by Aurelio Frieres Sr., an agriculturist, who became the first appointed mayor of Lebak in 1950. They provided the labor force to the plantations and invited relatives to benefit from the job opportunities. More migrants arrived in 1929 from the Bicol and Ilocos regions of Luzon.

A private entrepreneur provided boat transportation between the ports of Cotabato and Kalamansig. The new arrivals also worked in the plantations, some as cooks and mechanics for the American managers. With generous wage incomes in contrast to other farm businesses at the time, the migrants purchased land of their own, cleared forests or acquired lands as gifts from the Manobo chieftain, Datu Sangkulan Wakay. State building and civil administration progressed apace as telegraph and postal services were opened, as well as treasury and judicial services.

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[42] Republic of the Philippines, *Official Gazette*. 1976. Presidential Decree no. 1011. Creating the Municipality of South Upi in the Province of Maguindanao. Malacanang, Manila. 22 September. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1976/09/22/presidential-decree-no-1011-s-1976/

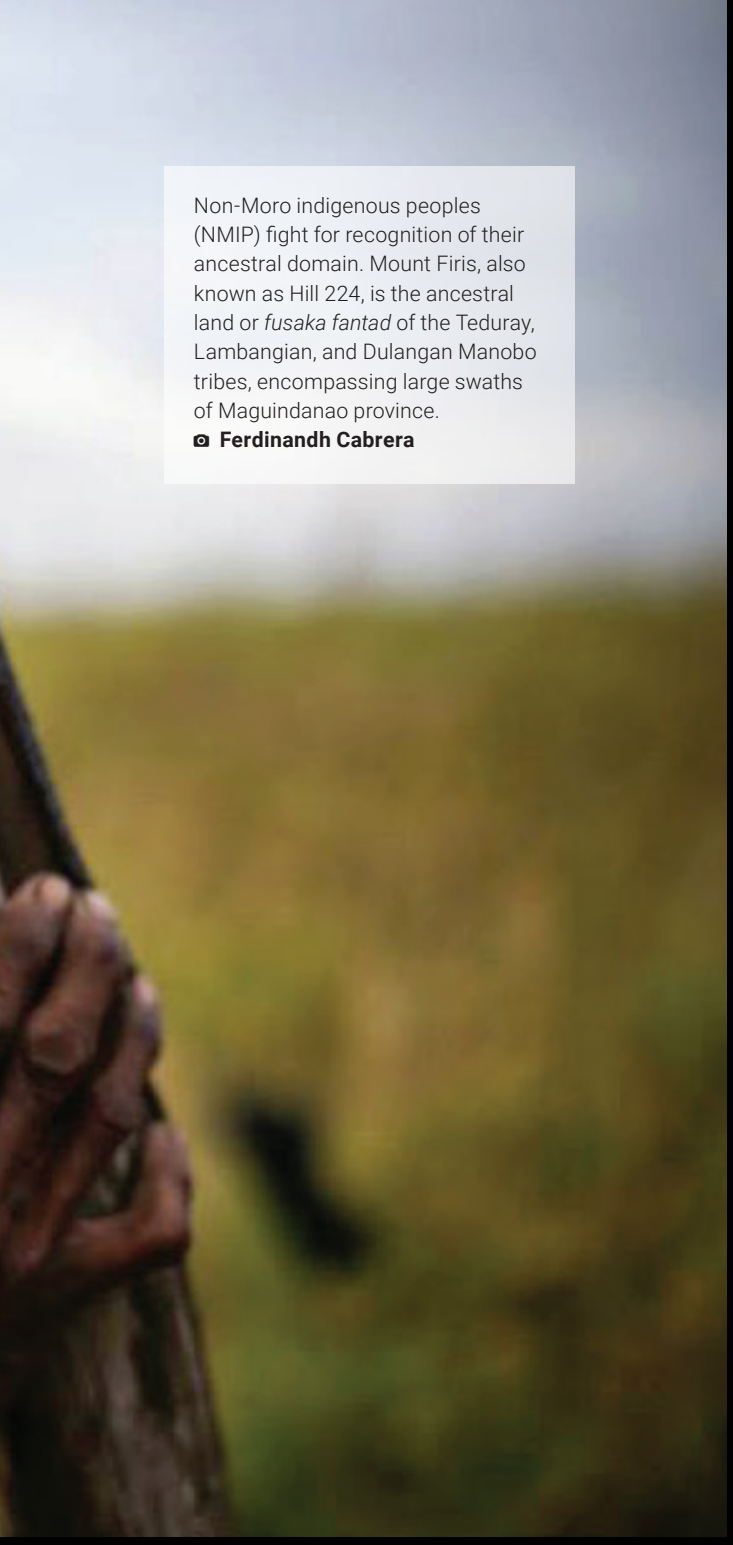
[43] The decree noted that the "independent municipality will redound and contribute greatly to the pacification drive in the area" and insure the upliftment of the socioeconomic wellbeing of residents.

[44] Barangay Pandan.

[45] This was the same period when Philippine Packing Corporation (later known as Del Monte Philippines) established its experimental pineapple plantation in Bukidnon (see https://www.delmontephil.com/about-us/our-history).

Non-Moro indigenous peoples (NMIP) fight for recognition of their ancestral domain. Mount Firis, also known as Hill 224, is the ancestral land or *fusaka fantad* of the Teduray, Lambangian, and Dulangan Manobo tribes, encompassing large swaths of Maguindanao province.

Ferdinandh Cabrera



Lebak became a municipal district under the Municipality of Kiamba in 1947.[46] One year later, the municipal districts of Lebak and Salaman (which was then under Dinaig, the former name of Datu Odin Sinsuat) were merged to form the new Municipality of Lebak.[47] In 1951, the seat of government was transferred from Kalamansig to Salaman.[48]

Ethnicity and geography

There is very little in common between South Upi and Lebak. Other than being both ethnically diverse borderlands on the edges of each other's mother provinces, all other features are remarkably different.

South Upi is a landlocked highland municipality with an average elevation of 639 meters (highest elevation at 1,083 meters). Mobility of people is limited to the north–south highway that connects it to Sultan Kudarat via Lebak and to Cotabato City via Upi.

Meanwhile, Lebak is a coastal municipality with an average elevation of 28 meters. In addition to the north–south highway going to Cotabato City, it has road access to the major urban centers of Sultan Kudarat.

What socially connects the two municipalities is the Manobo ethnic group, which is extremely minoritized in both areas and the Teduray, which is a majority group in South Upi and a minority group in Lebak. Manobo and Teduray people go to Upi to visit relatives or to buy fish. They also hold longtime grievances against the Maguindanaon Muslims.

Political rule

The political existence of South Upi was the product of a political settlement between Teduray clan leaders and the central state. The prime movers, the Gunsi clan, found an educated Teduray, Santiago Moendeg. Moendeg was a law graduate and employee of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development. The latter was initially asked to refine the semantics and grammar of the resolution drafted for the Upi legislative council. Moendeg was subsequently appointed as the first mayor and ruled the new municipality for an uninterrupted term of 10 years.

However, Teduray rule in the municipality was not consolidated, similar to the collapse of Teduray rule in Upi when it was created in 1956.[49] Competing forces sponsoring Maguindanao claims on land have always threatened Teduray monopoly rule. In fact, no clan has had a monopoly of rule. Mayoral offices from any ethnic background have always been targeted physically. The incumbent mayor, an Ilonggo, has been a target of three assassination attempts.[50]

South Upi's biggest constraint in political rule is the inability to fix the municipal territory and the contested territories of farms and home lots of its citizens. Although South Upi's claimed area

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[46] Republic of the Philippines, *Official Gazette*. 1947. Executive order no. 82, Organizing into Ten Municipalities All, Except Three, Municipal Districts in the Province of Cotabato and Annexing the Said Three Municipal Districts to the Municipality of Cotabato. Malacanang, Manila. August 18. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1947/08/18/executive-order-no-82-s-1847/

[47] Republic of the Philippines, *Official Gazette*. 1948. Executive order no. 195, Segregating the Municipal Districts of Lebak and Salaman from the Municipalities of Kiamba and Dinang, Province of Cotabato, as Organized under Executive Order no. 82 of August 18, 1947, and Organizing Them into an Independent Municipality under the Name of Lebak with the Seat of Government at the Sitio of Kalamansig. Malacanang, Manila. December 31.

[48] Republic of the Philippines, *Official Gazette*. 1951. Executive Order No. 432, Transferring the Seat of Government of the Municipality of Lebak, Province of Cotabato, from its Present Location at Kalamansig to the Barrio of Salaman of the Same Municipality. Malacanang, Manila. April 12. https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1951/04/12/executive-order-no-432-s-1951/

[49] The first elected Mayor of Upi was Ignacio Labina, a Teduray. He invited Maguindanaons to occupy lands in what would become the Municipality of South Upi.

[50] All three attempts (July 2016, June 2020, and January 2021) were with the use of improvised explosive device (IED) in Barangay Romangaob, the seat of the municipal government (*MindaNews*, 3 January 2021, 27 January 2021).

Table 7. Lebak and South Upi: Comparative Data

Selected Variables	Lebak	South Upi
Population (as of 2020)	91,344 (PSA, 2021a)	43,197 (PSA, 2021)
Population concentration	25% distributed in six urban barangays	25% concentrated in Brgy. Romongaob
Land area (sq km)	573.51	188.4
Population density (per sq km)	159	229
Poverty	34.7 (as of 2018)	60.4 (as of 2018)
No. of Barangays	27	11
Income Class	1st class	4th class
IRA (as of 2016)	PHP 192 M	PHP 93.5M
Banks	2	0
ATM	1	0
Transport terminals	5	1
Petrol stations	3	1
DTI Municipalities Competitive Index (Rank), as of 2021, out of 1,488 municipalities	79	352
Rate of unemployment (% in proportion to labor force)	3.11 (as of 2020)	94.0
Magnitude of unemployed	634 (as of 2020)	1,175 (as of 2010)
Dependency Ratio	83.93 (as of 2020)	88.79 (as of 2010)

Sources: 2007 Socio-economic profile of Lebak; 2020 Ecological profile of Lebak; South Upi CDP 2017-2022; PSA, 2021, 2021a.

is 46,342 ha, only 18,480 ha is on record with the Department of Budget and Management.[51] Collection of real property taxes is difficult under conditions of undefined extent of A&D lands and public lands and records of land titles. Even more difficult is the protection of informal land exchanges facilitated by barangay officials. From 2004 to February 2012, 406 Free Patents and 54 Sales Patents involving 2,279 ha were transacted in the informal land market (Gulane 2013).

Since the establishment of Lebak as a municipality in 1947, political rule has been in the hands of Ilonggo migrant settlers with different clans vying for power through elections. Traditional leaders from the Maguindanao and Manobo ethnic groups earlier recognized by the American colonial administration could not muster sufficient support to participate and win electoral contests.

Economic development and people's welfare

Lebak is better-off than South Upi in most indicators of economic development and people's welfare such as income class of the municipality, business competitiveness, urbanization, employment, poverty incidence, access to health, water and education services, communication, and mobility (Table 7).

[51] Interview with Renato Sirikit, South Upi MPDC, 13 April 2022.

Management of collective identities and claims

The first inhabitants of South Upi were the Tedurays followed by the Lambangian and the Manobo groups.[52] Maguindanao and non-Muslim migrant settlers later followed the original inhabitants. The population comprises Tedurays (65%), Maguindanaos (20%), and migrant settlers (15%) of different ethnicities but predominantly Ilonggo and Ilocano.

The Tedurays are spread in different barangays with a few barangays where they are dominant. The smaller sitio within the barangays where Maguindanaons are predominant include e.g., Sitio Kuhan in Romangaob, Sitio Letingan in Bongo, and Sito Sibowa in Biarong and Lamud.

Much of interethnic relations in South Upi has been influenced by land exchanges, accompanying conflicts and hope that local rulers protect ownership rights and boundaries. Informal land exchanges were mainly between Tedurays, Lambangians, Cebuanos, Ilocanos, and a few Ilonggos (Gulane 2016). The peacefulness of these transactions is often upset by the intervention of Maguindanaon claimants that are supported by a combination of armed force and external sources of legitimacy such as access to formal land titles and free patents.

Lebak is also an ethnically diverse municipality though this diversity is not inflamed by land conflicts. The first inhabitants were the Manobos, followed by Maguindanaos and, in the 1970s, new Christian settlers. Independent estimates of population distribution are widely different: one estimate suggests that the Lebak population comprises 50% Muslims, 25% Ilonggo-Ilocano and 25% Manobo; another suggests that Lebak is composed of 30%–40% Muslims and 60% Christians.[53]

A look at an official census data from 2007 indicate religious affiliations in the following distribution: 57% Roman Catholic, 14.23% Islam, 2.43% tribal religions, the remaining 26% comprising all other Christian denominations. In terms of major dialects spoken: 41.06% Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, 12.98% Karay-a, 12.91% Maguindanao, 9.42% Cebuano, 8.08% Teduray, 5.74% Manobo, 1.22% Tagalog, 7% Ilocano, and 3.35% other dialects. Ilonggo and Karay-a being closely related, 54% of the population would be speaking either Ilonggo or Karay-a. The pattern of self-ascription by household is coherent with identity by spoken language. Ilonggo and Karay-a comprise 54% of households, 13% Muslims (of the Maguindanao, Maranao, and Tausug ethnic groups), 5.7% Manobo, and 8% Teduray.

Much of the land exchanges during the arrival of migrant settlers in the late 1920s were informally and peacefully transacted with the native Manobos. Maguindanao settlers who arrived in the 1930s also benefited from these informal transactions including territorial expansion through intermarriage.

While Christian settlers (mainly Ilonggo and Karay-a) are dominant in both ethnic distribution and political rule, land and other economic exchanges are not dominated by any single group and is often negotiated in informal markets.

Indigenous peoples, specifically the Manobo, Lambangian, and the Teduray, have become weaker as minorities due to their dwindling numbers not only in Lebak but in the whole of the BARMM and Region 12. Results of a 2013 survey conducted by

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52 Interview with Renato Sirikit, South Upi MPDC, 13 April 2022.

53 Interviews with Muhammad Mastura, descendant of Datu Guiwan Mastura; Nemesio Tomongtong, Ilonggo Christian settler; Jameson Mijares, Ilonggo settler and Kagawad of Barangay Poloy-Poloy, 12 April 2022.

IPDEV[54] show that there are only 2,904 Manobos (in 383 households) in the two regions. Most of them are in the municipality of Sen. Ninoy Aquino (formerly the municipality of Dulangan).

4. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explain the higher intensity of violent conflict in borderlands in contrast to non-borderland areas as shown in the Conflict Alert database, and to determine as well why some borderlands exhibited the reverse, i.e., low levels of violent conflict. The author examined two case studies of borderlands: inter-municipal borderlands within one province and inter-municipal borderlands between two provinces.

The study concludes with the following observations:

One, the historic formation of borderlands explains whether these areas will become embroiled in high levels of violence or not. Borderlands that were formed through an organic and gradual process of migration and settlement were less violent than those that were established due to the population movement policies of the State.

Indeed, when the processes of siting and bordering ignored presettlement land rights and forcefully transferred property rights to favored migrants, intense violence became the outcome. In the case of Wao, the state-sponsored resettlement programs ignored prior claims of ownership of the native Maranao population. In contrast, the migrant settlers of Lebak negotiated land rights with preexisting native inhabitants.

The siting and bordering of South Upi was also state-sponsored yet the central state ignored the need to formalize land tenure rights or even the territorial limits of the municipality. Ethnic-based land claims of the Teduray, Maguindanaon, and other ethnic groups were left exposed to violent claims and the informal land market. Meanwhile, national land management agencies ignored their obligation to secure land tenure rights for all valid claimants, hence setting the stage for violent contestation.

Two, the manner through which borderlands took shape, survived, and thrived matters more than the heterogenous or homogenous nature of the population. There are borderlands that are as heterogenous as urban areas yet exhibit low levels of violence, and there are borderlands that are ethnically homogenous yet tied up in the conflict. Amai Manabilang was carved out of Wao and practically retained the same heterogenous composition of Christian ethnic groups, Maranao, and other migrants yet it exhibited low levels of violence. There are two palpable explanations: one, none of the multiethnic Christian settler groups asserted their ethnic exclusivity in dealing with the other groups; and, two, the land resources were more than enough for the various claimants to avoid intense and violent competition.

South Upi was intended to be the land of the Teduray when it was first created. It was to shield them from the other identity groups in the more heterogenous mother town of Upi. However, it lost its homogenous character due to competition over land resources coupled with the vibrancy of the informal land market that brought in other ethnic groups in the territory.

Three, there are two factors that may be more important than the composition of the population: one, the wealth and other resources present within the borderlands, and two, the nature of the prevailing illicit economy in the borderland.

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[54] Recognition of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for their Empowerment and Sustainable Development' (IPDEV) was a three-year project launched in February 2012 and was implemented by the consortium of the KAS Philippines, its institutional partner Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG)1 and Development Consultants Inc (DEVCON).

Most of the land in borderland areas are part of the public domain or the 'commons' as they are called elsewhere. In Mindanao, most of the remaining public lands are 'open-access' despite the fact that these areas have not yet been declared as 'A&D'.

If national agencies, local states, or local strongmen decide to instrumentalize the dominance of one ethnic group over the other in the case of apportioning or redistributing land in borderlands, the level of violence will rise. The weaponization of identities was the case in Wao while in South Upi, local rulers were unable to manage interethnic competition.

In borderlands where open-access public lands were scarce relative to the demand of competing groups, violence escalated. This characteristic is present once more in the case of Wao, which is relatively denser (138 per sq km) in contrast to Amai Manabilang (22 per sq km). South Upi is also relatively denser (229 per sq km) compared to Lebak (159 per sq km).

It is true that violent conflicts caused by shadow economy issues, common crimes, identity issues, and resource issues are prominent but are not unique to borderlands in the BARMM. However, those borderlands that are known transit points for illegal drugs and weapons exhibited higher levels of violence than those involved in coping and survival economies such as informal cross-border trade and the smuggling of food-related commodities. Violence was spurred by cyclical periods of state suppression rather than turf wars between the ruthless entrepreneurs in drugs and guns.

Four, the nature and character of administrative and politico-military control over borderlands matter. If the border is rather porous, levels of violence are generally lower as the entry and exit of business is often determined by informal and traditional institutions. If the administrative and politico-military control of the State is direct and rigorous, higher levels of violence fester and affect socioeconomic conditions.

The intensity of violence rises in borderlands with a heavier and predatory presence of the PNP and/or AFP. This can be seen in the volume and intensity of shadow economy conflicts in Wao and Lebak where AFP and PNP presence is heavier compared to Amai Manabilang and South Upi. This is especially graphic in the case of common crimes.

Indeed, the shifts in the level of violence related to shadow economies and common crimes are largely influenced by the vectors of law enforcement in the area, especially the policies and practices of the PNP and AFP, whether they occur in borderlands, non-border areas, or in big urban centers.

Five, the nature of clan rule matters in taming or promoting violence. Monopolistic clan rulers invite violent resistance when they side with one ethnic group and exclude others. This is shown in the case of Wao in 2015 when both town officials (mayor and vice mayor) were siblings who sided with the dominant Ilonggo ethnic group involved in the massacre of minority Maranao Muslims in one village.

This is in contrast with Amai Manabilang, where the ruling clan represents the Maranao Muslim majority but does not employ this dominance to violently marginalize the minority Christian settler community. Lara (2014) demonstrates a similar case in the non-borderland municipality of Upi during 2001–2010 when the mayor used his experience in cross-cultural alliance building to bring together representatives of different ethnic groups in continuous dialogue on peace and order issues to head off violence.

One can argue that this lesson resonates across the Bangsamoro, but more so in borderlands. Borderlands require rulers who can bargain and engage with other social and identity groups beyond their own and across the border. Their legitimacy is founded on an openness to construct a wider social contract between various identities. Their rule is also structured and constrained by informal institutions that operate only at the border, such as

the rules on barter trade that only traders in Sulu and across the sea recognize.

To conclude, scale shifts in borderland violence are intimately related to the resource and identity issues that determine the distribution and access of each group to land and other resources, but the evolution of a border, the nature of state intervention, and the mode of clan rule are intervening factors that can deter or escalate conflict.

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CHAPTER 7

In Search of Peaceful Solutions:

Land Conflicts and the Plight of the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples

In Search of Peaceful Solutions: Land Conflicts and the Plight of the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples

Jilliane Oria, Rey Palabon, and Ruel Punongbayan

The indigenous peoples (IPs) of the Bangsamoro region have engaged in a parallel struggle for the recognition of their rights and the restitution of their land amid the fragile peace and the unfinished political transition in the Bangsamoro. They are among those who feel genuinely afraid and equally frustrated over their lack of voice and leverage in the governance of the region, and the absence of any meaningful protection for themselves and their communities.

A case in point is the long and hard struggle for the recognition of the Teduray and Lambangian ancestral domain that covers 11 municipalities in Maguindanao province and two municipalities in Sultan Kudarat province. Their official application for the formal recognition, delineation, segregation, and the issuance of a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) was lodged as far back as in 2005. It took more than a decade for their application to move forward. The actual ancestral domain survey started only in 2016 and the technical processing took another two years. Finally, in August 2019, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Region 12 transmitted the survey returns to the Ancestral Domain Office of the NCIP central office. The Teduray and Lambangian were hopeful that the validation of their CADT application would soon follow.

However, in September 2019, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) issued BTA Resolution No. 38 ordering the NCIP to cease and desist from delineating land in the Bangsamoro and issuing the CADT. This resolution undermined the ancestral domain claims of the Teduray and Lambangian tribes and was a clear case of interference by the Bangsamoro Transition Authority- Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BTA-BARMM) in the recognition, delineation, and awarding of ancestral domain claims.[1]

As confirmed by the NCIP, the delineation and survey of the Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domains was accomplished even before the passage of Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and should have been exempted from coverage. However, the succeeding steps for the issuance of a CADT were put on hold in deference to the BTA-BARMM. The ancestral domain claim of Teduray–Lambangian totals at least 200,000 hectares based on the NCIP delineation survey done in 2017.[2]

In July 2021, the proposed Bangsamoro Indigenous Peoples Code was submitted to the appropriate committee of the BTA for deliberation by the Bangsamoro Parliament. However, the possibility of immediate passage remains unknown despite

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[1] In protest, Timuay Labi Leticio Datuwata of the Teduray decried the erasure of their land claim: "Instead of protection of our right, the BTA released a resolution to cease and desist the processing of our ancestral domain".

[2] (187,000+++ ancestral lands and 14,000+++ ancestral waters)

Indigenous Teduray people of Barangay Itaw, South Upi were forced to evacuate on 3 January 2021 when armed men believed to be members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) burned down their homes to evict them from their land.
Ferdinandh Cabrera

its inclusion in the seven priority bills of BARMM. The IP Code was declared a priority bill by the BTA before BOL was passed in 2019 yet to date no Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim or CADT has been issued, despite the enactment of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997.

These are visceral issues following the ratification of Republic Act 11054 or the BOL and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) takeover of regional economic and political authority over the BARMM. The new power dynamics in the region is provoking a mad rush by communal groups to gain access and control of land in Maguindanao and other parts of mainland Mindanao. Some as tribes, some as clans, and some as tribal clans.

But there is another push coming from a different direction. Land and other resources including the previous MILF camps are being ring-fenced for occupation and used by rebel armies and their families, with the latter emboldened to assert their claims above the rest. They are clans allied with former rebels, clans allied with extremist groups, or clans allied with both. In this delicate situation, a legitimate and credible land law is even more important. It can bequeath a new political settlement between various stakeholders from state, non-state, civil society, and business that rivals the settlement between the government and the MILF.

Caught in the crossfire

Many non-Moro indigenous peoples (NMIP) fell victim to violent land conflicts in Maguindanao in 2018, before the passage of the organic law. Most of them were killed and displaced from their communities.[3]

The prevalence of violence toward NMIPs prompted both the Senate and House of Representatives to issue resolutions directing the appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry into the escalating attacks against the NMIPs.[4]

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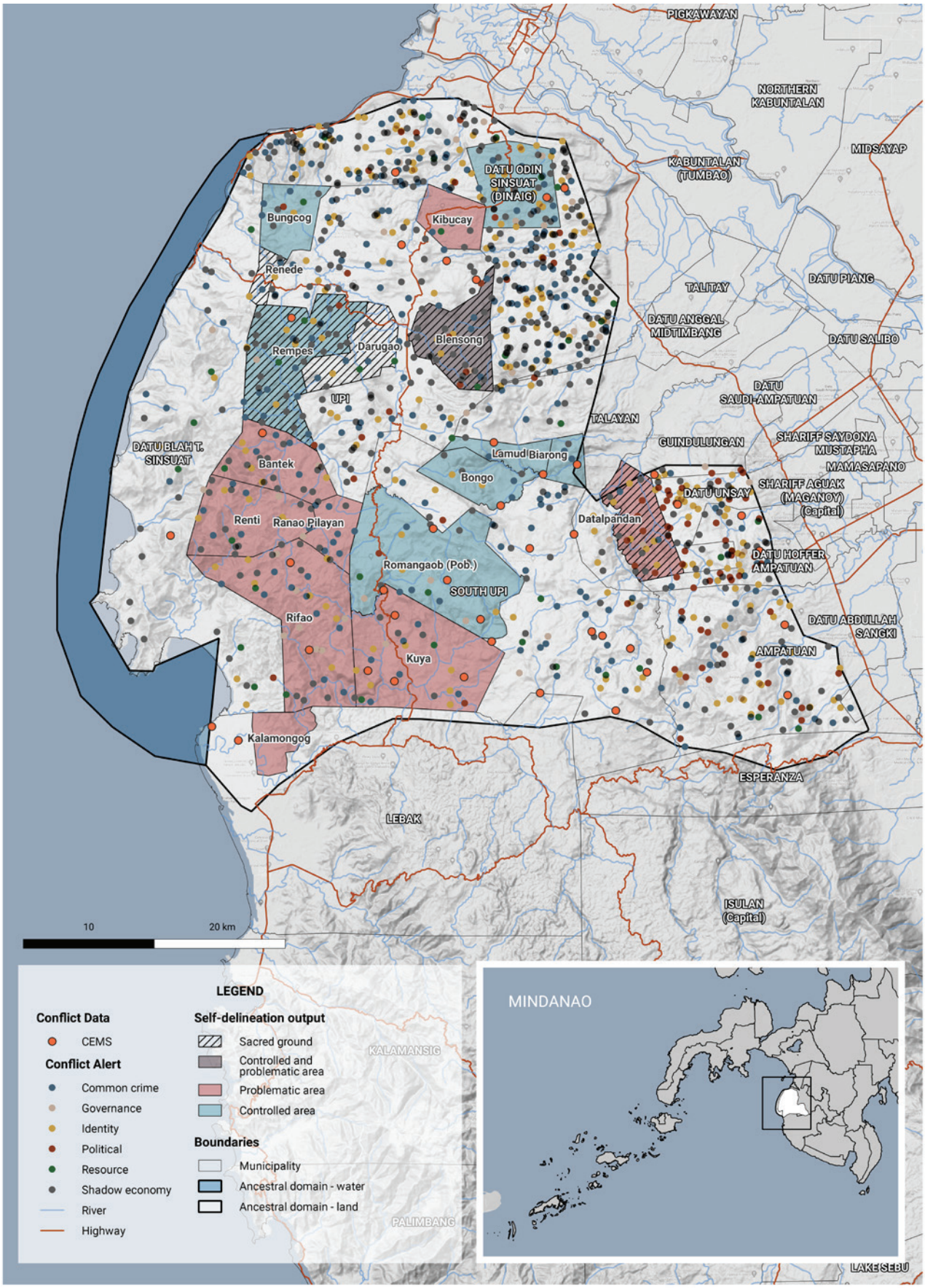
[3] In an Alerto Bangsamoro radio interview on 9 June 2021, Timuay Leticio Datuwata reported that 23 NMIP leaders and community members have been murdered since 2018. "No justice has been accorded to them, the perpetrators have not been found, and the government has offered no redress for their fears and grievances."

[4] On 7 September 2020, then Senator Maria Imelda "Imee" Marcos filed Senate Resolution No. 516 directing the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry into the escalating attacks against IPs amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. On 28 June 2021, Congresswoman Amihilda Sangcopan filed a similar resolution directing the House Committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (ICC/IPs) to conduct an inquiry on matters relating to ICC/IPs in the Bangsamoro. Both resolutions underlined the continued displacement from their ancestral lands, the armed conflict in their areas, and the harassment by armed groups resulting in the deaths of non-Moro IPs.

Map 1. Overlay of Teduray–Lambangian Ancestral Domain and Violent Conflict



According to the Mindanao displacement dashboard of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, approximately 1,600 people were forced to flee their homes due to violence in South Upi on 2 December 2020 and another 2,790 individuals were displaced on 31 December 2020.

Based on the report of the Ministry of Social Services and Development, Maguindanao, around 111 families (around 555 individuals) remained displaced as of June 2021.

Alert's Early Response Network has also monitored and reported to the Critical Events Monitoring System platform at least 37 violent incidents affecting NMIP communities from May 2020 to April 2022 alone.

The Philippine National Police confirmed at least nine violent incidents with 23 fatalities recorded. Some of the cases were with the prosecutor's office while others were already filed in the courts. In short, all were languishing in the judiciary.

The figures from the Conflict Alert database show that nine of the 11 Maguindanao municipalities where NMIPs had claims over their ancestral domains have undergone land conflicts that are ongoing in Upi (12 incidents), South Upi (12 incidents), and Datu Odin Sinsuat (11 incidents). The latter had the most numbers of violent incidents over the past 10 years. These include clan feuds due to land disputes involving individuals linked to the MILF and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) (**Map 1**).

Datu Odin Sinuat and South Upi continued to be hotspots for land-related issues and had the most land-related conflict deaths within the Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domain, with 12 and 16 deaths, respectively (**Figure 1**).

Institutional evolution in the case of land and other property rights

Similar to any ancestral domain claim among the different indigenous people in the country, all lands that are subjected to ownership or lease applications are considered public lands prior to the IPRA. The establishment of an Insular Bureau of Public Lands (IBPL) under Act 218 on 2 September 1901 by the American insular government started the system of land surveys in the Philippines. In 1903, the first Public Land Act or Act 926 became the basis for public land disposition. The concept of land disposition as embodied in this act was to promote social equity by giving public agricultural lands to the rural masses.

The IBPL was later replaced by the Bureau of Lands and mandated to dispose of public lands either by

Figure 1. Land Conflict Deaths in Teduray-Lambangian Areas

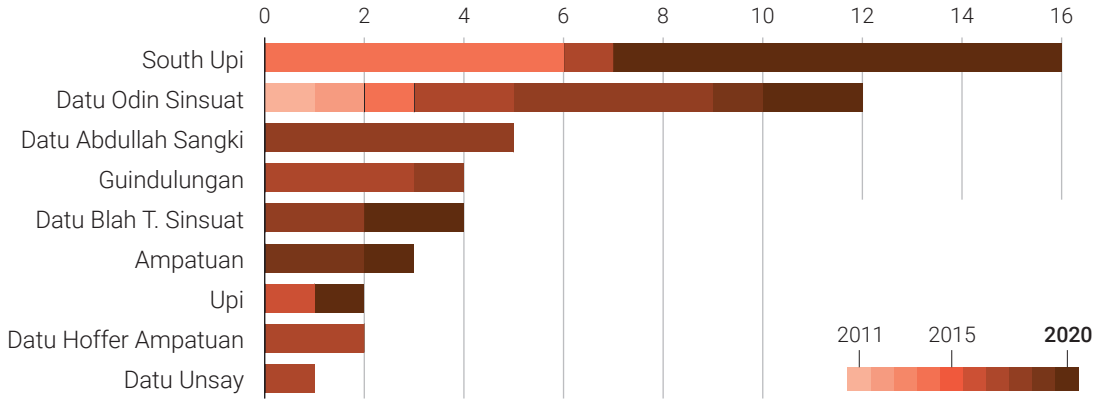


Table 1. Timeline of Proclamations

Proclamation / Tenurial Instrument	Title / Description
PD 68 s 1936	Reserving for school purposes a parcel of land situated in the barrio of Upi, Municipal District of Awang, Province of Cotabato, Island of Mindanao.
PD 391 s 1953	Reserving for resettlement purposes a certain parcel of the public domain situated in the barrio of Dalican, Municipality of Dinaig, Province of Cotabato, Island of Mindanao.
Proc-0174-1964	Excluding from the operation of Proclamation no. 287, dated 14 August 1964, a certain parcel of land of the public domain situated in the Municipality of South Upi, Province of Maguindanao, and declaring same as alienable or disposable for townsite purposes.
PD 1401 s 1975	Reserving for military purposes certain parcels of land of the public domain situated in the Barrio of Awang, Municipality of Dinaig, Province of Maguindanao, Island of Mindanao under the administration of the chief of staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines.
PD 1011 s 1976	Creating the Municipality of South Upi in the Province of Maguindanao.
PD 1580 s 1978	Amending Presidential Decree No. 1011 creating the Municipality of South Upi in the Province of Maguindanao.
Proc-0065-1987	Establishing as watershed forest reserve of a parcel of land of the public domain situated in the Municipality of South Upi, Province of Maguindanao, island of Mindanao, Philippines.

Source: Philippine *Official Gazette*.

homestead, free patent, sale, and lease. The system of land classification was enacted in 1919 under Act 2874 and adopted during the commonwealth through Commonwealth Act 141 (CA 141) or the Public Land Act of 1936. This act remains the governing law on public lands.

Meanwhile, the land classification process is the guide for creating enabling laws and proclamations in declaring the specific use of such area (Table 1).[5]

There are indispensable points to consider in addressing land conflict cases through applicable laws and policies applied to attendant facts and circumstances involved. In particular, Section 3, Article XII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that lands of the public domain are classified into agricultural, forest or timber, mineral lands, and national parks and alienable lands of the public domain shall be limited to agricultural lands. Another primary consideration is the basis or the source of the claimant's right to the land such as the right to ownership as defined in land titles, and the right to possession as defined by tenurial instruments and proclamations reserving land for public use.

By identifying the land classification of a conflict area, one can easily discern whether a certain issuance, be

[5] These laws, proclamations, and issuances contributed to the weakening of the Teduray-Lambangian ancestral domain.

it a title, tenurial instruments, or proclamation may hold. If the subject of the conflict is forestland, any title granting private rights to individuals cannot issue. Forestlands are not registrable properties. On the other hand, titles may issue on agricultural lands declared as alienable and disposable (A&D).

For purposes of resolving land conflicts in BARMM, for example, mineral land, and national parks shall be considered part of forestlands. Thus, only two land classifications are important to consider: forestlands and agricultural land. Agricultural lands are rendered A&D when lands of the public domain are subsequently classified or declared as no longer intended for public use or for the development of national wealth, or through any of the exclusive modes enumerated under Section 11 of the Public Land Act.

Ownership of property entitles the owner to a bundle of rights: the right to enjoy or use the property (*jus utendi*); the right to the fruits/income derived therefrom (*jus fruendi*); the right to the accessories or to things attached to the property (*jus accessiones*); the right to abuse or destroy the same (*jus abutendi*); the right to alienate or dispose of the property (*jus disponendi*); the right to recover possession of the property based on claim of ownership (*jus vindicandi*); and the right to possess the property (*jus possidendi*). Issuance of a title over a parcel of land entitles one to become an owner thereof and consequently possesses all the rights of an owner.

Meanwhile, the right of possession pertains to the state of subjecting a property into one's control. One may become a possessor of a property without becoming an owner. A perfect example is a contract of lease. The owner who is the lessor has the right to dispose of or alienate the property may allow another to use the same, the lessee or the tenant by such arrangement only has possessory rights over the property. The ownership remains with the lessor or landlord. Tenurial instruments issued by the DENR are in effect lease contracts involving land of public domain.

Different land processes

Map 2 presents the result of a mapping of ancestral land classification in Teduray and Lambangian areas. As seen in the color legend, the areas are subdivided into A&D, forest reserve, forestland, and timberland.

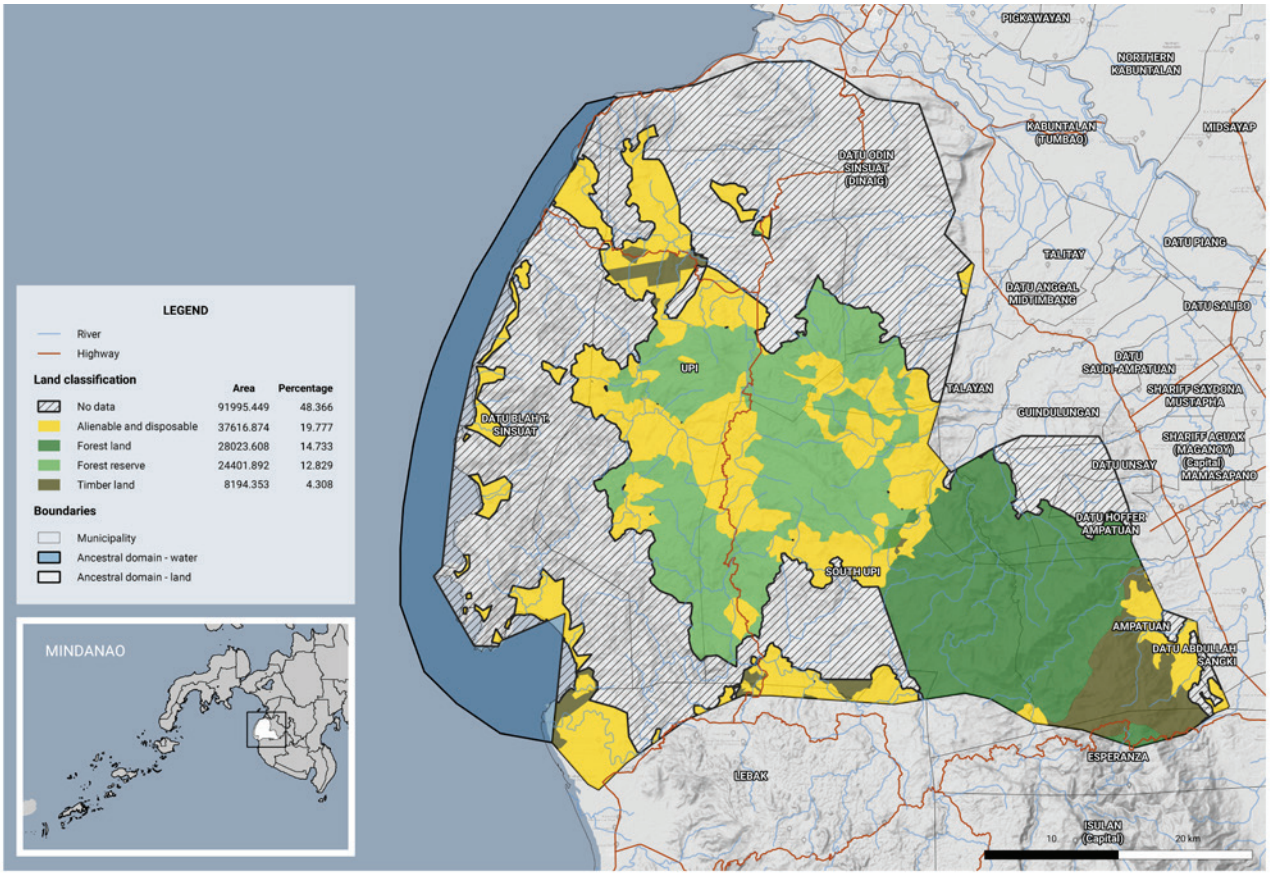
A&D are lands that are open for private or corporate land title applications, including areas that are reserved for built-up and settlements, as it is used for residential, commercial, industrial, or other productive purposes. Some of the lands that are covered in this classification are already allocated by the government on specific purpose such as Proc-0174 for the townsite of Upi, PD 68 s 1936 for reserving a school site in Upi, and PD 391 s 1953 for resettlement purposes in Dinaig.

The A&D areas are not covered by proclamation or any executive issuances. There are pertinent laws that cover various modes of land disposition: for homestead settlement, sale, lease, or confirmation of imperfect or incomplete titles (by judicial legalization and by administrative legalization or free patent).

For individual applications, section 12 of CA 141 describes that any citizen of the Philippines over the age of 18 years, or the head of a family, who does not own more than 24 hectares of land or has not had the benefit of any gratuitous allotment of more than 24 hectares of land since the occupation of the Philippines by the United States, may enter a homestead of not exceeding 24 hectares of agricultural land of the public domain. On the other hand, in section 33, large tracts of lands can be applied for a lease agreement not exceeding a total of 1,024 hectares. If the land leased is adapted and devoted to grazing purposes, an area not exceeding 2,000 hectares may be granted.

The land disposition for A&D as described above is available to all potential claimants of land for various purposes. There are instances that multiple applications are lodged for one specific location,

Map 2. Digitized NAMRIA Land Classification of Teduray–Lambangian Ancestral Domain Claim



hence the onset of disputes, and possibly the eruption of violence. Such was the case in some of the contested areas falling within the Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domain claim.

Examining land-related issues

Most of the violence can be traced to long-standing land issues in Teduray–Lambangian areas. The Conflict Alert 2020 report explains the history and importance of resolving violent land-related feuds in Teduray–Lambangian areas. Conflict incidents in Maguindanao underscore the land claims of the Teduray and Lambangian IPs, who see the land areas in the highlands that are part of their ancestral domain being claimed and occupied by Maguindanaon clans.[6]

Land-related issues in the Teduray–Lambangian areas are among the leading causes of horizontal violence that are intertwined with broader inter-community struggles in Maguindanao. Informal land markets, overlapping claims, boundary disputes, encroachment, and land grabbing regularly affect the NMIPs. These land issues are further complicated by the incoherence of land-related laws from the local to national levels—laws that overlap and are often irreconcilable using existing legal frameworks and alternative mechanisms.

In fact, proxy fights between provincial, regional, and national land management agencies are the norm due to a lack of coordination.[7] This lack of coordination has led to persistent conflict through the issuance of overlapping and

[6] International Alert. 2021. *Conflict Alert 2020 Report. Flashpoints in the Bangsamoro Box 4: A wave of violence in Kuya*. Quezon City. January.

[7] International Alert. 2014. "Land governance in the Bangsamoro", *Policy Brief*. April.

multiple tenurial instruments, agreements, and contracts over parcels of land, in the process muddling vested and prior rights of occupants, claimants, settlers, and migrants. A thorough examination needs to be done to unearth the history and understand the dynamics of land disputes and to enable a proper determination of the most effective arrangements, settlements, and policy frameworks to address them.

The Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domain claim

The Teduray–Lambangian IPs have formally lodged an ancestral domain claim to the NCIP of 190,149.0755 hectares of land comprising the two towns (Datu Blah T. Sinsuat and Upi) and portions of nine towns (South Upi, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Talayan, Ampatuan, Guindulungan, Datu Unsay, Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, Datu Abdullah Sangki, and Datu Anggal Midtimbang) in Maguindanao including portions of Lebak and Esperanza in Sultan Kudarat, as well as ancestral waters of more or less 18,109.5063 hectares in a majority of the coastal areas of Datu Blah T. Sinsuat municipality, Maguindanao. The claim application started in 2014 and was already on the pipeline for approval by the NCIP commissioner en banc in 2019 after completing all requirements.

However, the process was put on hold as well after the NCIP was ordered to cease and desist from undertaking the titling of lands that are now within the jurisdiction of the BARMM. The new BARMM authorities have justified their order as consistent with past legal interpretations that prevented the application of the IPRA within the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and now within the new regional entity.

Violence against the Teduray–Lambangian

Other salient cases demonstrate the multiple challenges facing actors who mediate disputes and bridge warring groups fighting over land, especially in ancestral domain claims of the Teduray–Lambangian. Several cases illuminate important ancestral domain claims that have seen a history of violent conflict over land.

Case 1. Barangay Kuya, South Upi multiple claims

The A&D lands in Barangay Kuya, South Upi are mostly located in the southern part of the municipality near its boundary with Lebak, Sultan Kudarat. Overlapping claims were found in sitios Dara, Lalak, Langa-langa, Fengalungan, Meglaway, Milaya, Ilak, Kitol, and Farang Uwa.

The Timuay Justice and Governance Group reported in a narrative document that a land survey with number GSS 45 was conducted during the term of Mayor Labina during the martial law years in the 1970s.[8] After the survey, an influx of Moros arrived to lay claim over lands that were titled in their names. A violent conflict erupted that drove away the Teduray–Lambangian families residing in the area.

War and displacement continued during the long years of communal violence between the Christian Ilaga and the Muslim Barracuda paramilitary groups in the same areas claimed by the warring parties. At some point, the Moro families also left the area to avoid the depredations of the Ilaga paramilitary group. After the evacuation, the tribal community came back and have dwelled in the contested areas since then.

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[8] The Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) is the indigenous political structure of the Teduray–Lambangian non-Moro indigenous peoples of South and Central Mindanao. The *Timuay* system is a traditional form of collective leadership and tribal-based self-governance practiced by the Teduray and Lambangian with administrative, legislative, and judicial branches.

Some Teduray residents of Barangay Kuya, South Upi stay behind to defend their farm lands as families flee the armed fighting in their area. **Amiel Cagayan**

It is unclear how the Maguindanaon Moros got hold of land titles over tribal land. Suffice it to say that the land grabbing of land in Philippine rural areas have employed similar tactics where government agents worked with private landowners in search of land to amass.

Records from the BARMM Ministry of Fisheries and Agrarian Reform and the Registry of Deeds show only six titles recorded in Barangay Kuya. The land title numbers are CL-2658, CL-2659, CL-2655, CL-2523, CL-2607, and CL-2522, which were originally awarded to some Teduray–Lambangian tribal members in 1996. The same records also indicate that land has passed through several owners and the original names replaced with Christian surnames.

Case 2. Barangay Kalamongog, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat ancestral domain overlap with agri-industrial ventures.

The second case is an overlap of the Teduray ancestral land claims in Sitio Tapudi, Barangay Kalamongog, Lebak over a parcel of land acquired by a migrant settler. The land was estimated at 350 hectares, planted to coconuts, and was previously called the Kalamongog Plantation. Many Teduray families were employed by the plantation as tenants. Tension arose when the area was included in an ancestral domain claim.

The situation became complicated when an agribusiness company took over operations of the Kalamongog Plantation and expanded the area to about 2,000 hectares. The company was planning to convert the area into a banana plantation.

The issue has since produced strings of violence between tribal families, the migrant settlers, and the Moro as vested interests among affected community members clashes.

Case 3. Integrated Forestry Management Agreement over unclassified lands in Rifao

The land coverage of Rifao is unclassified and is considered as timberland. Two Integrated Forestry Management Agreements (IFMAs) were

granted covering the area that extended toward the other adjacent barangays and places of the ancestral domain. The first is IFMA No. 005 of the Maguindanao Coastal Logging Corporation with contract ending on 31 March 2023, and the second is IFMA No. 014 of the Penansaran Logging Concession with contract ending on 2 November 2029.

The IFMA is governed by DENR through Administrative Order Number 99-53 describing the management agreements as "a production-sharing contract entered into by and between the DENR and a qualified applicant wherein the DENR grants to the latter the exclusive right to develop, manage, protect and utilize a specified area of forestland and forest resource therein for a period of 25 years and may be renewed for another 25-year period, consistent with the principle of sustainable development and in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Development and Management Plan, and under which both parties share in its produce."

The exclusivity of the contract granted toward the two corporations to develop, manage, protect, and utilize the land and its natural resources have alienated the lands and natural resources of the Teduray people in Rifao. In addition, the tribal community in the affected areas have observed that most of the activities of the company were geared toward cutting and harvesting logs, with very little done to optimize the development potential of the area.

There are threats of violence after the company was made aware that the self-delineation of the lands will embolden the community to assert their rights of ancestral domain. They are also aware that a valuation of their previous ecosystem through a resource-use planning process on the IFMA land could strengthen tribal opposition to a further renewal of the IFMA contracts and return the land as part of the ancestral domain.

Case 4. Tribal sacred ground overlaps with proposed economic hub of former rebel combatants

One of the most important sacred grounds of the Teduray and Lambangian tribes is in Barangay Datalpandan, Guindulungan known as the Firis Complex, where Mount Firis is located. It is revered because the tribal people believe that their great ancestor and spiritual leader Lagey Firis ascended to the skies from this mountain. Important rituals and cultural events are performed on the site covering 2,819 hectares that is classified as a permanent forestland.[9]

However, the site is also identified by the MILF as part of their Camp Badre and is one of the six camps where they have made land claims as part of the peace negotiations with the Philippine government. The area is being developed as an agricultural economic hub for former rebel combatants and has been reportedly surveyed by the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs for potential redistribution.

New cycles of violent communal conflict loom over this area as well as in the other camps that are being designated as permanent resettlement sites for rebel combatants. The Teduray–Lambangian tribes do not trust promises of equivalent welfare benefits for them from the camp transformation program.

Case 5. Multiple claims in Barangays Biarong and Lamud

There are instances of multiple claimants among the Teduray–Lambangian and the Moro clans in Barangays Lamud and Biarong in South Upi that are bound to provoke new cycles of violence. Worse, parts of the ancestral domain claim have

[9] Based on DENR land classification map number 3628 sourced from NAMRIA.

also been declared as part of a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) camp called Omar.[10]

Barangay Biarong and Lamud are adjacent barangays on the northeastern tip of South Upi and are boundary barangays with Talayan municipality. The two barangays used to be one but were split in the mid-1960s when two of the clan heads became contenders for barangay captain.

Most of its area is classified as A&D land per NAMRIA's land classification. Some of the barangay residents were able to secure land titles because a teacher who was assigned to the area convinced the Tedurays to apply for land ownership. However, in 1962, a group of Maguindanaon farmers from Dinaig (former municipal name of Datu Odin Sinsuat) arrived to conduct a land survey explaining that they were doing a delineation of the Dinaig municipal boundary. The group was chased away by the Teduray residents. A week later, the group returned with guns and killed one tribal elder and injured another person. Since then, atrocities perpetrated

Table 2. Typologies of Teduray–Lambangian Land Conflicts and Potential Policy Remedies

	Case	Land Classification	Source of Claimant's Rights
1	Barangay Kuya, South Upi multiple claims	A&D lands	Land titles
		Forestlands	
2	Barangay Kalamongog, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat ancestral domain overlap with agri-industrial ventures.	A&D lands	IPRA
		Forestlands	

[10] Position paper of Barangay Lamud and Barangay Biarong about ancestral domain claims.

against the Teduray have increased, leading to the displacement of dozens of families.

The permanent occupation of the Moros in the area can be traced back to the 1990s when members of a major clan from Talayan sought refuge in the Teduray territory because of their clan feud with another major political clan. The Teduray–Lambangian leaders at that time concurred on the premise that the stay will only be temporary, and the group would leave after two years when their feud with the rival clan is settled. But the group later refused to leave and brought more of their clan members to settle in the village. The clan continues to occupy most of the prime landholdings in the area.

Remedies under existing laws

The five cases summarized the history and characteristics of the land conflicts existing in Teduray-Lanbangian areas and **Table 2** outlines potential remedies under existing laws that clarify what is applicable to the particularities of a given case.

	Implications	Remedies under Existing Laws
	Considered private lands and should be excluded in the Teduray–Lambangian ancestral domain claim (TLADC) if issued prior as they constitute prior and vested rights under IPRA.	Check NCIP Inventory to verify if classified as ancestral lands.If yes, exercise the right of redemption under Section 8(b) of IPRA. Verification of multiple titles or review of the decree of registration under Section 32 of Presidential Decree 1529 before the Land Registration Authority in the BARMM should be done. If the issuance of titles was found with fraud, file cases to question the titles.
	Titles are void because forestlands are not registrable.	
	CADT/Certificate of Ancestral Land Title (CALT) may proceed. If the company has a title, the same should be respected as they are presumed valid and indefeasible. CADT application may be processed. However, CALT may not issue.	Verification of titles or review of the decree of registration under Section 32 of Presidential Decree 1529 before the Land Registration Authority in the BARMM should be done. If issuance of titles were found with fraud, cases must be filed to question the titles. Compel occupants to vacate by filing cases in court if there is no title within A&D lands or tenurial instrument if within forestlands.
	Meanwhile, occupants in the conflict area should show authority in the form of tenurial instruments since titles within forestlands are void. If found with a tenurial instrument, TLADC may still proceed subject to the rights granted therein.	

Case	Land Classification	Source of Claimant's Rights
3 IFMA over unclassified lands in Barangay Rifao	Unclassified lands are deemed forestlands	IFMA is a tenurial instrument / long-term lease granted by the DENR within forestlands
4 Tribal sacred ground overlaps with the proposed economic hub of former rebel combatants	Forestlands per NAMRIA Land Classification map	IPRA
5 Multiple claims in Barangays Biarong and Lamud	A&D	Land Titles For Camp Omar, no formal proclamation from the government
	Forestlands	

	Implications	Remedies under Existing Laws
	CADT may proceed. IFMAs issued will continue to be in force.	In case the IFMA awardee is found to violate the terms and conditions thereof, the same should be reported to the DENR for appropriate action.
	CADT may proceed. Proclamations reserving lands of the public domain for public or quasi-public use remain classified as forestlands. Hence, inalienable. If found within the ancestral domain, IPs have the right to claim parts of the reservation or proclamation, except those intended for common and public welfare and service.	Zoning of the area and issuance of formal Proclamation identifying the purpose and defining the metes and bounds of the proposed agri-eco hub. It should likewise provide the inclusion of the NMIPs in the programs.
	CADT/CALT may proceed, excluding titles constituting prior and/or vested rights under IPRA. Titles shall be respected unless obtained through fraud.	If titles are obtained through fraud, appropriate cases to invalidate the same should be filed. If there is no title, the government may explore proclaiming the area for settlement where parties with conflicting claims will be given proper allocation of lots after the conduct of a census. Inquiry should be made whether MNLF members are qualified for public grants. If there are other forms of conveyance or proof of informal transfer within ancestral domain/ ancestral land found in its inventory, NCIP shall resolve whether the same is in accordance with IP procedures and not contrary to law, public policy, and morals. Agreements with IPs may also be facilitated in accordance with their customs and traditions.
	CADT may proceed. If there are titles, the same are void because forestlands are not registrable. If there are tenurial instruments, the same shall remain in force.	

Access to potable water remains difficult in Teduray areas of South Upi, Maguindanao. Residents must walk a long distance to the water source to fetch water, imposing a heavy burden on them. **Amiel Cagayan**

Continued quest for self-determination and self-delineation of ancestral domain land

The intensification of violence against the Teduray–Lambiangan did not stem from the ratification of the BOL—it was fueled by it. However, the threats and the violence did not deter the Teduray–Lambangian tribes from fighting for the recognition of their ancestral domain. They have devised steps to resolve issues with legal support and improved their mediation capacity.

In 2021, the Teduray also enhanced their capacity to map out their lands. They conducted self-delineation and land surveys on areas that they identified as 1) sacred places, 2) tribal-dominated and -controlled villages, and 3) areas that are problematic or have adverse claims from other groups and entities.

The self-delineation categories reveal the true status of the ancestral domain—reflecting the current situation of the land, the recognition of the indigenous people's claims, and the bundle of rights that have been accorded to the IPs, or the lack of it.[1] Meanwhile, **Map 1** represents the true state of Teduray landholdings to date. The size of the Teduray–Lambiangan ancestral domain shrunk after their prior rights were ignored and different individuals and entities came to possess land titles and other legal documents. The size of their ancestral domain claims now appears huge only on paper but is getting smaller on the ground.

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[1] According to the IPRA, the well-being of indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) may be measured based on the ability of the IPs/ICCs to enjoy and exercise the four bundle of rights, namely, the right to ancestral domain and land, the right to self-governance and empowerment, the right to social justice and human rights, and the right to cultural integrity.

The map indicates the areas where all categories intersect such as Barangay Blensong in Upi, which means that the barangay contains a specific area that is a sacred place, a sitio, or clan landholding that is safeguarded, and a problematic area that the Teduray–Lambangian wants to redeem in the future. A similar intersection can be seen in the Firis Complex in Barangay Datalpandan, Guindulungan which is identified as sacred but problematic.

Another aspect of the map representation exposes a large area within the perimeter of the ancestral domain claim that is not targeted for self-delineation. These areas seem to have been removed from the legitimate claims of the IPs. There is neither a land mass that connects the land to their claimed ancestral waters.

Conclusion

The notion that the absence or delay in the creation of a vital land law was merely a technical or organizational problem brought about by the difficult transition process from the ARMM to the BARMM is factual but inadequate.

Is the aversion to designing a land law that would diminish BTA and BARMM's authority and power to decide on vital land claims that involved its own members and communities behind the delay? Is it because they would have to legislate against their own interest? Is the diminution in priority and the omission from law-making therefore deliberate and consequential?

The indifference and fear from both sides of this conflict divide is shaped by the history of violence over competing land claims. This issue lies at the core of any transitional justice initiative in the Bangsamoro. The struggle between Moro and NMIPs is founded upon the struggle for restitution. Both sides claim prior rights and have fought a long and violent battle to assert those rights above all else—seldom through law, often by force.

The resilient violence also underscores the vital yet missing element in the normalization and transitional justice component of the peace agreement. The guarantee of reparation and restitution is granted to all claimants of land unjustly dispossessed of their properties and rights. That guarantee is not exclusive to the Moro. It includes the NMIPs as well.

Several potential scenarios can unravel during the extended political transition that can retard or reward violent conflict.

First, the NMIPs can invoke the IPRA and take on the BARMM government for neglecting to uphold their ancestral domain claims. The NCIP has shown its willingness to support the Teduray by undertaking moves to strengthen the Tedurays' claims in their pursuit of their ancestral land. The downside in this scenario is the likelihood of conflict intensification.

The second scenario is where the NMIPs and the BTA work together with support groups during the extension period in formulating and legislating an IP Code that is mutually acceptable to the parties. The national government agencies and other instrumentalities in the BARMM including BTA and normalization mechanisms can make concrete and practical steps in the resolution of land conflicts either through creation of new policies, updating old ones, or finding ways to better implement existing laws and policies that are responsive to the needs of both sides in the conflict divide.

Finally, the last scenario spells a winner-take-all struggle that can emerge if a 'might is right' attitude is used to settle land claims. The current situation is starting to evolve into this type of outcome because of the presence and intervention of different armed groups coming from the various corners of this horizontal conflict. Unless a land law is passed, both the Moro and NMIPs will be locked into a continuing proxy war where both lose out in the end.

Ways forward

Resolving land-related conflict requires a determination of the sort of violence that may arise. Land-related violence is often expected to emerge from horizontal struggles between various claimants to a parcel of land. However, land-related conflict can also induce vertical conflict or armed challenges against the State if the rights of people to the land they own or occupy are neglected, ignored, or abbreviated by government measures or rehabilitation and development plans. The prevention, adjudication, and resolution of land-related conflicts must be undertaken in both cases, requiring a set of actions that can stem violent outcomes.

Several pre-conditions need to be addressed to manage violent flashpoints in relation to the land issue. These pre-conditions create an environment for getting the support of all parties to the mediation process, and are central to achieving a consensus behind the outcomes of negotiations.

- Local context and the process should include deliberate engagement with local community leaders and stakeholders and government representatives;
- Recognition of existing local or communal occupancy/tenure arrangements;
- Willingness to resolve tenure issues using multiple or pluralistic institutional arrangements, including hybrid arrangements;
- Respect and recognition of private rights and protection of such rights under existing laws, including just payment of these properties should they be used or taken by the government (expropriation);
- Use of third-party facilitators to handle the multistakeholder process and consensus building on decisions and actions to be taken, and to ensure objectivity and impartiality.

Government agencies can facilitate the resolution of land conflicts within BARMM either through the creation of new policies, updating old ones or finding ways to better implement existing laws and policies, or through government actions that pave the way for peaceful solutions for NMIP issues in the Bangsamoro. It is also crucial that the BARMM works closely with non-state actors and private sector groups involved in mapping techniques and resource-use management planning.

Initial steps that may be undertaken include the following:

- complete the inventory of ancestral domains and ancestral lands nationwide (NCIP);
- validate land classification in situ (DENR/NAMRIA);
- establish single land titling agency (medium to long term) to harmonize land survey and titling (DENR, DAR, LRA and NCIP);
- undertake parallel activities by respective offices to update and delist land records;
- document customary IP practices and traditions especially pertaining to land, livelihoods, and culture (NCIP or NGOs); and
- capacitate IPs in resource-use mapping techniques.

Investing in the improvement of land governance in the BARMM

Good governance in the land administration and management in BARMM will protect the property rights of individuals, the IPs, and the government within the principles of social justice, transparency, accountability, and rule of law.

1. Complete the cadastral survey of BARMM and adopt a conflict-sensitive approach in the survey process—delineating political boundaries and parcellary lots in BARMM to determine actual land ownership/usage rights and to identify existing competing claims and lands that were unjustly obtained.

2. Rebuild and retool the BARMM-Land Management Bureau in terms of information and database building, prioritizing the development of a common and updated systems for parcel or cadastral indexing that integrates current attributes of each land parcel.

3. Conduct priority actions at the national level.

- Complete the Unified Parcel Referral System to clarify information on land titling, land registration, land taxation and land management.
- Address the land data gap by completing the system for establishing the central repository for land data and start carrying out a comprehensive survey to map/identify all untitled lands and assess in further detail to what degree existing land titles are overlapping. This will help validate the process of recognition of all land tenure rights and the settlement of competing land claims related to historical dispossession and conflict situation.
- Pursue the roll out of the land administration and management system by DENR to all regions would greatly enhance the inventory of records within the agency. Greater data sharing between the LRA and DENR should be mandatory. The restrictions associated with the Land Titling Computerization Project contract on records sharing have to be addressed for this to be realized.

4. Adopt and implement a strategic road map on land administration and management. Strategic measures to reengineer land administration services in the country has to be implemented. LAMP 2 has developed a Long-term Strategic Development Framework and Roadmap to improve land administration services and can be adopted as the strategic direction for the national government to address long-term challenges in land administration and management.

This would have to include establishing a unified Land Administration and Management Agency, reviewing transfer taxes and related costs to dampen secondary land markets and encourage wider and effective registration of transactions and to accelerate the titling of untitled properties for greater coverage.

5. Redesign an appropriate, conflict-sensitive, and harmonized customary–traditional mode of resolving land conflicts.

To be responsive in addressing land conflict in BARMM, a harmonized customary–traditional formal mode of resolving land conflicts should be designed. The NCIP and Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs should coordinate joint consultations with experts and all stakeholders. The mechanism should be accessible, easy to implement, and accepted by the community. The employment of customary practices in resolving conflict is a must.

Genuine reforms in the administration of justice is also necessary. While the traditional justice system is in place and operational, enhancing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms or a redesigned customary–traditional mode of dispute resolution may be institutionalized.

Campaign for the passage of an executive order, or presidential issuance to address land tenure issues and land conflicts, and implement long-term

reforms on land governance, particularly clarifying measures on:

- establishment of the land classification of the BARMM, including classification of ancestral lands within the concept of indigenous ownership of land;
- rules on recording of land titles and land transactions involving ancestral lands;
- codification of customary laws regarding land ownership, property rights and dispute resolution mechanisms;
- applicability of processing as ancestral land, free patent application or usufructuary or long-term lease as land tenurial arrangement;
- procedure for the Determination and Recognition mechanism to have inventory of claims, conflicts, and process of resolving them;
- BARMM cadastral mapping;
- adoption and implementation of the Strategic Roadmap on Land Administration and Management;
- measures to address land data gap including better sharing of data and information among land agencies;
- design for new or harmonized customary–traditional mode of dispute settlement; and
- provision of funding for all the activities to be undertaken.

CHAPTER 8

Women and Conflict

A Gendered Analysis of Violence in the Bangsamoro

Women and Conflict: A Gendered Analysis of Violence in the Bangsamoro

Phoebe Dominique Adorable, Nicole Angelie Policarpio, and Saba Hussain[1]

This chapter sheds light on women's unique vulnerabilities to violence and the nature and manifestations of violence perpetrated against and by women. The 2015 Census of Population of the Philippines indicates that women comprised more than half of the population in the Bangsamoro region across age, marital status, religious affiliations, and household population. Unfortunately, this greater number of women also means that they are more likely to be victims of violence and criminality. Conflict Alert data revealed an upsurge in violence against women in the Bangsamoro from 2013 to 2016. Moreover, more women are involved in violent conflicts such as clan feuding, land conflicts, and political violence during this period, including violent extremism (Conflict Alert 2018).

Gender divisions play an important role in the dynamics of violence and stand out from other identity-related cleavages sparked by ethnicity, clan, religion, and language. Gender-related violence is also a cross-cutting issue in any conflict analysis borne out of criminal activity, economic or resource predation, political contestation, and so on.

However, most analyses of conflict remain ungendered and fail to recognize the ways in which structures of power and patterns of resource allocation shape or are shaped by gender inequalities. For instance, the effects of militarization on definitions of masculinity and femininity and the allocation of responsibilities are seldom discussed (Connell 2005, 1990, 1987; Enloe 1983).

Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, the study starts with descriptive statistics that expose violent actions against women, followed by qualitative accounts of women caught up in conflict. Conflict Alert's 10-year panel data on incidence, human cost, and causes of conflict in Muslim Mindanao, as well as Alert's separate research on gender and conflict, are examined to determine the reasons why women are both victimized by and get involved in violence.

Additional qualitative data from a women's perception survey reviews the understanding of patriarchal gender norms and revisits the victim–villain binary framework that has influenced most studies of gender-based violence in the past. The study concludes with a contextual reading of women's involvement in Mindanao's shadow economies and the newly emerging violent extremism.

[1] The authors thank Nikki de la Rosa and Kloe Yap for their research work on patriarchal gender norms, which served as the foundation for related portions, as well as for writing the section of our chapter on peacebuilding implications. Dr. Francisco Lara helped us tremendously by providing analytical advice, organizing our chapter, and contributing sections on violent extremism from the forthcoming publication Jihad, Rebelyon, *Rido*: Insider Voices on Collective Violence and Extremism in Muslim Mindanao: A Research Study.

A decade of conflict monitoring: conflict data in the Bangsamoro

The Conflict Alert system has been monitoring gender-based violence since 2011 through a combination of incident reports reported to the police as well as media reports. Uneven accounts of gender-related violence and conflict have always been the case in the Bangsamoro since Conflict Alert began harvesting data on gender violence. Figure 1 shows when the spikes occurred and which years exhibited a decline. The numbers began to rise in 2014 and peaked in 2016 when the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao government issued the Gender and Development Code's implementing rules and regulations in 2015.

The Conflict Alert 2017 report highlighted that gender, an identity-based conflict, was the second most common cause of violent conflict in urban areas such as Cotabato and Isabela City in 2016. This was the first time since the monitoring system was established that identity-based conflicts, notably gender-based violence, ranked second in the rank of incidents. The numbers, which have more than tripled, have overtaken illicit guns, carjacking, robbery, and clan feuding, which were previously the most prevalent among identity-based conflicts. Growing reports of gender-based violence accompanied the shift from rural to urban and peri-urban violence this year. However, more incidents of gender-based violence reported in urban areas do not necessarily mean that urbanization is to blame or that there is less incidence in rural areas; the disparity may be explained by the nature of rural and urban communities, as well as existing redress procedures and regulations.

There is a downward trend beginning in 2017, with gender-related violent incidents decreasing from 306 incidents in 2017 to 125 and 97 in 2018 and 2019, respectively. It is worth noting that there were just as many cases of gender-based violence in 2020 as there were in 2019, a period of martial law in the wake of the war in Marawi in 2017 and then the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) lockdowns in 2020.

Examining gender-based violence during the months of strict lockdowns reveals an alarming spike in recorded cases. Gender-related violent incidences, including those that involve girl children, increased in 2020 during the March–May and September–December time periods.

Figure 1. Gender-Related Incidents and Human Costs, by year

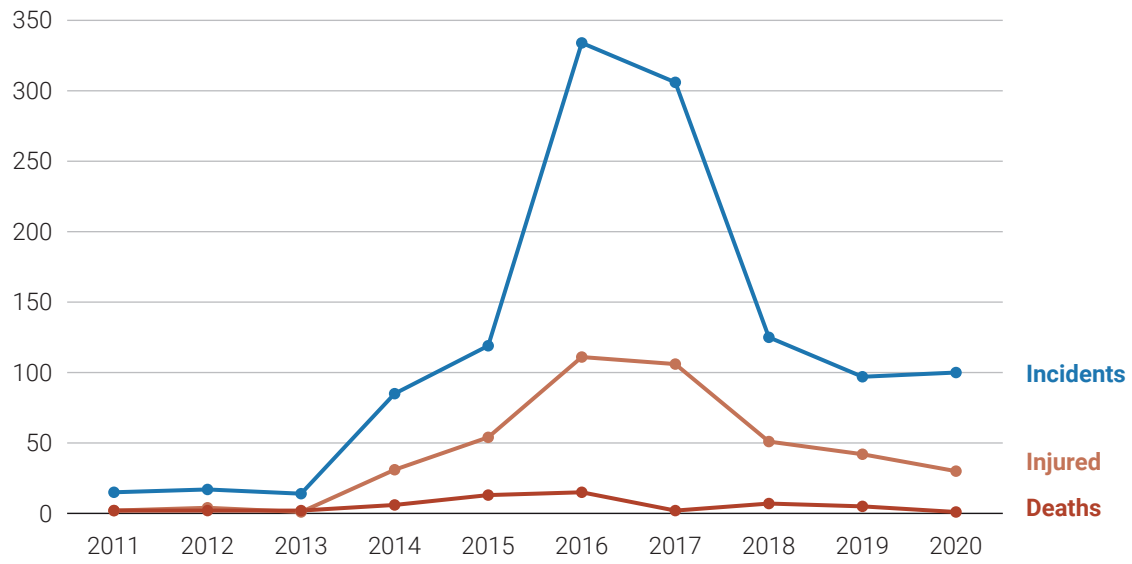
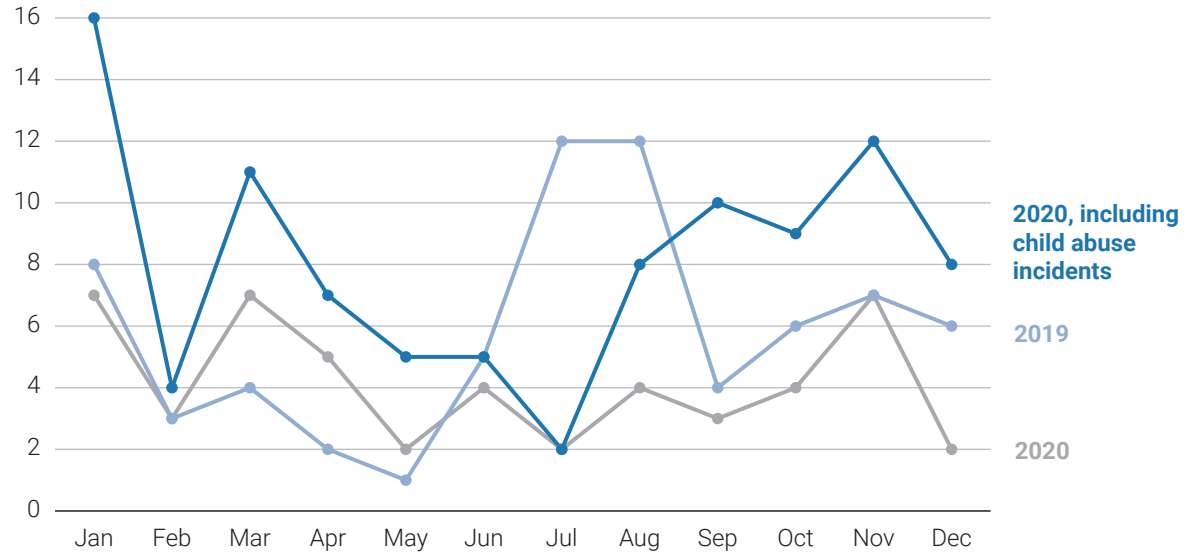


Figure 2. Gender-Based Violent Incidents 2019 and 2020, by month



COVID-19 and gender-based violence [2]

Removing cases involving minors, the number of gender-based violence in 2020 would fall to 50 from 70 in 2019, with higher numbers recorded in March through May compared to the same months in 2019 (**Figure 2**).

The hard lockdowns imposed at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 were designed to shield individuals from the disease, but they had the opposite impact on women and children. Alert conducted a temporal study of gender-based violence vis-à-vis the months when lockdowns were imposed, and the rise in reported gender-based violence cases correlated with the lockdown period (**Figure 2**). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities and weakened social networks that provide welfare and protection, making women more vulnerable to abuse.

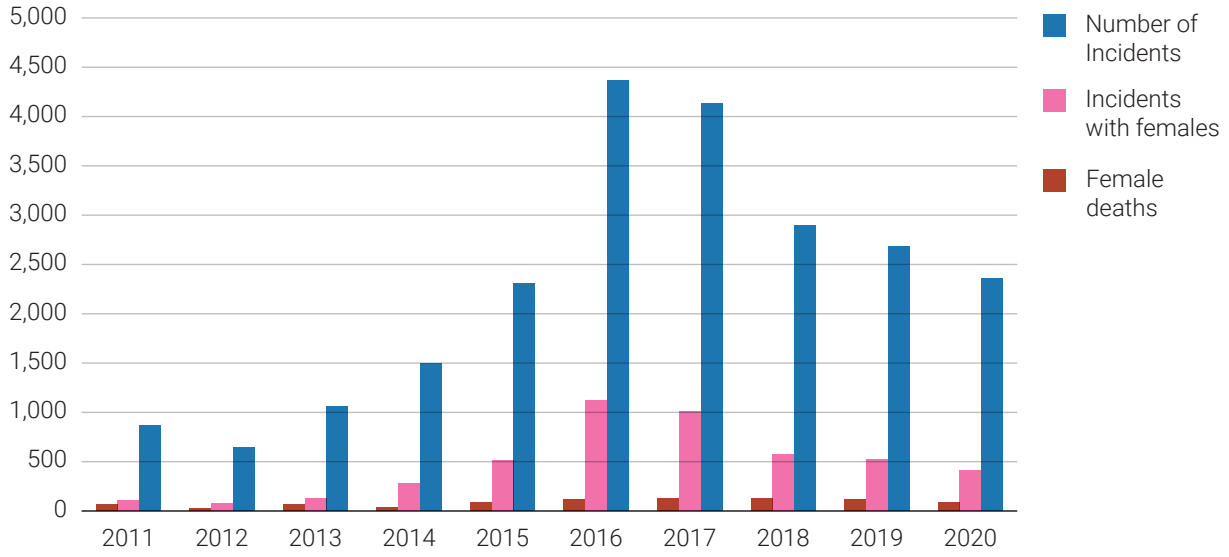
There were signs that the reporting of gender violence increased during the lockdown despite the stigma attached to it. However, the pressure to protect the family or clan reputation, the lack of a system that encourages reporting of incidents, particularly in the rural areas, and the traditional settlement practices that are biased against the victims but to which they submit continue to deter the true reporting of violence against women.

Analyzing incidents by actors, in particular, the victims, provides a way to determine how they were similarly or differently affected by the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both women and girls became additionally vulnerable to abuse but based on the available data, girls even more.

Over years of monitoring conflict, it has been found that police reports on incidents involving women and children lack data on the relationship between victim and suspect and the location of the incidents. This raises the necessity of complete police reports and making these more available to be able to better analyze the factors behind incidents of abuse of women and children in the Bangsamoro and the crafting of appropriate

[2] Analysis drawn from International Alert Philippines Critical Events Monitoring System (CEMS) March 2021 Bulletin titled "*COVID and Conflict Dynamics in the Bangsamoro*".

Figure 3. Female Deaths and Female Involvement in Conflict Incidents, by year



policy responses to them, particularly during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Involvement in violent conflict

The percentage of female involvement in conflict incidents mimics the ebb and flow of violent conflict across the region. It started to increase from 13% in 2013 to 19% in 2014 and peaked in 2016 (26%), then began to decline steadily to 17% in 2020. This increase in female involvement coincided with the increase in the number of overall conflict incidents in 2016 and 2017 (**Figure 3**). Meanwhile, the female percentage of deaths in incidents with female involvement declined and was at its lowest at 5% in 2014. It increased to 11% in 2015, then began to decline again to 9% and 6% in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The percentage of female deaths began to increase again in 2018 at 14%, then steadily declined to 13% and 12% in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

Examining the male and female involvement by main causes of conflict, males are mostly involved in shadow economy issues, common crimes, and identity issues, while females are mostly involved in identity issues, shadow economy, and common crimes (**Figure 4**). It should be noted that "involvement" here refers to any female or male who is involved in conflict incidents as either victim,

Figure 4. Female vs. Male Involvement by Main Causes of Conflict

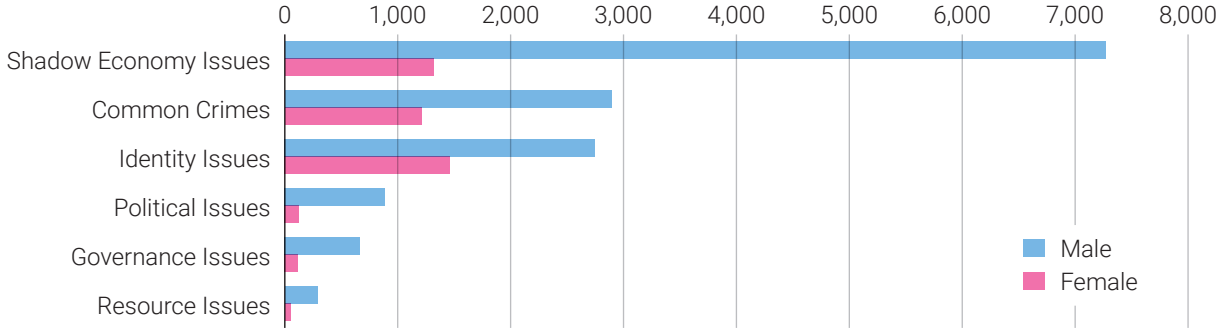
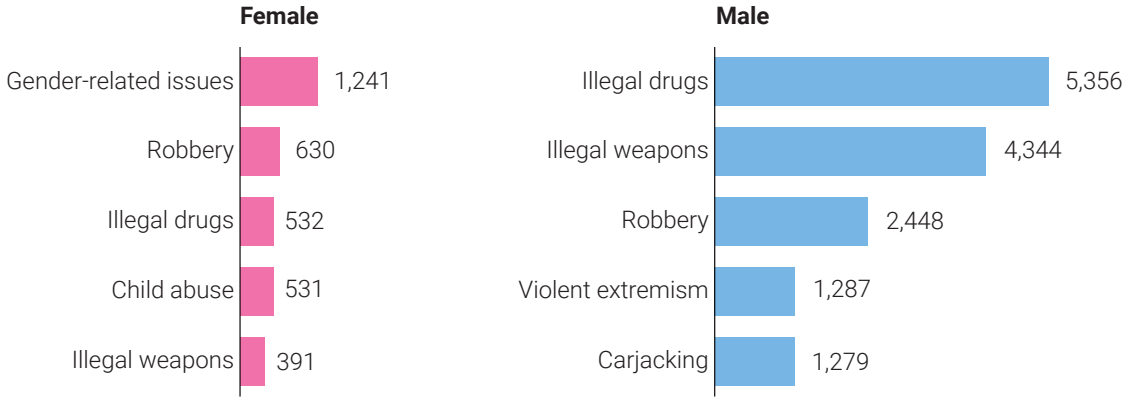


Figure 5. Top Five Specific Causes with Female and Male Involvement



suspected perpetrator, enforcer, complainant, complainant-relative, relative, or bystander.

If we dissect the main causes into specific causes of conflict, females are mostly involved in gender-related issues, robbery, illegal drugs, and child abuse, while males are involved in illegal drugs, illegal weapons, robbery, and violent extremism (**Figure 5**). Undetermined involvement yields a high number for both males (9,190) and females (1,475) that necessitates a dissection of its gendered manifestation and characteristics.

Women as victims and perpetrators

In terms of victimization, the number of female victims began to increase in 2014, when the number doubled from 120 to 287. In 2016, it also doubled from 507 in 2015 to 1,095. It slightly decreased to 927 victims in 2017, followed by a steep decline to 455 victims in 2018. Female perpetrators also tripled from 91 suspected perpetrators in 2015 to 288 in 2016 and declined to 217 in 2017. It will continue to stabilize and eventually decrease to 168 in 2020 (**Figure 6**). This shows that as overall violence peaks, women's role in perpetrating violence also increases in parallel to their victimization.

Males are dominant in both victimization and perpetration of violence. Male perpetrators doubled from 1,200 in 2015 to 2,770 in 2016 and will continue to stabilize to around 2,600–2,500 perpetrators from 2017 to 2020. Male victims increased from 1,418 in 2015 to 2,292 in 2016 and started to decrease to 1,889 in 2017, 1,162 in 2018, and eventually to 884 victims in 2020.

Male perpetrators of violence are often involved in illegal drug cases, illegal weapons, gender-related issues, and illegal gambling. Female perpetrators of violence are also involved in illegal drugs, illegal gambling, and illegal weapons, but these include child abuse (**Figure 7**).

In terms of victimization by cause, female victims are found in gender-related issues, robbery, child abuse, and human trafficking (**Figure 8**). On the other hand, male victims are found in illegal weapons, robbery, carjacking, and clan feuding incidents.

In both female and male cases of victimization, identity and shadow economy issues emerge as likely sources of risk for both. The shadow economy issues are mostly cases of illegal weapons, while the identity issues include clan feuds, gender-related issues, and personal grudges.

Figure 6. Female and Male Involvement, by year

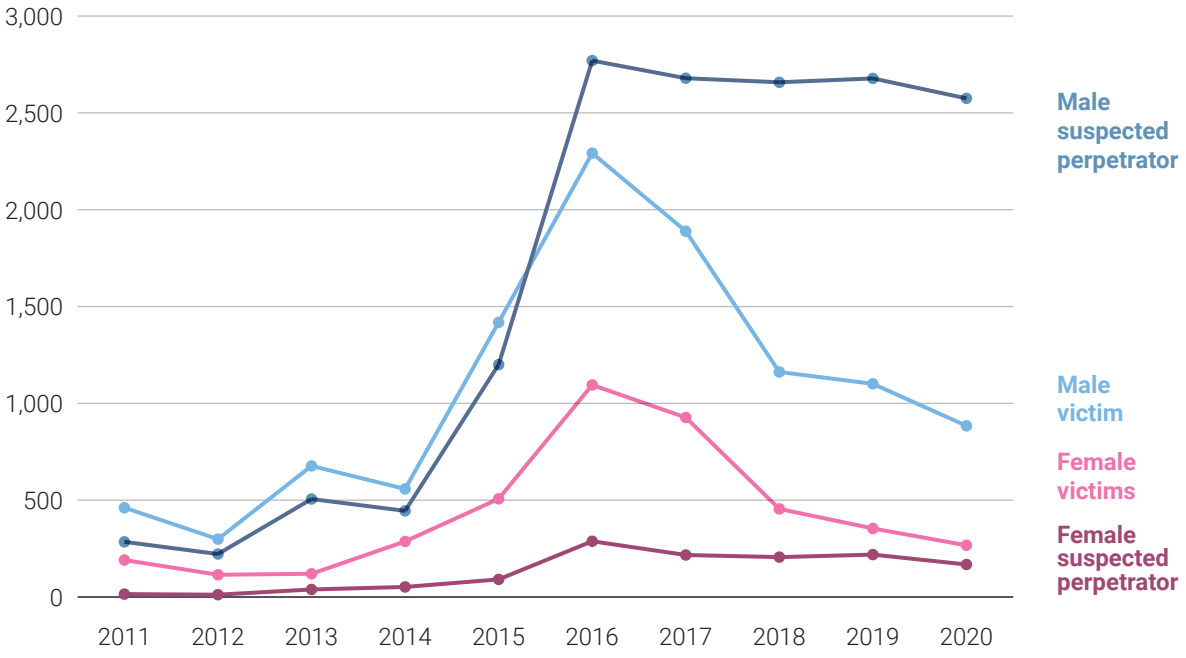


Figure 7. Top 10 Specific Causes with Female and Male Suspected Perpetrators, 2011-2020

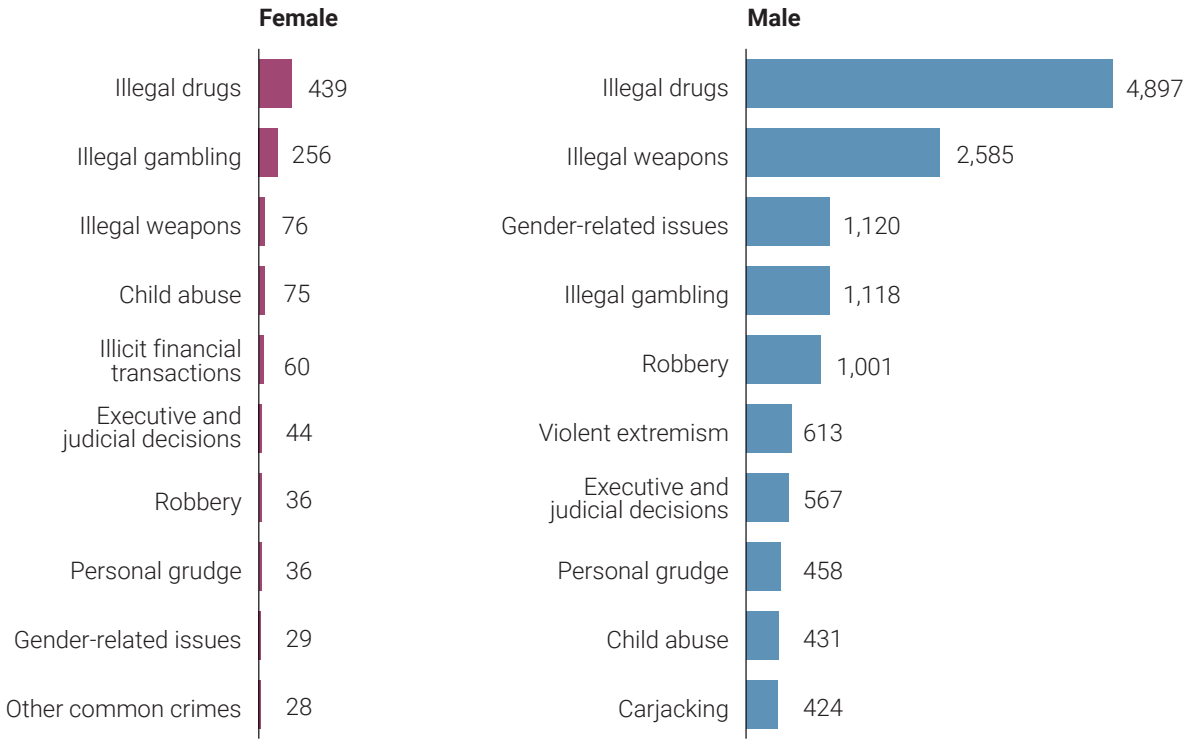
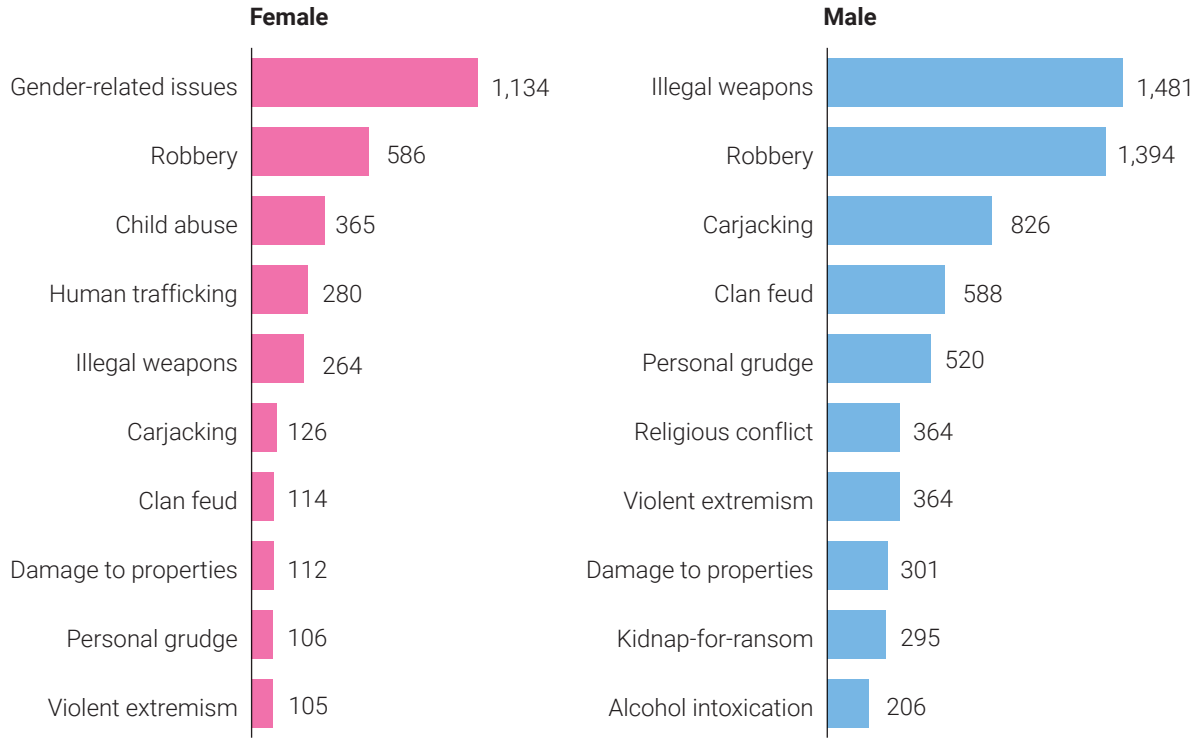


Figure 8. Top 10 Specific Causes with Female and Male Victims, 2011-2020



Women's perceptions of risk

International Alert Philippines conducted separate yet interrelated studies of women's risk perception in Muslim Mindanao. In the first study, a survey was conducted among women from the Maguindanao Iranun Corridor—a dominantly Muslim and ethnically homogenous area populated by the Islamized Iranun tribe.[3] In the second study, key informant interviews were done with select respondents from the Iranun Corridor, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi to generate narratives behind the data. The respondents detailed their own experiences of economic hardships, community-level conflict, and the lived realities of being a female head of a household. They shared stories from the ground on gender-based violence and the conditions that push women toward involvement in shadow economies and even violent extremism. Finally, a qualitative study was done of women involved in violent extremism that drew from first-hand accounts of women who joined the siege of Marawi.

Alert's perception survey in Iranun Corridor showed that women often accept and internalize their primary role as caregivers, with many having little to no participation in the civic space. The family serves as their source of honor. The study shows that women are overwhelmingly concerned about preserving the family's honor, with 93% of respondents saying this is their first consideration in decision-making (**Figure 9**). A majority also said that they were concerned about bringing shame to their families through their actions (**Figure 10**). Personal and family honor plus the fear of shame disciplines women's behavior and is integral to

[3] International Alert Philippines conducted a survey on women's risk perception in the Iranun Corridor of Maguindanao as a component of a broader study that sought to examine the interlinkages between identity, gender-based issues and violent conflict, including violent extremism. A sample of 400 women from four municipalities in the province of Maguindanao was surveyed.

A woman washes her kitchen utensils with water from Lake Dapao in Barangay Porug, Lanao del Sur.
Najib Zacaria

Figure 9. **Family Honor Above the Rest**

"Ang karangalan ng aking pamilya ang una kong iniisip sa paggawa ng desisyon."

Translation: "The honor of my family is my first consideration when making decisions."

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.8%	**1%**	**2.6%**	**58.4%**	**36.2%**

Out of 392 respondents. A total of 399 participated in the survey, but 5 had no response and 2 responses were not applicable

Figure 10. **Fear of Bringing Shame to the Family**

"Natatakot akong mapahiya ang pamilya ko dahil sa mga aksyon ko."

Translation: "I fear bringing shame to my family because of my actions."

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.5%	**2.3%**	**5.9%**	**48.6%**	**40.7%**

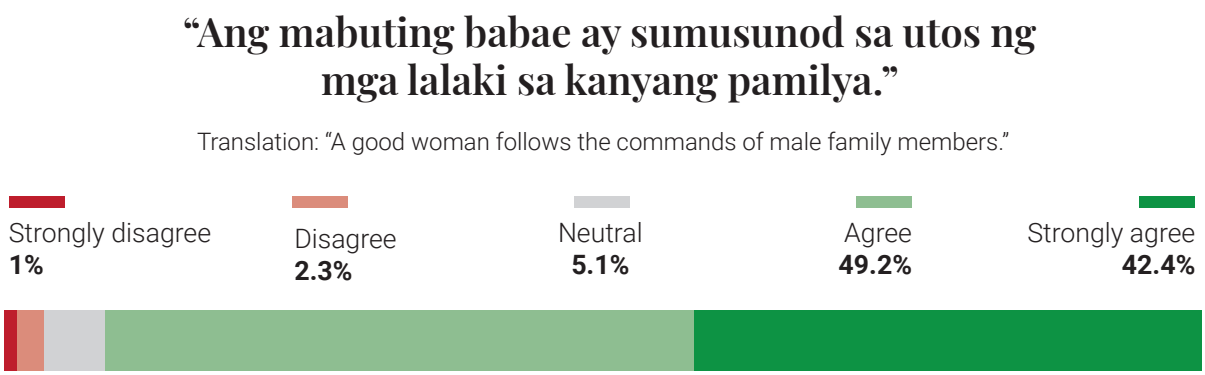
Out of 393 respondents. A total of 399 participated in the survey, but 4 had no response and 2 responses were not applicable

maintaining or reinforcing patriarchal gender norms and hegemonic masculinity. This is reflected in the overwhelming number of respondents seemingly accepting and conforming to male power and authority, saying that a woman should follow the commands of male relatives (92%), including their views on how women should dress (87%). The respondents also point to behavioral expectations such as 'not drawing attention to oneself' (50%) and 'wearing a niqab', as opposed to a hijab (32%). It is also interesting to note that 89% of respondents fear being disowned by their family and the wider community due to their actions. See **Figures 11–12**.

The women's perception survey also found that over 47% of the women in the sample either have not attended school or not finished elementary school. A meager 8% each finished high school and college. The results also indicate high degrees of dropout at elementary and high school levels, which is consistent with global statistics of high levels of school dropouts, especially girls in conflict prone areas. It is therefore not surprising that only 6% of the women report salaried incomes (**Figure 13**).

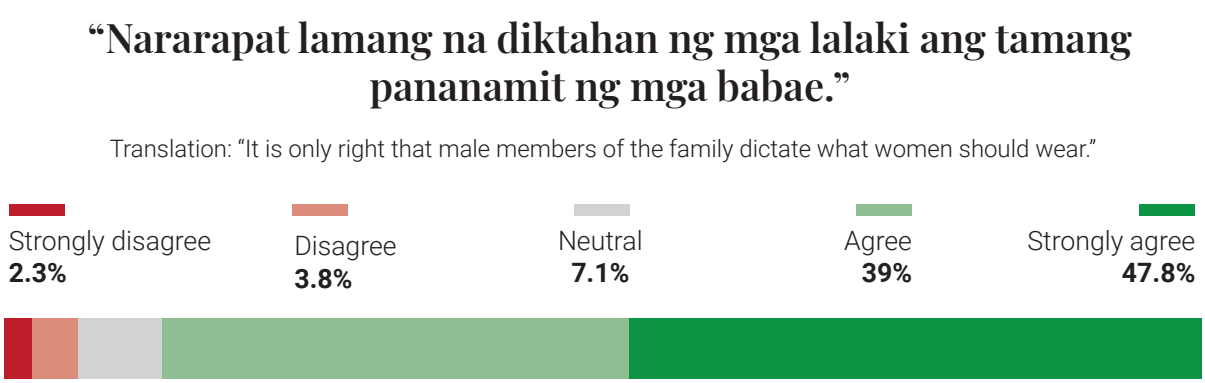
However, over half of the women (65.25%) say they earned cash incomes from farm work, selling agricultural products from their own farm, from small businesses and other various sources—indicating the wide range of income generating informal activities involving women (**Figure 14**). Ten percent of the women also received financial

Figure 11. Women Should Follow the Commands of Male Family Members



Out of 396 respondents. A total of 399 participated in the survey, but 2 had no response and 1 response was not applicable

Figure 12. Male Members of the Family Dictate What Women Should Wear



Out of 395 respondents. A total of 399 participated in the survey, but 3 had no response and 1 response was not applicable

Figure 13. Extremely Low-Salaried Incomes

Meron po ba kayong regular na sweldo?
Translation: Do you get regular income?

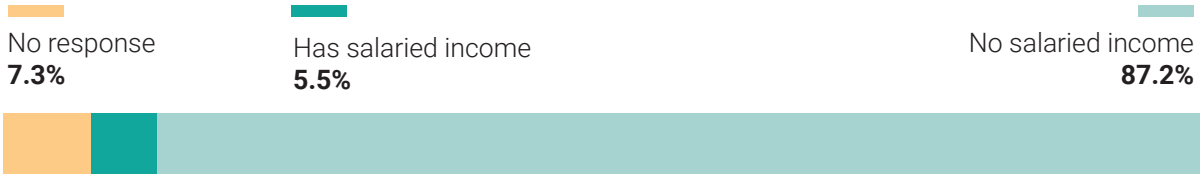
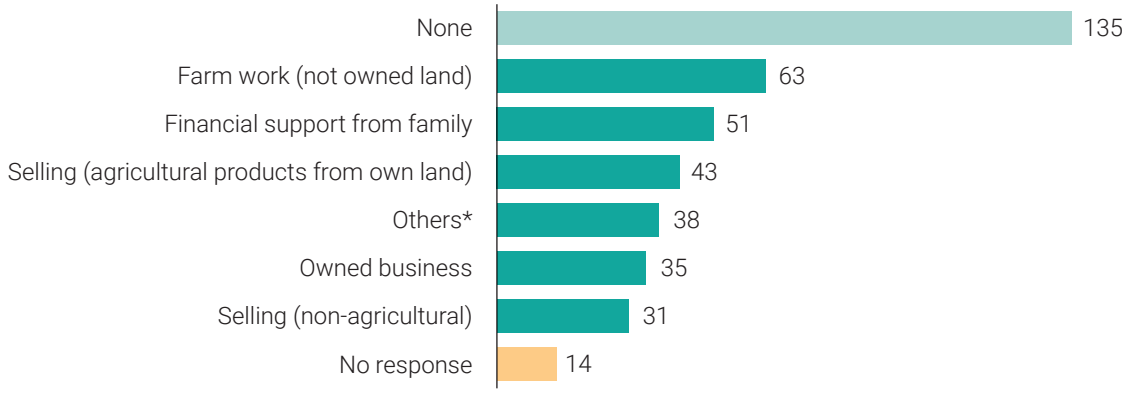


Figure 14. Informal Economies and Other Income Sources

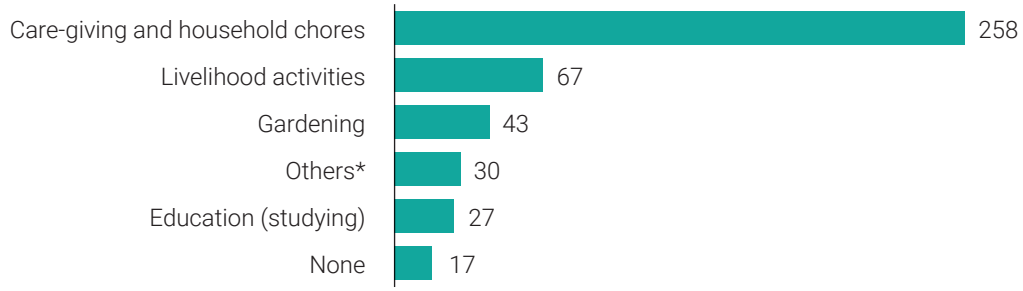
Meron po ba kayong iba pang pinagkukunan ng pondo? Anu-ano po ang mga ito?
Translation: Do you have other sources of income? What are they?



*Others include working as a teacher, fisherman, selling seaweeds, and receiving financial support from the government.

Figure 15. Women's Reproductive and Other Work

Sa isang araw, anong mga gawain ang pinaka-pinaglalaanan ninyo ng oras?
Translation: In a day, what activities do you allot most of your time in?



*Others include health-related activities (exercise, sleep).

assistance from family in some way, indicating the ongoing role of families as women's support networks. Given the socioeconomic characteristics of the sample, it is unsurprising that economic and livelihood issues emerge as the biggest concern among the respondents. The same focus on livelihoods, in addition to basic needs, utilities, food, water etc., emerges in concerns for the community. Respondents mentioned livelihood activities as one of the activities they spend most of their time doing, second only to caregiving and household chores (Figure 15). This reinforces the idea that women in Muslim Mindanao cannot be viewed as 'domestic' or 'private' actors, a majority view themselves as

economic actors with a duty to provide for the family. This can be understood as a part of the process of increasing the largely informal (with low or no pay) role of women in the economic sphere while maintaining their sociocultural roles.

Finally, the additional economic activities that women in conflict areas are engaged in have often contributed further to their levels of vulnerability. For example, despite the potentially important economic dividends brought about by the systematic integration of women in the local economy and the generation of more meaningful employment, including in the informal sector, there must be equal recognition that wider involvement in the pernicious and deadly sort of shadow economies makes them vulnerable to criminal, political, and extremist violence.

Intersections of patriarchy and socioeconomic status

A striking feature in the demographics of the Iranun survey sample is that a large portion of the population are widows (33%), and almost all widowed women are mothers (96%). These account for the many households that are female-headed, with absent husbands, fathers, or brothers standing as head of the household.[4]

Evidence in Muslim Mindanao indicates the acute vulnerability of female-headed households in conditions of violent conflict. Data even suggest that female-headed households are associated with extremist violence, specifically during an extraordinary event such as the 2017 Marawi siege and more importantly, improving life expectancy and mean years of schooling are associated with reduced risk of violent extremism. See quantitative analysis on violent extremism and female-headed poor households and gender-related violent incidents **Box 2**.

Interviews with two mothers from the Iranun Corridor who identify as female heads of their households exposed the lived realities of women with multiple burdens arising from the mix of economic (productive), political (safety and protection), and social (reproductive) responsibilities they carry out as mothers and caregivers. Maribel[5], 42, is wife to a person with disability and has been struggling to keep her three children, aged 14, 12, and nine, in school, given the remote learning setup during the pandemic. She narrates the realities faced by women in the Iranun Corridor whose families are involved in *rido* or clan feuding. Even though their husbands are alive and able-bodied, men cannot go out to work for fear of being hunted down and killed, leaving the sole responsibility of earning for the household to the women.

"When there is an ongoing clan feud, the women are greatly affected because they need to provide for their families since the men cannot go out. Women take responsibility for earning an income, oftentimes temporary, sometimes permanent, especially if the husband dies."

Maribel earned an income as a vendor by selling peanuts and other goods while relying on payments from government social assistance programs for the poor. This has not been enough to sustain their daily needs and her children's education, so she is currently applying to become an overseas Filipino worker to earn a living as a domestic worker in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Ester,[6] 52, is a widowed mother of seven who has taken on the sole responsibility of breadwinner as an Arabic teacher and a Hajj guide in the community since her husband's death in 2017. The recent lockdowns prevented Madrasah classes from being held, and it was not possible to

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[4] The head of the household is defined as the person who generally provides the chief source of income for the household unit, and/or is responsible for the organization and care of the household and is regarded as such by the members of the household (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2010).

[5] Not her real name.

[6] Not her real name.

Once a bustling downtown area in Lamitan City, Basilan has been emptied of people as residents stayed home during the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. **Martin San Diego**

serve as a guide for the Hajj, which was her main source of income. Given her very specific roles in the community, she was unable to undertake other jobs or engage in other livelihood opportunities elsewhere, putting her family in dire economic position. However, Ester is more worried about her children not having a male role model in the face of widespread poverty and violence in their community and the threat of being involved in illegal activities. Describing her situation as a single parent, she says:

“I am worried that my children will grow up with poor discipline because they have no father. They can be tempted by the many illegal and deadly means of earning an income in our place. I keep these problems and worries to myself and don't let my children see me feeling helpless. It's bad enough that they don't have a father, it's worse if their mother is seen crying.”

The stories of Maribel and Ester highlight the newly emerging insecurities and threats of violence in a situation where most men are leaving their villages in search of jobs elsewhere, getting gravely ill from a pandemic or worse, joining clan feuds, criminal groups, or violent extremists. The situation emphasizes how, whether a male figure is present and able-bodied or not, women bear a huge economic cost and absorb a large part of the risks connected with conflict through their productive and reproductive labor.

A social worker who works with incarcerated women in the provincial jail of Tawi-Tawi said that her female wards were incarcerated because they had been caught as mules carrying illicit drugs for a cross-border drug syndicate. They were tempted by the incomparable profits made from illicit drugs in contrast to smuggling rice or other commodities. As female heads of households, they had seen their partners migrate to Malaysia, or lose their jobs, or worse, get killed for criminal or terroristic activities. They were not coerced into becoming drug peddlers, but the lack of choice made them do it willingly to provide for their families.

She reported that Tawi-Tawi province had the biggest number of detained women across the three island provinces. There were more than 70 women detained in the provincial jail due to illegal drugs and human trafficking in the first quarter of 2022.

"Most of the detained women are forced into selling or peddling illegal drugs. Tawi-Tawi is an entry point of international vessels from Malaysia, China, Taiwan, and other neighboring countries. Women are used

Boys and girls play separately outside a madrasah in Lanao del Sur. The madrasah is the only source of formal education for some children, while it supplements secular basic education for others. **Bobby Timonera**

to peddling drugs because police authorities are less suspicious when it comes to women. These women are good people who are just trying to provide for their families. They didn't have enough legal options to earn a living, and drug peddling was the easiest and most accessible. Most of them were introduced into the business by their partners themselves."

Whether heads of the household or not, women in Muslim Mindanao carry a disproportionate economic burden to provide for their families on top of their reproductive roles. Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam write that without viable livelihood opportunities, skills training, or access to capital, women in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) tend to "view their economic contributions during conflict less as examples of empowerment and more as an exhausting strain" (2012, 13). And it is these conditions of lack of economic options that circumscribe women's choices to participate in the shadow economy or even in violent extremist networks.

Lara and Schoofs (2013) explain the prevalence and resilience of Mindanao's shadow economies further in *Out of the Shadows: Violent Conflict and the Real Economy of Mindanao*, citing that the informal economy provides critical employment and livelihood opportunities to marginalized and vulnerable people in poor communities who would otherwise have no access to viable ways to earn an income.

Education and economic possibilities broaden women's spaces

Using hegemonic masculinity, which shapes social hierarchy, as a lens, patriarchal gender norms can be viewed as customarily accepted practices that maintain the hegemonic relations between and within genders (Pearse & Connell 2016). Research done by International Alert Philippines (2022) shows that contexts of conflict and crises tend to give rise to increasingly rigid gender norms and hegemonic gender roles or stereotypes that men, women and other gendered identities are expected to fulfill. These norms often result in the marginalization of women's voices and suppress their full participation in different domains of society. On the other hand, the results also underscore how patriarchal gender norms in the Bangsamoro can be fluid and offer opportunities

to enhance women's agency and promote their participation in different domains of society.

Aside from economic factors, exposure to different cultures and ideas also play an important role in shaping women's perceptions. An interview with Noreen[7], a Tausug of royal status, reveals that access to education and to a diverse set of ideas is important for a woman to feel empowered and confident in her agency.

Growing up in the heterogeneous city of Zamboanga, she describes being raised with progressive ideals and being comfortable around people of other religions and cultures. She never felt forced to wear a hijab, she wears it only when she feels like it, and she has always felt comfortable going out, even on her own. The only time she felt uneasy was when she was dressed in a hijab while in public spaces of Metro Manila, saying she has felt discrimination more as a Muslim than as a woman.

She says the boundaries of what she chooses to do and not to do are structured by her values as a Muslim and as a good human being and not really defined by her being a woman. For instance, she only eats halal food, dresses in modest clothing and wears a hijab by her own choice, not because she feels forced to or because she is afraid of being punished otherwise. She has never felt that her clan or her husband have dictated or limited her decisions and actions. She said that if a Muslim woman feels that she is being restricted by what her clan or husband imposes on her, it is not because of Islam but because of the choices and values of their family and/or husband.

"I understand that my situation is different. I come from a position of privilege because I was able to acquire an education, I have access to economic opportunities, and I own assets. In the worst-case scenario, for instance, God-forbid, I would lose my husband or the support of my clan, I could still provide for myself and for my children. In that

A textile vendor at the Talayan market in Maguindanao.
Bobby Timonera

sense, I am confident to speak my mind and make my own decisions based on what I think is right. Other women may not have that privilege because if they go against their husband or clan, they could end up with no home or no food on the table."

The counter-narrative of Noreen's story as compared to the women in the Iranun perception survey and interviews underscores how gender, culture, religion, and socioeconomic conditions interplay in their experiences of oppression and liberation. Noreen's lived reality shows that the way patriarchal gender norms structure and oppress the lives of women cannot be attributed to religion but to the varied factors of cultural norms, the exposure or non-exposure to other cultures, and access to education and economic opportunities.

Extremist violence and women in local and international perspective

Women are mostly victims of violent extremism, although the data set reveals there were 15 women who were involved as suicide bombers or arrested as wives of their extremist husbands. Men are

[7] Not her real name.

mostly perpetrators of violent extremism, but half of them were victims too (**Figure 16**). There were 604 clash encounters between extremists and authorities, 407 shooting incidents, 209 bombings, 201 murders involving males. See **Figure 17**.

The literature on women's participation in violent extremism generally portrays their roles as less agential, less political, and often one-dimensional. Some researchers connect women's participation to shame and dishonor from failing to live up to social expectations of womanhood, while others link it to the inability to find a husband and the lack of another purpose in life.

In the media coverage of women's involvement in violent extremism, especially radical Islamist violence, it appears as if women's participation in political violence is a product of manipulation and is not 'natural' to women. Indeed, Brown (2016) reminds us that "women can be violent, politically active, wives/mothers, or all three, because women's lives are complicated, and they are complicated in a world where gender subordination influences their lives in many, and multi-directional ways."

This is not to suggest that there are no sex- or gender-specific reasons that induce women's participation in violent extremism. Instead, we should look at the sex- and gender-specific reasons that are embedded within the patriarchal social and political structure of the world that women inhabit (Sjoberg and Gentry 2016). For instance, the wives of the Maute fighters in Lanao del Sur might not have carried guns and participated directly in acts of violence, but they performed complex and multiple roles that facilitated violent extremism. This is especially true in the case of Nadiya,[8] who was not passive but rather active in many roles, imposing discipline among other wives and young women who were with her traveling with the Maute Group, gathering information and other intelligence, and raising financial and other resources for Dawlah Islamiya.

If agency and coercion exist on opposite sides of a spectrum, women's motivations for being involved in violent extremism cannot be positioned as either or. Applying the framework of the 'suffering actor' in the case of Nadiya amplifies the fact that women's participation in violent extremism is driven by relationships, domestic and/or sexual abuse, grief, economic hardship, and caring for reproductive burdens. In short, it is too complex to be labeled simply as coercion or agency.

Other international studies of women returnees, as in the case of the Islamic extremist group al Shabaab in Kenya, shows that many of the women who joined made conscious decisions to join the group to find work or to be reunited with their loved ones already in the group (Ndung'u and Salifu 2017). Only later was personal agency overtaken by coercion—especially when the women found themselves trapped in unwanted situations. Studies of Kenya's coastal towns where families sent many young recruits to al Shabaab in Somalia drew attention to the economic rather than ideological motivations that shaped women's participation in al Shabaab (Ndung'u and Salifu 2017; Badurdeen, 2021). They pointed to the high levels of poverty and unemployment in their communities as key factors creating conditions for the participation of young men and women in violent extremism. They also described how poverty was being weaponized by al Shabaab by promising young recruits with jobs, money, and the means to strike fear among others, the chance to carry weapons, and the means to acquire individual power that enables them to marry or capture young women.

An interview with a social worker in Marawi further revealed that there were several child combatants involved in the siege who were mostly recruited as 'scholars'—they were promised free education and an improved economic situation to become a *hafiz* or a scholar who knew the Qur'an by heart. To lighten their economic load, mothers agreed for their children to be recruited without

[8] Not her real name.

Figure 16. Female vs. Male Involvement in Violent Extremism

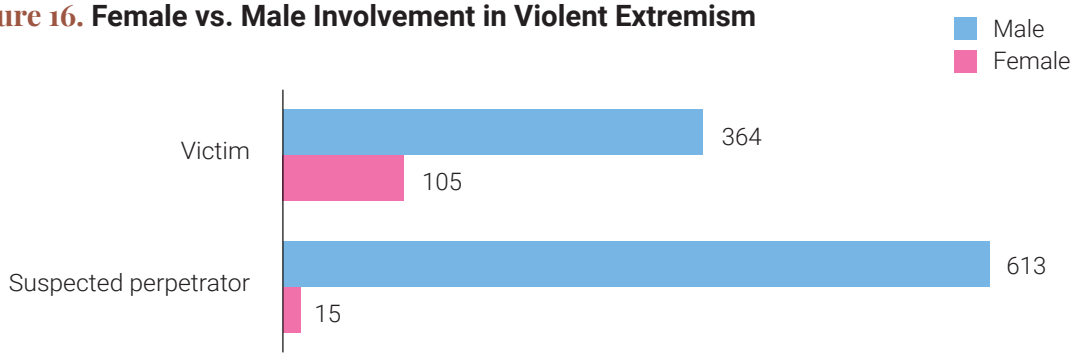
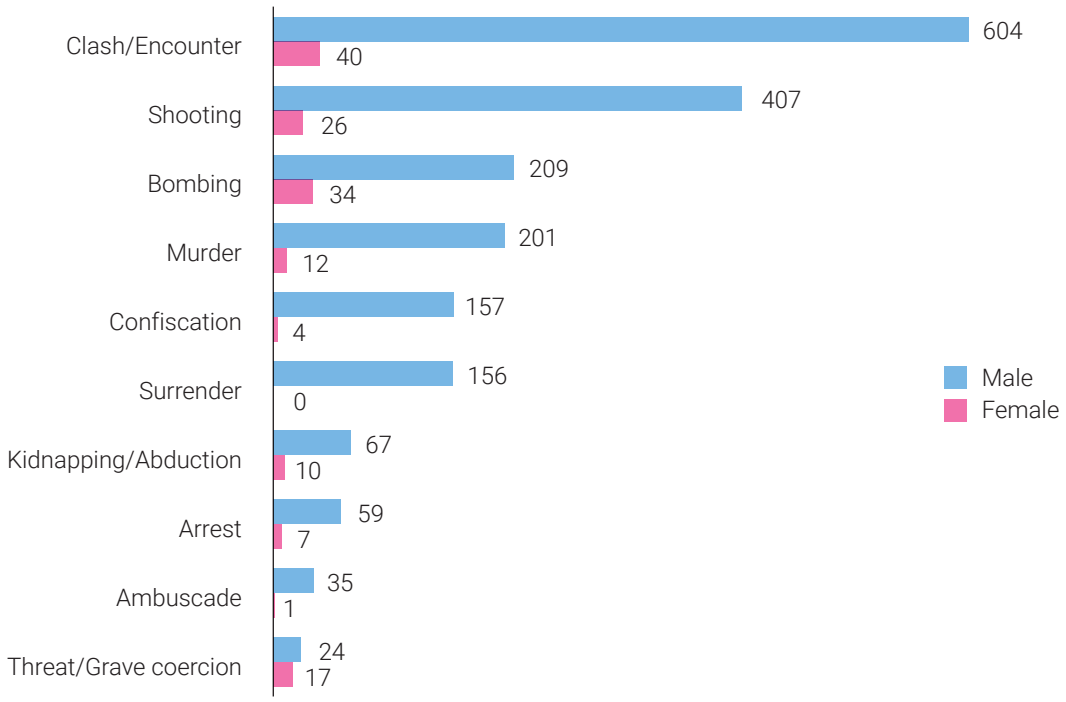


Figure 17. Manifestations of Female vs. Male involvement in Violent Extremism



knowing about their deployment as foot soldiers. Alert Philippines' studies of radicalization also shed light on the complex and indirect involvement of women in violent extremism. In many cases, women were harnessed to provide reproductive work by husbands and family members in line with the patriarchal gender norms. Some of the women also bore multiple children to their combatant husbands, performing the task of "giving birth to the next generation of jihadists"[9] (International Alert Philippines 2022).

Conclusion: Beyond the victim–villain dichotomy

The chapter sought to explain how men and women get caught up in various ways in struggles over power and resources, owing to their varied identities and disparities in access to and control over resources. This allows us to better understand conflict and shine light on the structural disadvantages women suffer in economic, political, social, and cultural terms.

[9] Interview with an extremist-returnee from Dawla Islamiya in Marawi. Name and date withheld.

A bullet-riddled classroom in Ranao Elementary School, Butig, Lanao del Sur. The school was badly damaged during the 2016 armed clashes between Dawlah Islamiya (DI) and the military. Barangay Ragayan is located next to Barangay Poctan, where the main training camp of DI was situated. **Najib Zacaria**

From this exploration, this chapter posits three conclusions. **First, women are uniquely vulnerable to violent conflict due to gender disparities and a long history of violence against women in the Bangsamoro—often hidden but no longer dismissed.** This chapter points to the vulnerability of women who suffer disproportionately in times of war, crises, and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The evidence is overwhelming, and new flashpoints that saw violence against women and children soar during the COVID-19 pandemic could no longer be ignored.

Second, there are valid reasons too, for blending the oft-repeated victimization claim with narratives and accounts of the reverse—the involvement of women in perpetuating violence in places where extremist violence abounds. Women are being channeled into another path that would turn them from being nurturers of the young into reproducers of the next generation of jihadists.

Women have always been perceived as the victims of violence, and rightly so. There is no reason to undermine this fundamental truth. However, neglecting to investigate women's involvement in perpetrating violence indirectly reinforces the patriarchal social and political structure of the world that women inhabit and are induced to emulate. Evidence from a range and types of data sources collected by Alert in the last 10 years offers a more expansive view that indicates that women play multiple and complex active roles in relation to conflict and violent extremism. These roles exist along a spectrum that extends from being active perpetrators of violent acts to participating in nonviolent acts facilitating violent actors, to actors in shadow economies and as victims of violent conflict.

The discussion around women's participation in shadow economies and extremist violence demonstrates how women partake of the same roles and similar terrains that men occupy in the face of violent conflict. Future studies are best served by a more political economy approach that goes beyond the victim–villain binary that could no longer capture the interplay of choice and coercion in the lives of women in Mindanao.

Finally, the experiences of womanhood across lines of religion, culture, and socioeconomic status in the Bangsamoro are not a monolith and looking at the real-life histories of women in Muslim Mindanao reveals how varied circumstances shape the way they adhere to or reject gender norms, and their resilience to conflict. The culture within a community, exposure to different perspectives, access to education, ownership of assets, and economic opportunities emerged as particular conditions that bolster empowerment and agency for Bangsamoro women.

A nuanced understanding of the factors and conditions that shape gender relations in the BARMM, which in turn shapes the conflict landscape and vice versa, as initially explored by this chapter, is crucial in developing interventions that address the root causes of women's vulnerability to violent conflict. While pockets of agency and empowerment exist and should be harnessed, gender disparities and how they interact and are exacerbated by conflict have wide-reaching impacts on the lived realities of women in Muslim Mindanao.

Implications to peacebuilding

These findings are particularly relevant to peacebuilding outcomes, especially in strengthening the participation and role of women in preventing violent conflict and addressing issues that trigger violence in local communities. It also reinforces the importance of addressing gender-specific needs, particularly the need to broaden women's socioeconomic and political participation and access to education, especially in conflict contexts where the vulnerabilities of women are exacerbated, spaces are limited for the discussion of gendered issues, existing structures do not necessarily promote the development of approaches and interventions that are relevant and appropriate, and when there are efforts to do so, the process often lacks women's meaningful participation.

Given the gaps surfaced from the chapter, recommendations for programmatic and policy interventions can be in five key areas: 1) advocating for access to gender-based data, 2) protection of women and children, 3) gender-responsive response networks, 4) prototyping of women-led change projects, and 5) educational interventions.

First, accurate, granular, disaggregated, and longitudinal data are crucial in determining the magnitude of the problem, establishing baselines, and monitoring changes over time vis-à-vis the interventions applied. Advocating for access to data is not mutually exclusive with initiatives and programming that strengthen the protection and promotion of women's rights. As shown, for example, in the different researches cited in this chapter, 1) the methodology in itself is a finding—meaning that the exploration yields an understanding of the different variables and data sets to use alongside the Conflict Alert data set; and 2) the findings give nuance to programming, strategy formulation, and monitoring and evaluation—making more sharp and surgical the approach and hence, more cost-effective and more likely to deepen impact.

Second, is to support the enactment of laws that protect women and children and ensure women model the policy-making process. The recently passed anti-child marriage law, which revealed strong patriarchal perspectives against the law and the threat of gender-based violence against children exacerbated by the pandemic, indicates that a calibrated approach to policy advocacy is crucial, particularly for issues perceived to weaken patriarchal hegemony and control. Identifying adjacent institutions or issues is an opening toward eventually engaging on sensitive or polarizing issues and bringing in women's voices, those who are primarily affected, at the center of the discourse. The methodology and process of advocacy work and lobbying need to be reshaped from a binary approach to one that opens avenues less linear and divisive at the onset.

Third, the establishment and strengthening of Women Action Response Networks (WARN). Women face a complex reality of navigating, negotiating, and choosing their path within the parameters of the norms, values, traditions, and beliefs socialized into. The weakened and unequal access to support networks for women brought about by the pandemic calls for the establishment of a response and welfare network led by women themselves, contributes to more effective actions suited to the specificities of their context, realities, and needs. The WARN is an all-women network that monitors and responds to issues faced by women. As a protection response, it will serve as an emergency response network and a support system, a safe space

for dialogue, and a platform for women to access practical needs such as educational and employment opportunities and information on laws and their rights.

In establishing this network, careful consideration is given to approaches as women can also be purveyors of patriarchal gender norms. Therefore, a strategy of segmenting based on different age groups' needs and strengths so that subnetworks would have different focus and entry points is suitable. For instance, the network would create the space for young women to discuss important issues they cannot freely discuss with others, help them gain access to education and health information, and possibly create a dialogue platform anchored on a specific issue (e.g., anti-child marriage law). On the other hand, for older women who would have different needs and have more power and agency, their network would be more strategic if geared towards advocacy and policy development on key issues such as health, women's socioeconomic participation, and the protection of women's rights. While this indicates that different age groups will be segmented, there is also a need for cross-learning and mentoring on common issues between young and older women to promote understanding of different perspectives and explore where their needs intersect and collaborate.

Fourth, prototyping of change projects that improve women's socioeconomic and political capacities. Linked to the establishment of women networks where women can gather to discuss and help one another on issues unique to their sector and context, this can be taken a step further by giving women an opportunity to incubate and implement small-scale projects that will directly address their needs and concerns. Alert Philippines' previous experience with women-led change projects supported various small-scale issue-based activities but with a high-level impact objective vis-à-vis improvement of confidence, effective voice, and strengthening their position in the community. These include capacity-building on business and social enterprise towards producing income to support and pay Madrasah teachers who are moderate and progressive to counter violent extremist ideologies; young women management of potable water systems to establish their important role in community life, cross-cultural exchanges, and bridging local government and minority communities in urban areas to increase marginalized women's access to social protection services, among others. This area of work can be further expanded and linked with the WARN.

Last, interventions that help retain girls and young women in education are crucial to promoting their agency, expanding economic opportunities, and exposing them to different perspectives. Many young girls drop out as soon as they are married or pregnant and helping them carry on with their schooling may be a matter of providing access to childcare support for mothers—lobbying with local governments to provide day care centers or partnering with civil society organizations to mobilize resources and capacity. Besides providing better economic opportunities, education is also an ideological influence that can shape young girls' understanding and navigation of these gender norms. The Department of Education can engage in intercultural and inter-religious activities geared toward 'understanding the other'. Education will play an important role in widening perspectives if exposed to different views and cultures, leading to the adoption, or at the very least, bringing to the public discourse more flexible and egalitarian gender roles.

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BOX 2

Extremist Violence, Female-Headed Households, and Other Socioeconomic Determinants:

The Case of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

Donnie-Paul C. Tan and Kenmore B. Espinoza

Gender is one of the most prominently used correlates of crime incidence. Various victimization reports, self-reports, and official statistics have shown that male individuals exhibit higher rates of offending for many violent offenses (Messner & Sampson 1991). It has also been shown that they are prone to radicalization, thereby leading to violent conflicts (Hagan, et al 1995). In the case of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), reports have centered around the diminution of the Moro homeland, poverty, marginalization, weak governance, and abuses by the military (Timberman 2013). While most of these reports rely on case studies, interviews, and expert assessment of extremist violence incidences, this paper aims to complement this narrative through a macro-level research on the structural determinants of EV with a particular focus on gender.

This short study provides a quantitative analysis on the occurrence of violent extremism in the municipalities in BARMM and how it relates to the occurrence of gender-related violence and poor households whose heads are females. Particularly, it seeks to answer the following questions: Is an increase in proportion of female-headed poor households in BARMM associated with an increase in EV incidence? Is an increase in gender-related violence incidence across BARMM associated with an increase in EV incidence?

Aside from these variables, other confounding factors that influence of EV incidence have been controlled, and are explained in the following section.

Empirical framework

The evidence

Data from Alert Philippines was used to construct a cross-sectional data for 120 municipalities and cities in BARMM. The Conflict Alert dataset contains barangay-level violence reports from police, media, and community-level multi-stakeholder validation groups covering the period 2011 to 2022. It classifies different forms of incident causes such as common crimes, governance issues, identity issues, political issues where violent extremism belongs, resource issues, and shadow economy issues.

For this analysis, the 2017 Conflict Alert data was used due to the limitations of comparable data sets such as the total number of poor female-headed households in the region notably in the BARMM. What was only available to the authors is the 2017 data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) which was

used to calculate the proportion of female-headed poor households in BARMM. An additional dummy variable was also included to capture the quality of local governance in the area. Its value is equal to 1 if the local government unit (LGU)[a] has received a Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) and 0, if otherwise. The SGLG is awarded by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to LGUs successfully passing all assessment areas to include safety and peace and order.

The analysis here also includes provincial-level data to account for infrastructure and human capital variables that have plausible effects on EV incidence. The human capital variables are gathered from the UN Human Development Reports for 2015 and 2012.

Variables used

Table 2.1 presents the summary statistics of the variables used in the study.

Count of extremist violent incidents (Dependent Variable)

On average, EV count averages six per LGU as seen in **Table 2.1**. Out of the 120 LGUs, 64 reported zero EV incidents in 2017. Meanwhile, Marawi City reported 445 EV incidents, the highest EV count among the BARMM LGUs. The high EV count coincides with the Marawi Siege during that year. **Table 2.2** classifies the distribution of female-headed poor households into thirds. The distribution is classified into thirds to segregate the effects of those that fall below or above the median household—a commonly used approach in income inequality studies (Gelman & Su 2010, Blackburn & Bloom 1987). Among the LGUs that fall under the lower and middle thirds of the proportion of female-headed poor households, the average EV incidence is approximately 2.0. LGUs belonging to the upper third, however, have a significantly higher average extremist violence incidence of 12.5. Note that Marawi City belongs to the upper third, which

Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Means	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Extremist Violence Count	120	5.733	40.723	0	445
Municipality-Level Independent Variables					
Proportion of Female-headed Poor	120	12.172	4.836	3.6	30.1
Gender-Related Violence Count	120	2.542	10.784	0	92
Population Density	120	186.858	296.373	20.237	2439.943
Province-Level Independent Variables					
Number of Police Stations	120	29.75	11.525	11	40
Mean Years of Schooling, 2015	120	6.968	0.56	6.3	7.6
Life Expectancy (in years), 2015	120	66.95	2.357	62.6	69
Income per Capita (NCR PPP, log-transformed), 2015	120	10.273	0.182	10.074	10.616
Gini Coefficient (0-1), 2015	120	0.294	0.041	0.229	0.34

[a] Throughout this study, LGUs refer to the cities and municipalities of BARMM.

Table 2.2. Average of Extremist Violence Incidents by Proportion of Female-headed Poor Households in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2017

Proportion of Female-headed Poor Households	Definition	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Lower Third	LGUs with proportion less than 9.7%	38	2.368	6.331	0	37
Middle Third	LGUs with proportion greater than or equal to 9.7% but less than 14.1%	41	2.049	4.171	0	23
Upper Third	LGUs with proportion greater than or equal to 14.1% but less than 30.1%	41	12.537	69.333	0	445

Note: 9.7% represents the lower bound of the middle third pertaining to the distribution of the variable (Proportion of female-headed poor household). Likewise, 14.1% represents its upper bound. The variable ranges from 0% to 30.1%.

Table 2.3. Average of Extremist Violence Incidents by Proportion of Female-headed Poor Households in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (excludes Marawi City), 2017

Proportion of Female-headed Poor Households	Definition	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Lower Third	LGUs with proportion less than 9.7%	38	2.368	6.331	0	37
Middle Third	LGUs with proportion greater than or equal to 9.7% but less than 14.1%	41	2.049	4.171	0	23
Upper Third	LGUs with proportion greater than or equal to 14.1% but less than 30.1%	41	1.725	3.856	0	22

Note: 9.7% represents the lower bound of the middle third pertaining to the distribution of the variable (Proportion of female-headed poor household). Likewise, 14.1% represents its upper bound. The variable ranges from 0% to 30.1%.

posted a higher-than-usual EV count in 2017. Marawi was classified as an outlier considering that the 2017 siege had notable effects on the overall distribution of variables. Table 2.3 shows the average EV incidents excluding Marawi City. Removing Marawi City from the sample, LGUs with more female-headed households exhibited lower average EV count. As such, average EV incidence in the upper third shows the lowest, followed by the middle third, whereas the lower

third posts the highest mean EV incidents. To mitigate possible outlier bias, the analysis uses a sample including all LGUs, and a sample of all LGUs, but drops observations from Marawi City.

Key independent variables

One key variable is the proportion of poor households headed by females to the total number of households. **Table 2.1** shows that the average proportion of female-headed poor households is 12.17%. This is a relatively low figure compared to the other regions in the country (see DSWD statistics). Among the BARMM LGUs, Pualas in Lanao del Sur records the highest proportion of female-headed poor households while the lowest proportion is found in Mangudadatu, Maguindanao. On the other hand, there is an average of three gender-related incidents per locality in 2017, where Cotabato City reports the highest number of gender-related violence with 92 counts.

Control variables

Two municipal-level control variables are used in this study. One is the population density of the LGU. As shown in Table 1, on average, the population density of an LGU in BARMM is 186.86 individuals per square kilometer (km). The densest LGU in BARMM in 2017 is Marawi City with 2,440 individuals per square km.

In 2017, only 20 out of 120 BARMM LGUs received the SGLG from the DILG. This means that these LGUs passed all assessment areas including safety and peace and order. In addition, the number of police stations completed in 2017 per province was used to capture the contribution of infrastructure dedicated to securing peace in these areas. Studies have shown that human capital variables deter extremism. (Buonanno 2003, Imrohoroglu, et al 2006). Hence, the analysis included province-level variables from the UN Human Development Reports. In this study, the mean years of schooling, life expectancy, as well as income per capita (adjusted on National Capital Region purchasing power parity) were examined. These three variables form the basis of the Human Development Index (HDI) as a measure of well-being. According to these variables, Tawi-Tawi reports the highest HDI with 0.471 while Lanao del Sur has the lowest HDI among the five BARMM provinces with 0.248. The HDI variables are from 2015 to mitigate contemporaneous bias as human capital investments persist over time. As an alternative set of control variables, the same specification was ran, but the difference of the 2015 and 2012 HDI figures was used to account for the effects of improvement, instead of the level, of human capital in these areas to EV incidence.

Methodology

Four models are employed in this study: 1) ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, 2) Poisson regression, 3) negative binomial regression, and 4) zero-inflated Poisson (ZIP) regression. Note that the nature of the data makes OLS not suitable for the regression model since the dependent variable is a count data and implementing this model may cause bias in the estimates. Nevertheless, the OLS model was still included as a baseline. The rest of the regression models are often used in modeling count data. In the case of ZIP, it is commonly used when the dependent count data has many zero observations. In this case, 64 LGUs recorded zero EV incidents. To account for these excess zeros, population density was used. Since Marawi City appears to be an outlier in the data set, the analysis runs two regressions: one including all LGUs, including Marawi, while the other excludes Marawi City.

Results and discussion

Table 2.4 presents the regression results. Columns 2, 3, 6 and 7 show that the proportion of female-headed poor households has no significant effect on the count of EV incidence. Controlling for the zero observation, column 8 shows no significant relationship between the count EV incidence on

LGUs with a high proportion of female-headed poor households. Accounting for the Marawi siege in 2017, however, column 4 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship (at 10% level of significance) between the two variables. This implies that, in an extraordinary event such as the Marawi siege, female-headed poor households become more vulnerable to EV (Rothermel 2020). A time-series or panel data analysis can provide further causal evidence to this relationship.

Gender-related violence, on the other hand, is negatively related to EV count. This perhaps means that the cause of conflicts in the region are mutually exclusive, i.e., violent incidents are predicated with either extremism or gender discrimination but not both. However, actors committing gender-related violence may also be prone to committing EV at different times, though this cannot be captured within one period. Other forms of analysis may be needed to support the alternative claim.

With regard to the control variables, there is no significant relationship between EV incidence and good LGU governance, as the coefficients are insignificant in all specifications. Likewise, policing infrastructure is found to have a negligible impact on EV incidence.

Population-dense LGUs are found to be positively and significantly associated with extremist attacks in 2017 (columns 2 and 3). Since Marawi City is the most population-dense in BARMM, dropping Marawi City in the regression (see columns 5 to 7) results in an insignificant relationship. That is, controlling for the 2017 siege, EV does not necessarily take place in population-dense LGUs. Remarkably, areas with higher mean years of schooling are negatively associated with EV incidence as seen in columns 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8. This proves the role of education in reducing crime incidence and the spread of extremism (Borum 2012; Stephens, et al 2021; Rink & Sharma 2018; Hagan, et al 1995). The effects of the human capital variables on EV

Table 2.4. Regression Results

		(1)
		OLS
Female-Headed Poor HH *(base = lower third)*		
	Middle third	-3.193 (6.533)
	Upper third	-5.078 (8.557)
Control Variables		
Gender-Related Violence		**-1.771**** **-0.756**
SGLG Dummy		0.179 (6.588)
Population Density		0.133*** (0.0408)
Police Stations, 2017 (prov.)		-0.994 (0.834)
Mean Schooling, 2015 (prov.)		14.30* (7.239)
Life Expectancy, 2015 (prov.)		4.710* (2.697)
Log Income per Capita, 2015 (prov.)		-38.97 (35.11)
Constant		3.039 (273.1)
Alpha		
ZIP First Stage Population Density		
Constant		
Observations		120
Pseudo R-squared		
F (OLS); chi2 (Poisson, etc.)		
P		0.136

Note: Dependent variable is the count of EV incidence. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Asterisks ***, **, and * denotes 10%, 5% and 1% level of significance.

(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
All LGUs			All LGUs excluding Marawi City			
Poisson	Negative Binomial	ZIP	OLS	Poisson	Negative Binomial	ZIP
0.340	0.227	-0.415	1.062	0.408	0.304	0.197
(0.598)	(0.459)	(0.753)	(1.362)	(0.562)	(0.467)	(0.561)
0.722	0.642	**1.191***	1.667	0.857	0.678	0.765
(0.599)	(0.591)	**(0.625)**	(1.498)	(0.613)	(0.584)	(0.548)
-0.0362* **	-0.0228	**-0.0291*** **	-0.0692	**-0.0301** **	-0.0295	**-0.0194** **
-0.00784	-0.0188	**-0.0084**	(0.0440)	**(0.0150)**	(0.0203)	**(0.00814)**
-0.632	-0.347	-0.636	-1.408	-0.637	-0.355	-0.209
(0.447)	(0.473)	(0.419)	(1.182)	(0.439)	(0.470)	(0.389)
0.00279***	0.00268***		0.00323	0.00114	0.00149	
(0.000148)	(0.000488)		(0.00263)	(0.000915)	(0.00120)	
0.00137	-0.0160	0.0282	0.0495	0.0233	-0.00412	0.0715
(0.0429)	(0.0593)	(0.0584)	(0.114)	(0.0446)	(0.0593)	(0.0446)
-1.374***	-1.448***	0.0841	-2.681**	-1.817***	-1.582***	-1.752***
(0.394)	(0.371)	(0.497)	(1.214)	(0.506)	(0.394)	(0.418)
0.148	0.154	0.0172	0.135	0.0487	0.113	-0.123
(0.148)	(0.184)	(0.165)	(0.347)	(0.163)	(0.186)	(0.158)
1.914	1.578	-3.194	5.124	3.079	2.080	3.736
(2.115)	(2.639)	(3.384)	(5.161)	(2.161)	(2.642)	(2.414)
-20.32	-16.25	32.17	-43.47	-23.11	-17.98	-19.31
(18.61)	(20.33)	(26.51)	(50.58)	(17.00)	(20.16)	(18.96)
	0.785***				0.787***	
	(0.211)				(0.215)	
		-0.00675***				-0.00516**
		(0.00233)				(0.00229)
		1.032***				0.601
		(0.348)				(0.430)
120	120	120	119	119	119	119
0.838	0.156		0.209	0.068		
830.3	52.85	13.54	2.422	42.41	28.31	22.44
3.23E-177	3.61E-10	0.0089	0.0151	0.00000276	0.000847	0.00417

incidence by using the changes in these variables from their 2012 standings instead of their current state were also explored. That is, the difference of the three variables (mean years of schooling, life expectancy, and income per capita) were taken between 2015 and 2012. Improvements in these three variables are more robust in lessening EV incidence (Ismail & Mohamed 2019). These are presented in **Table 2.5.** Many of the new estimates in **Table 2.5** remain qualitatively (and, for some, quantitatively) similar to the previous results in **Table 2.4**.

A surprising result is that the number of police stations are now significantly and positively associated with the number of EV in BARMM. While one expects that more police would prevent EV incidence, it may also be that there are more police stations located in areas where EV is more prevalent. Advanced modes of analysis and data can provide more robust inferential evidence in this relationship.

Improvements in life expectancy and mean years of schooling from 2012 to 2015 are negatively and significantly associated with EV incidence. This again supports the differential impact of health and education in minimizing crime in general as well as extremism.

Nonetheless, results show that increase in income per capita is positively associated with higher EV incidence. This implies that richer areas are more prone to EV attacks. Since marginalization is a primary driver of extremism (Rink & Sharma 2018, Stephens, et al 2021, Timberman 2013, Imrohoroglu, et al 2006), actors who have felt impoverished and disadvantaged choose to undertake EV in richer areas to project this inequality. Including an income inequality measure or psychological measures of marginalization may shed more light to this relationship. In addition, the interpretation of the control variables is severely limited as these average income figures are based on the provinces, rather than municipalities and cities. The significance of these coefficients failed to consider the within-province effects, i.e., some municipalities may

Table 2.5. Regression Results (using differenced HDI control variables)

		(1)
		OLS
Female-Headed Poor HH (base = lower third)		
	Middle third	-3.193 (6.533)
	Upper third	-5.078 (8.557)
Control Variables		
Gender-Related violence		**-1.766**** **(0.689)**
SGLG Dummy		**0.179** **(6.588)**
Population Density		0.133*** (0.0408)
Police Stations, 2017 (prov.)		-1.793 (1.416)
Mean Schooling, 2015 (prov.)		85.13* (50.12)
Life Expectancy, 2015 (prov.)		34.35 (28.97)
Log Income per Capita, 2015 (prov.)		-184.4* (106.7)
Constant		-48.76 (34.12)
Alpha		
ZIP First Stage Population Density		
Constant		
Observations		120
Pseudo R-squared		
F (OLS); chi2 (Poisson, etc.)		1.273
P		0.260

Note: Dependent variable is the count of EV incidence. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Asterisks ***, **, and * denotes 10%, 5% and 1% level of significance.

(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
All LGUs			All LGUs excluding Marawi City			
Poisson	**Negative Binomial**	**ZIP**	**OLS**	**Poisson**	**Negative Binomial**	**ZIP**
0.340 (0.598)	0.227 (0.459)	-0.415 (0.753)	1.062 (1.362)	0.408 (0.562)	0.304 (0.467)	0.197 (0.561)
0.722 (0.599)	0.642 (0.591)	**1.191*** **(0.625)**	1.667 (1.498)	0.857 (0.613)	0.678 (0.584)	0.765 (0.548)
-0.0564*** **(0.0101)**	**-0.0411**** **(0.0173**)	**-0.0156*** **(0.00941)**	-0.0692 (0.0440)	**-0.0301**** **(0.0150)**	-0.0295 (0.0203)	**-0.0194**** **(0.00814)**
-0.632 (0.447)	-0.347 (0.473)	-0.636 (0.419)	-1.408 (1.182)	-0.637 (0.439)	-0.355 (0.470)	-0.209 (0.389)
0.00279*** (0.000148)	0.00268*** (0.000488)		0.00323 (0.00263)	0.00114 (0.000915)	0.00149 (0.00120)	
0.193* (0.111)	0.211** (0.106)	0.187 (0.116)	0.344 (0.232)	0.243** (0.111)	0.222** (0.106)	0.238** (0.121)
-6.960** (3.446)	-7.886** (3.075)	-3.210 (3.187)	-12.77 (8.469)	-9.380** (3.721)	-8.498*** (3.140)	-9.089** (3.618)
-4.968** (2.226)	-5.592** (2.250)	-2.197 (2.502)	-8.527* (4.503)	-6.083*** (2.271)	-5.805*** (2.248)	-5.194** (2.530)
26.65*** (6.977)	28.38*** (6.723)	0.856 (8.719)	49.09*** (18.22)	33.00*** (8.295)	30.06*** (6.927)	29.12*** (7.895)
6.657*** (2.361)	7.680*** (2.575)	1.538 (2.966)	12.74** (4.913)	8.199*** (2.458)	8.031*** (2.577)	7.103** (2.802)
	0.785*** (0.211)				0.787*** (0.215)	
		-0.00675*** (0.00233)				-0.00516** (0.00229)
		1.032*** (0.348)				0.601 (0.430)
120	120	120	119	119	119	119
0.838	0.156			0.209	28.31	22.44
1244.1	74.60	24.35	2.422	42.41		
3.65e-262	1.90e-12	0.00200	0.0151	0.00000276	0.000847	0.00417

substantially exhibit higher levels of income inequality than others, which may cause bias in the results.

Conclusion

Results show that LGUs with more female-headed poor households become more vulnerable to EV during an extraordinary event such as the 2017 Marawi siege. Nonetheless, gender-related violence is seen as negatively related with EV. There might be certain mediating and confounding factors that exacerbate radicalization with regard to gender discrimination that are not captured by current data. Relatedly, a notable observation is the low EV yet high gender-related violent incidents in Cotabato City. This warrants further study in this area.

The results strongly support calls to improve on long-term, structural factors such as access to education and health services that have profound impact in promoting peace and development in BARMM.

Including more data that captures the quality of life such as income, unemployment, infrastructures, and presence of peacekeeping personnel can elucidate how these factors reduce the risk of extremism and associated hostilities. Other household-level variables can also be added as controls such as the average educational attainment of female heads in poor households, average household size, years of residence, ethnicity and religious concentrations, occupational characteristics, and other socioeconomic factors. As the study aims to complement reports on EV and gender, performing a similar study using a time- series or panel data set, or perhaps an individual-level survey data, can improve the current findings.

The findings presented in this article should be read in context with other reports due to the constraints of the available data. Analyzing this study in parallel with qualitative materials provides a thorough and comprehensive inspection of the relationship between EV and gender.

Maranao children listen attentively to their teacher at a public elementary school in the municipality of Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur.
Bobby Timonera

Future work

This article explores relevant quantitative models analyzing the relationship between female headed-households and EV and presents initial findings. Availability of more granular and relevant data can provide more robustness to the results presented here and will be explored in the next iteration of the study. Adding more control variables can provide a clearer narrative on the determinants of EV. Below are a few variables and possible analytical approaches recommended for future research, some of which are based on studies by Rink & Sharma (2018).

- Government expenditure, particularly on education and public health services
- Proxy variable pertaining to infrastructure quality such as telecommunication lines, number of banks or mobile subscriptions
- Presence of police/army in area
- Ethnicity concentration
- Unemployment rate
- Migration rate
- Inequality measure or psychological measures of marginalization

Moreover, a household-level analysis can provide more robust findings using the following variables, including municipality controls mentioned above and/or municipality dummy variables:

- Education level of household head
- Occupation type of household head (e.g., agricultural, manufacturing, retail, private sector)
- Number of years residing in the area
- Usual hours dedicated to religious activities
- Number of immediate family members residing in other areas (particularly on urban areas)
- Household size

Other variables such as measures capturing social capital such as trust, engagement in community activities, and other forms of reciprocity are known to mitigate extremist tendencies (Hagan, et al 1995).

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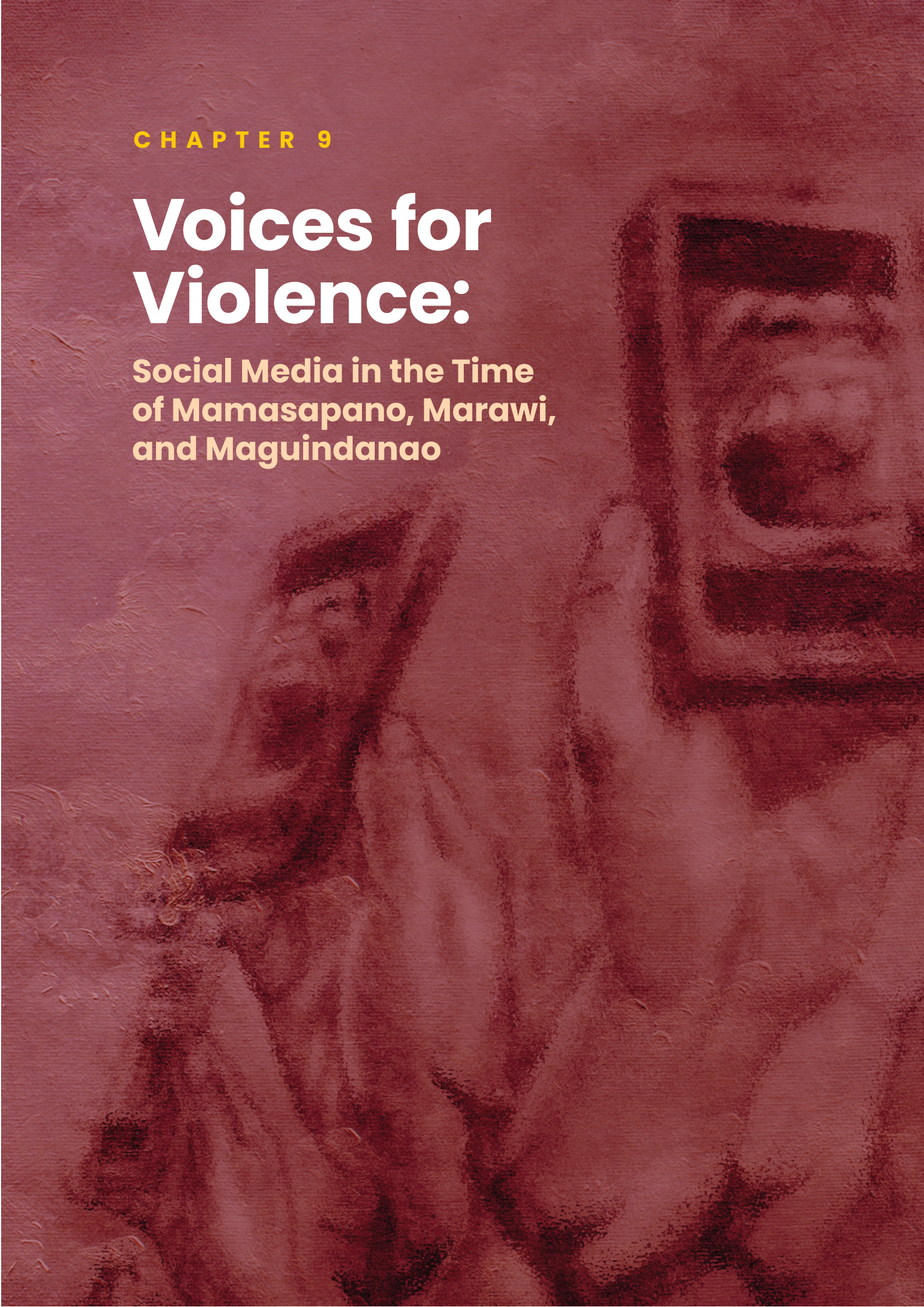

CHAPTER 9

Voices for Violence:

Social Media in the Time of Mamasapano, Marawi, and Maguindanao

Voices for Violence: Social Media in the Time of Mamasapano, Marawi, and Maguindanao

Daniela Luisa Tan, Maureen Anthea Lacuesta, and Deanne Louise Capiral

On 23 May 2017, the Dawla Islamiya-Maute Group stormed the city of Marawi, prompting then President Rodrigo Duterte to send a full military force to respond aggressively against the violent extremists, turning the Islamic City into a battleground for five months.

The death and destruction wrought on soldiers and civilians captured the attention of people locally and internationally. Filipino netizens were riveted to the developments online as news poured out of Marawi via cellphone cameras and texts and tweets.

The victims and perpetrators of the violence in Marawi were predominantly Moro, fanning the flames of online stereotyping against Muslims, more so after the links to ISIS and global terrorism was exposed. Before long, the war moved from print, radio, and television into the internet and eventually to social media. By this time the concerns no longer involved the growing death and destruction, but the fear that the hate-filled and sensationalist coverage of the incident would feed anti-Muslim discourse online. There was further concern that the anti-Muslim discourse would lead to increased Islamophobia and physical harm.

The crisis came at a difficult time. Muslim Mindanao was still in the grip of uncertainty and insecurity after the infamous Mamasapano encounter two years earlier. Other netizens went as far back as the Maguindanao massacre of 2009. Those incidents plus the violent siege of Marawi were three graphic events of collective violence that loomed large in the collective psyche of Muslim people on the ground, and the wider Filipino audience watching the massive human cost and displacement from afar.[1]

The study

An analysis of conversations and popular perceptions in social media about collective violence in Mindanao are at the core of this examination, especially of the Mamasapano and Marawi incidents. Traditional media is often the platform where Moro experiences are picked up and projected on a national scale, while the newly emerging social media has become the desired space for Moro and non-Moro groups to interact and engage with each other without geographical barriers.

The relevance of understanding how people 'otherize' and are 'otherized' in social media is

[1] In early 2015, a botched police raid against terrorist groups in Mamasapano municipality, Maguindanao led to the deaths of 44 police commandoes. Both houses of Congress were on the verge of passing a Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) after decades-long of conflict and peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Mamasapano massacre became a game changer. It intensified animosity against Muslims and delayed the passage of the law by another four years.

relevant in all its implications—how it affects traditional media coverage, how it affects an individual's sense of self, agency, and expression, and how it contributes to ongoing extremist violence. This is seen in discussions about race, opposing political sides, and of course, religions. There is a growing interest and increasing importance in understanding how the online space can be used in a positive way—to equalize voices, to amplify perspectives, and to empower marginalized groups, instead of a negative way—to sow disinformation, encourage stereotyping, and breed extremism.

Both types of conversation online – both in public and private spaces – are analyzed to see how people engage in discourse and form sentiments, the factors in social media that influence these sentiments, and the extent to which engagements and sentiment hurt or harm Moros' sense of agency and ability to express themselves online. As people involved in the Marawi siege rebuild their lives, has the interest and increased scrutiny in Moro lives been sustained online?

This examination shall also look at the different factors that shaped Moro stories and narratives in both digital and print media. We examine the evolution in rhetoric and imagery around Moro issues that have moved front and center in mainstream media and in the many spaces afforded by social media, especially during the years spanning the Mamasapano massacre in 2015 and before and after the Marawi siege of 2017.

Finally, this chapter seeks to answer why certain keywords in Moro-related stories gained traction in both the traditional and social media in contrast to others and how these keywords might contribute to public perceptions and interest in issues. In doing so, we shall delve into how conversations around these two conflicts might be indicative of the stereotyping and

stigmatization of Moro people and communities and the belittling of their shared experience.

Methodology

International Alert tracked online conversation over social media before, during, and after the Marawi siege through mining tweets with R package.[2] Combined with manual searches with different combinations of keywords, we were able to observe several phenomena—how people reacted, depending on their stand on the issue, and whether those with like-reactions would interact with each other or if there were conversations among those with unlike issues.

By running associated keywords through a document term matrix, we further observed if the overall sentiment towards Moros at the time were positive or negative, and whether that sentiment was dictated by certain factors in the development of the conflict.

A few years now following this conflict, the question is asked as to how the evolution of these conversations has been—if the increased interest, both positively and negatively, in the plight of Moros has been sustained. It is explored whether shift in interest is reflected in other Moro issues that have been front and center in mainstream media and in the sphere of social media interest – specifically, the death of the 44 members of the Special Action Force (commonly referred to as SAF 44) in a free-for-all attack where members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mamasapano were involved.

To complement these findings, we looked at media reports to see if there were similarities in the rhetoric and language used. The corpus of report text was observed from Conflict Alert's 10-year panel data from 2011–2020. Conflict Alert went through 22,772 reports from both the media and the police sources that mentioned the Mamasapano and Marawi conflicts. From these, there were only 3,245 media reports. Majority of the sources in Conflict Alert were from the police and only 6% of these police reports were picked up by the media.

To determine whether the same language was used and the same sentiment imparted between media reports and social media posts, and how one might inform the other, similar texts on these news reports were analyzed.

Finally, to examine the evolution of anti-Muslim discourse, hateful and insensitive language, or incendiary rhetoric, we looked at social media posts and tweets. This was done via the social media package.

Facebook posts could no longer be mined due to changes in Facebook's privacy protocol over the years, so findings from Twitter were supplemented with surface level keyword searches via Facebook's search function and using the interface's established parameters (by year, by popularity, etc).

The social media capital of the world

The internet brought about the age of "breaking news" and intensified extreme political opinions. News-making has been 'democratized,' i.e., the proliferation of information is no longer guarded by traditional mainstream media and delivered by trained journalists. With the ability to post your thoughts anytime and where access to the internet is available, the ability to distribute news, promote advocacies, influence minds, and call people to action is enormous.

Traditional media also has a role in shaping public perception and has also been scrutinized in the past for its negative portrayal and reporting of Muslims and Islam. Extremist viewpoints, whether from ultra-

[2] The software name was later changed to SocialMediaLab and then to VosonSML.

conservative or radical sources can influence online conversations as much as the other way around. The good thing about social media is that personal narratives that might be overlooked by mainstream news can gain their own traction. Overlooked and silenced groups can find a platform where they can make their stories known and gain solidarity and support, either publicly or privately in groups. However, the downside is that the same platform can be weaponized to allow fake news to proliferate, or to allow those with extremist views to mobilize, and drive people further down the path of violent radical change.

It is acknowledged that social media can also become a breeding ground for extreme political views. The use of digital interfaces to breed Islamophobia has been documented rigorously. A study by Evolvi (2018) found that online messages tended to conflate their criticism with larger issues—moving into vague, all-encompassing statements instead of attacking specific individuals or thoughts. These posts would reflect hate against Islam as a whole religion and as a wholesale concept, referencing Islam negatively against matters to do with ethnicity, gender, and politics.[3]

These threats must not be taken lightly and are especially relevant because of the Philippines reputation and standing as a major user and promoter of social media. In recent years, the Philippines has gone from being the "texting capital" to being "the social media capital of the world."[4] The Philippines also ranks among the top ten online populations with only 30% of the country having stable or constant internet access.[5] Social networking sites accounted for 86% of page views from Filipino mobile browser users and are believed to have become the netizen's primary source of information.[6]

Social networks are generally considered a ubiquitous part of Filipino daily life, with many using the platforms to keep in touch with family abroad, to form impressions on various issues, and to express themselves in serious discussions or for fun, capitalizing on the potential virality that their messages may generate. Having developed this sort of online ecosphere, it is no wonder that Filipinos are exceptionally quick to take to social media to express their reactions on sociopolitical issues.

The Marawi incident is no exception. The social media traction it received was particularly interesting since Bangsamoro issues are seldom at the forefront of Filipino consciousness. The voices of Filipino Muslims are even lesser heard. Compared to sociopolitical or crime news from the capital, or headlines that involve celebrities or politicians, stories about Moros receive less coverage and less engagement.

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3 Evolvi, G. 2018. Hate in a Tweet: Exploring Internet-Based Islamophobic Discourses. *Religions*. 9(10): 307.

4 *Sg.news.yahoo.com*. 2014. "Research Confirms: The Philippines is Still the Social Media Capital of the World." https://sg.news.yahoo.com/research-confirms-philippines-still-social-033045566.html. Accessed 14 November 2016.

5 Ibid.

6 Garcia, K. 2015. "A profile of Internet users in the PH." *Rappler*. http://www.rappler.com/brandrap/profile-internet-users-ph. Accessed 9 November 2016.

Key findings

Social media during Mamasapano and Marawi

1 **Critical discussions around relevant issues pertaining to development, democracy, and security seldom found their way into the social media platforms and pages created by Moro groups and organizations.** The study observed that conversations about Muslim and Bangsamoro issues are spectacularly low in Moro groups in contrast to the number of posts by buy and sell groups and the daily news. Moro users of social media platforms do not see these internal networks as a space for discussing controversial issues, inviting debate, and gathering consensus on vital issues. Alert has found that some clans have established their own private Facebook groups but these neither discuss political and other controversial issues.

Some believe that technical deficiencies may be reinforcing this trend because many parts of the Bangsamoro region do not have stable access to mobile and internet networks. In a National ICT Household Survey conducted in 2019, there were only 5.1% of households in the Bangsamoro that had access to the internet.[7] This proved to be a problem during the pandemic when teachers and students were forced to conduct classes online. In some areas, television and radios were used instead.

Indeed, radio is still seen as the most effective means of communication in Mindanao due to its wide reach. Data from the National Telecommunications Commission in June 2020 show that there are 468 AM and FM radio stations in Mindanao out of 1,339 AM and FM radio stations across the Philippines.

Two earlier surveys conducted by Alert Philippines among the youth and within a targeted area in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) showed that people in the Bangsamoro region relied heavily on television as their main source of information. A huge percentage still relied on word-of-mouth, and often from their families and friends in getting "truthful" information, specifically on matters pertaining to security and risk. This is validated from studies showing the persistence of conflict and the role of clan institutions in the provision of protection.

The absence of Facebook groups weakens any consensus on critical issues and contribute towards further weakening the Moro online voice on matters that affect their lives. It heightens the economic, political, and security risks of Moro communities, particularly those residing in non-Bangsamoro regions.

It also disables any joint or coordinated effort to thwart hate speech. It is known that online hate speech has real world consequences. Hate bred on the internet polarizes the direct and indirect experiences of victims and communities that hate speech demonizes.[8] Online interactions among Moro users can push back against polarization and prevent the "othering" process that leads to violent conflict.[9]

2 **Social media posts about Mindanao and the Bangsamoro often blunt and dominate local and indigenous voices and analysis of events and transmit biased, patronizing, and oftentimes discriminatory messages that impugn**

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[7] Jara, M.S. and Balinbin, A.L. 2021. "Satellite solutions: Filling in Mindanao's digital gaps." *BusinessWorld*. https://www.bworldonline.com/special-reports/2021/09/06/394261/satellite-solutions-filling-in-mindanaos-digital-gaps/

[8] Awan, Imran. 2016. "Islamophobia on Social Media: A Qualitative Analysis of the Facebook's Wall of Hate." *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*. 10(1). https://bit.ly/3NlGQQX

[9] Alert defined 'polarization' as a state of increased preference or attitudinal divergence between groups on either side of a social boundary (ethnic identity, clans, culture, and beliefs) characterized by a 'hollowing out' of the middle ground and a narrowing down in the number of heterogeneous groups involved.

the Moro. The sampling of data from non-Moro social media sites displays an intensive fascination with the region—its history, society, and politics but a sore lack of sensitivity about local culture and institutions. This could be witnessed in the case of Marawi. "Expert" posts swamped online sites, present an analysis of the situation, stating or insinuating a knowledge of the facts, claiming to be knowledgeable, and eager to jump into a conversation, even though they have not been to Mindanao, much less to Marawi.

In these spaces, the Moro netizen found their voices suppressed and their messages dampened by the flood of innuendos, racist bullying, and violent threats. Most of the comments also revealed the lack of closure among many Filipinos regarding the story of Mamasapano and the real victims and perpetrators of the massacre, especially the incompetence of the government that led to the deaths of the police. Meanwhile, conversations about the Moros focused more on those residents of the city whose lives were disjointed and their communities displaced by the conflict.

A quick scroll through the most popular posts at the time on Facebook shows a decided lack of empathy for Moro voices. On mainstream platforms such as ABS-CBN News[10], the Manila Bulletin[11] and TV5[12], stories talking about Moros asking for peace and a cessation of hostilities were drowned out by anti-Moro sentiments. Comments would range from those saying that an immediate cessation of violence was needed to those arguing that war against the MILF and violent justice for the SAF 44 is necessary (**Figure 1**).

Suppressing local voices also took the form of intentional fearmongering against all Muslims. This was especially true when the actions of the Maute Group were conflated with the actions of ISIS overseas. Fearmongering intensified as the conflict wore on.

Calls for decisive action to end the conflict also intensified—many demanding harsh, indiscriminate, and deadly solutions—without concern over the likely impact of drastic actions on the Moro people caught in the middle.

3 **Social media posts tried to devise and reinforce an artificial identity-based conflict over religion and spread misinformation about atrocities being committed by both sides in the conflict divide, obviously to encourage hate and violent retribution. Insensitive humanitarian statements and gestures caused unnecessary anger.** Outrage and indignation became stronger sentiments as the Marawi conflict moved on. Videos of the atrocities committed in the city were bad, but reactions became more visceral when there were videos of churches being desecrated or when there were news stories about Catholics being mistreated specifically.

Some of these pictures were faked and designed to inflame attitudes and perceptions. Several pictures and videos of devastated churches were spread and credited to the Marawi siege despite the lack of any connection, including videos of soldiers in combat and mangled corpses of civilians or soldiers that were claimed to have come from Marawi. These were deliberate cases of misinformation intended to encourage revenge killings and other acts of retribution. These reports would gain plenty of shares and dominate the conversation outside of news sites. [13]

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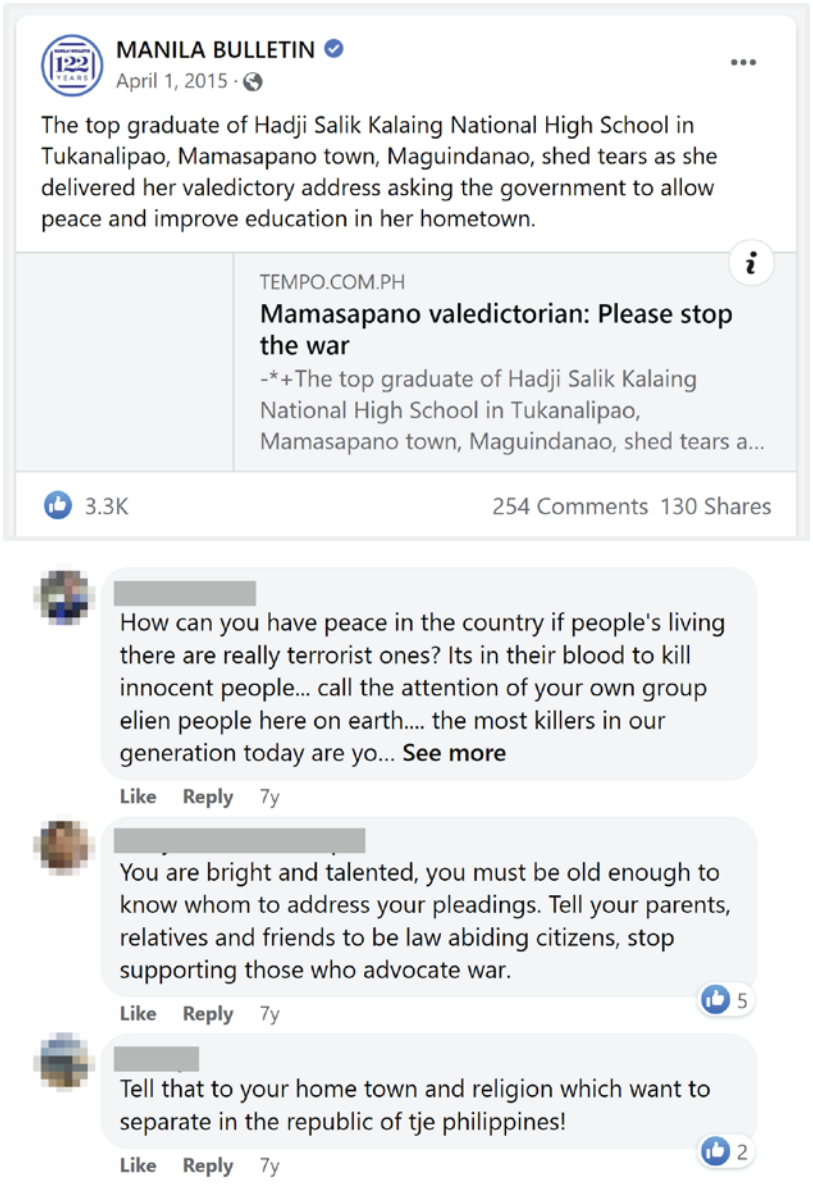
[10] *ABS CBN News*. 2015. "Why Mampasano Villagers Yearn for Peace." 25 March. https://www.facebook.com/abscbnNEWS/posts/10152938045820168

[11] *Manila Bulletin*. 2015. "Mampasano valedictorian: Please stop the war." 1 April. https://www.facebook.com/manilabulletin/posts/10153399158817985

[12] TV 5. 2015. "Mampasano incident should be put to rest, says Iqbal on reviving probe." 17 September. https://www.facebook.com/TV5manila/posts/10153185571196801

[13] This reflects Fan et al.'s study on China's SINA Weibo also found that posts that were angry were more likely to spread more quickly and more broadly, especially compared to sadness, which had the lowest coefficient for sharing. Fan, R., Zhao, J., Chen, Y. and Xu, K. 2014. "Anger Is More Influential than Joy: Sentiment Correlation in Weibo." *PLoS ONE*, 9(10): 110184. https://arxiv.org/pdf/1309.2402v1.pdf [Accessed 10 Nov. 2016].

Figure 1. Facebook Posts from Manila Bulletin on Mamasapano in 2015 with Strong Opinions from Non-Moros



Source: Manila Bulletin Facebook page

A much-used hashtag was #PrayForMarawi, spread by Christian, specifically Catholic groups that wanted to provide spiritual and humanitarian support to the victims. However well intended, the call to action was insensitive to the religious divides and distinct cultural practices of Muslims and Christians and was interpreted by many young Moro netizens as disrespectful.

4 **Insensitive and careless accusations about the Maranao being partly to blame for the attack because they failed to report the presence of ISIS, or probably supported ISIS, alluded to some complicity between victims and perpetrators. Sentiments in social media went from empathy toward the Moros caught in the crossfire, towards a sort of apathy or exasperation as the conflict dragged on.**

Figure 2. A 2015 Facebook Post from ABS-CBN on Mamasapano

Source: ABS-CBN News Facebook page

Bizarre accusations from President Rodrigo Duterte about the complicity of the Maranao in the violence, because they failed to report the presence of ISIS in due time, struck a chord among those in search of other people, groups, or ethnicities to blame for the war.[14] In the case of Marawi, the clans and other political leaders, and the victims displaced by the war were cast as equally guilty for allowing the war to happen.

This was a distinct turn-around from the kind of narrative spun during the Mamasapano incident—that the government and its peace partner, the MILF, were working together to neutralize the attackers of the SAF 44.

On the one hand, the narrative surrounding the Mamasapano incident gave a clear face and a story of heroism that gained a large amount of traction, both in reactions and shares. The same was true on traditional news platforms – ABS-CBN's post with the pictures and names of the fallen 44 commandos had nearly 100,000 reactions (**Figure 2**).[15] This number was high, even by current standards, and even though their active engagement in shares and comments were comparatively low.

On the other hand, attributing the attack to "Moro rebels" also found some traction on mainstream news platforms. Once again, an effort to impugn the MILF and undermine the peace process that was close to finishing the organic law seemed to be on the agenda of netizens hoping to spoil the peace process.

Juxtaposing the media reports about the Mamasapano against the Marawi conflicts saw a more toned-down narrative against the Moros. From the total reports in Conflict Alert, 536 media reports in Lanao del Sur were analyzed in a three-year period from 2016 to 2018 to identify how news in the province were reported a year before and after the siege. A textual analysis was conducted to identify the top words used in these reports.

The analysis found that the words Marawi and Maute figured prominently and were used 815 and 754 times respectively. In these news reports, terms that denote the military and security approaches were mostly used. These include 'military', 'police', 'troops', 'AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)', 'armed', 'soldiers', 'forces', 'government', 'infantry', 'state', 'commander', 'battalion', 'battle', and 'operations'. These were associated with actions that denote violence such as 'killed', 'fighting', 'wounded', 'attack', 'arrested', and 'hostages'. Meanwhile, terms such as 'Moro' and 'Muslim' were not often used to describe the Maute group. Instead, the use of terms such as terrorists and extremists were more prominent in the reports.

5 **Social media posts associated 'Marawi' with a staunch and decisive leader who was prepared to do everything to defeat the ISIS terrorists. In contrast, social media netizens associated 'Mamasapano' with incompetent and indecisive leadership.** The conversations surrounding the Mamasapano conflict had notable differences with those surrounding Marawi. There was similar anger around media depictions of the atrocities committed in battle. Videos and pictures of bloodied faces and soldiers getting shot made the rounds. However, in contrast to the Marawi episode, the conversations around the Mamasapano massacre cast the government in a more negative light.

On Twitter, conversations were less about the Mamasapano rebels or the Mamasapano attacks as a general incident, but more around the SAF 44 victims. Keyword searching Mamasapano would yield less posts and less diverse conversation compared to searching SAF 44 as a keyword. Discussion around

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[14] Lanao del Sur official rejected President Duterte's assignment of blame to the Maranao for the destruction of Marawi City in the fighting between government forces and Islamic State-inspired local terrorists. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. 2017. Don't blame Maranao for the destruction of Marawi. 11 July

[15] ABS CBN. 2015. "A Tribute to the 44 Slain Commandos." 29 January. https://www.facebook.com/abscbnNEWS/posts/10152778423060168

the SAF 44 as victims would often be mentioned in connection with other failed incidents surrounding the Aquino government such as the bus-hostage incident in Luneta Park, the mishandling of Yolanda typhoon funds, even the Hacienda Luisita massacre. There was an equal condemnation of government inaction or incompetent reaction to a crisis.

A backtrack of Facebook posts from 2015 shows stronger outrage against the MILF in Mamasapano than in Marawi, hence the vigorous effort to shift the narrative toward the partnership between the government and the MILF. This indicates how narratives with an emphasis on judgment are potent in negative-emotion formation and expression (Phelan, n.d., and Warhol 2003, as referenced by Kim 2014). It seems that there was little space for nuance about the Moro conflict, and that people were more focused on riling each other up in ubiquitous condemnation.

6 **The airing of grievances served as a strong unifying element in online Moro community-building.** While the Moro voice is not easily found in public online spaces, it can thrive even during times of conflict in private online spaces. It was observed that plenty of Moro online social chatters were happening in "Groups" instead of in public posts. The emergence of these groups coincided with the two-year gap between the Mamasapano incident and the Marawi siege when changes were introduced by Facebook in managing groups. Facebook groups were established in 2010 but it was only in 2017 when the company strengthened the feature. In 2017, Facebook developed the social infrastructure to give people power to build communities online, which made it easier for users to create Facebook groups.

The social media giant Facebook, described their own "groups" as places "to communicate about shared interests with certain people" (Facebook, 2021). The range of "interests" that these groups may engender begins with posts about family reunions, after-work sports activities, or book clubs that can be seen as supportive communities.

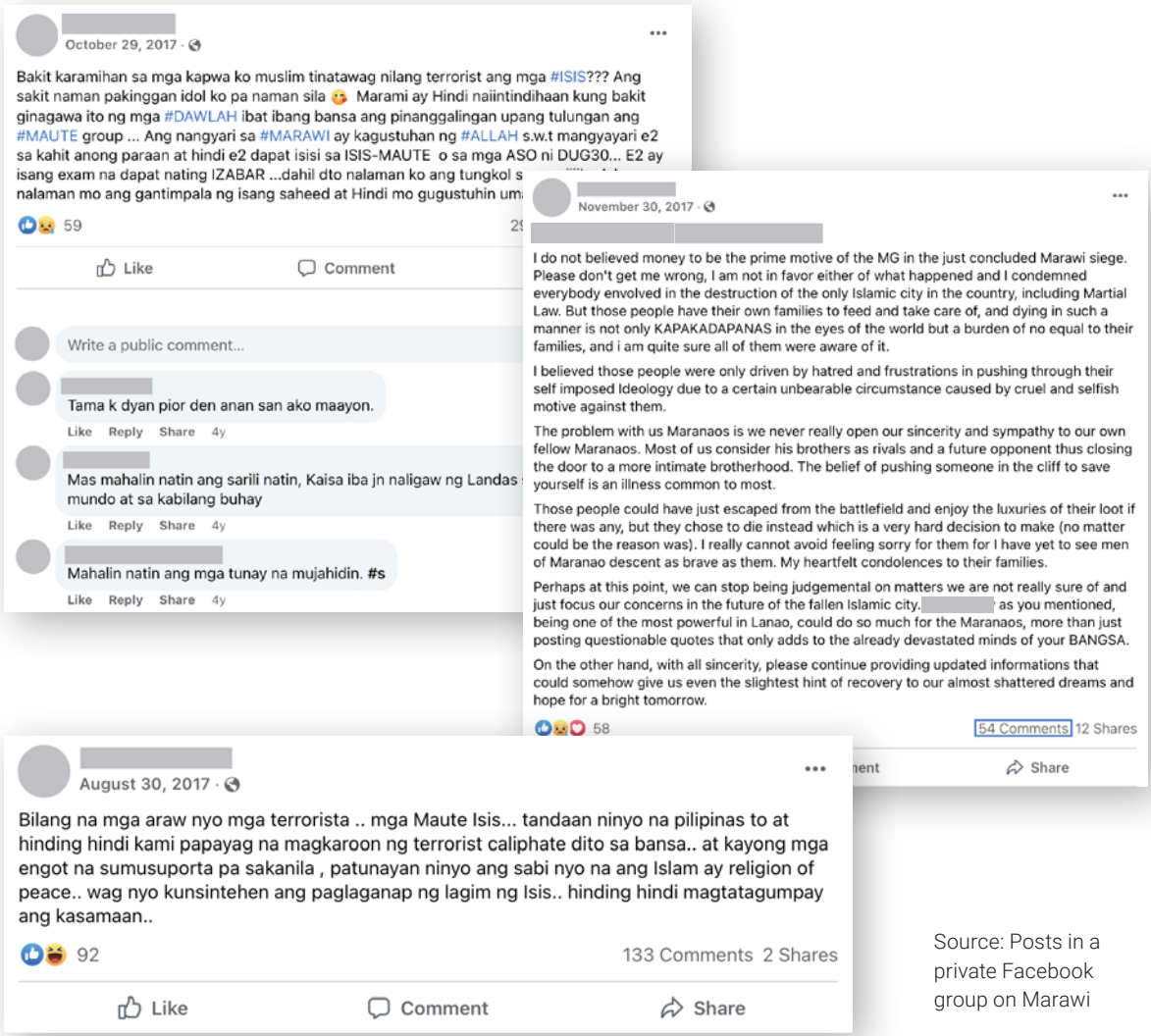
Following this vein, the highest engagement between Moro users online were observed to be in internal groups. Prime examples of these supportive communities emerged during the 2017 Marawi siege, when these groups were exceptionally active in exchanging information and cautioning others against falling for fake news. The roles of these groups were amplified when they filled critical information gaps experienced by the locals and their networks outside the city. These gaps were due to the specific risks and threats that deterred journalists from covering some places and during the information blackouts imposed by the military.

Facebook groups also became useful in updating residents on the ongoing war, especially among internally displaced peoples who were forced to leave their homes and belongings in the city. While posts in these pages focused on giving updates on the situation in Marawi, there were sentiments too of "othering" between and within identity groups.

Grievances were seen as indicators of community-building of Moros in these online spaces. When looking at top posts in these pages using negative keywords such as "terrorist" and "war", opinions and posts differed.

7 **Netizens were angry with Maute and Dawla Islamiya in the first month following the onset of war, but this mood shifted rapidly after continued bombardment destroyed the city and after the government refused to allow victims to return to their homes.** As the war wore on, people in these groups started blaming the government for the prolonged war and the destruction of the city. They saw the government, specifically the military, as the 'enemies' of the Moro people. This was evidenced in posts of some users which justified the actions of the Maute Group at that time saying that the war was by the will of Allah. Some even said that the Maute Group was brave to wage war in the city out of frustration in pushing for their own ideologies.

Figure 3. Posts that Signify "Othering" Within In-Group and Out-Group Identities



Source: Posts in a private Facebook group on Marawi

However, there were also divisive conversations and opinions even within their own group and identity. Several posts found justifications for the all-out war against Maute and lauded the sacrifices of the troops on the frontline (**Figure 3**).

These posts amplify the absence of any similar discussions about the Mamasapano encounter in 2015 and no Facebook groups dedicated to the victims of the encounter. In fact, when searching for Moro conversations about Mamasapano, it was difficult to locate anything through general searches. Other Facebook groups tackling Maguindanao issues were mostly concerned with commerce.

Social media before and during the pandemic crisis

The explosion of internet activity following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic featured conversations and complaints about the checkpoints, lockdowns, and quarantines that featured in earlier emergencies. The pandemic period also saw the creation of new buy and sell and livelihood groups and medical and humanitarian platforms emerging together with information and quick response functions. These groups did not escape the occasional discussion of political and security issues including the issue of extremism and recollections of the Mamasapano massacre. Online activity among Maguindanao-based Facebook groups skyrocketed in 2020 when the COVID pandemic brought communities to a standstill, borders were closed, and lockdowns imposed. Recollections of the Marawi and the Mamasapano incident could not be avoided during the pandemic because the crisis response included the same checkpoints and lockdowns that were a feature of the Maguindanao, Mamasapano, and Marawi flashpoints. There were plenty of Facebook conversations where these control mechanisms were either lauded or denounced (Figure 4).

Buy and sell groups also emerged in Maguindanao and Cotabato City as means to survive and to cope

Figure 4. Facebook Posts of Moros in Closed Groups with High Engagements that Evoke Strong Emotion

Source: Posts in a private Facebook group on Cotabato City and Maguindanao

with the economic collapse. These groups also had the highest membership, with some having as high as 100,000 members. There was one Facebook group that was used for information sharing, but most discussions centered on news and updates in Cotabato City and nearby municipalities in Maguindanao.

To be sure, some conversations about the Mamasapano incident also appeared in closed groups dedicated to commerce and buy and sell livelihoods, community noticeboards, and the like. Though these were not dedicated to talking about sociopolitical issues, odd posts about issues like the Mamasapano conflict would pop up, often accompanied by cautionary remarks about the veracity of the news. It was also within these groups that individuals would declare their fears of a similar flashpoint especially in the SPMS box and share personal experiences of increased discrimination. These insular groups offered wider support and understanding of the risks and problems faced by netizens.

Finally, Moro netizens tended to engage more with local news sources (Brigada, DXMS, etc.) versus national media outlets (ABS-CBN, GMA, etc.). This indicates that they find local sources more trustworthy, or perhaps see them as a safer outlet. For better or for worse, that means that there is a disconnect between how their stories are being told between themselves and how their story is being told to and by the wider public.

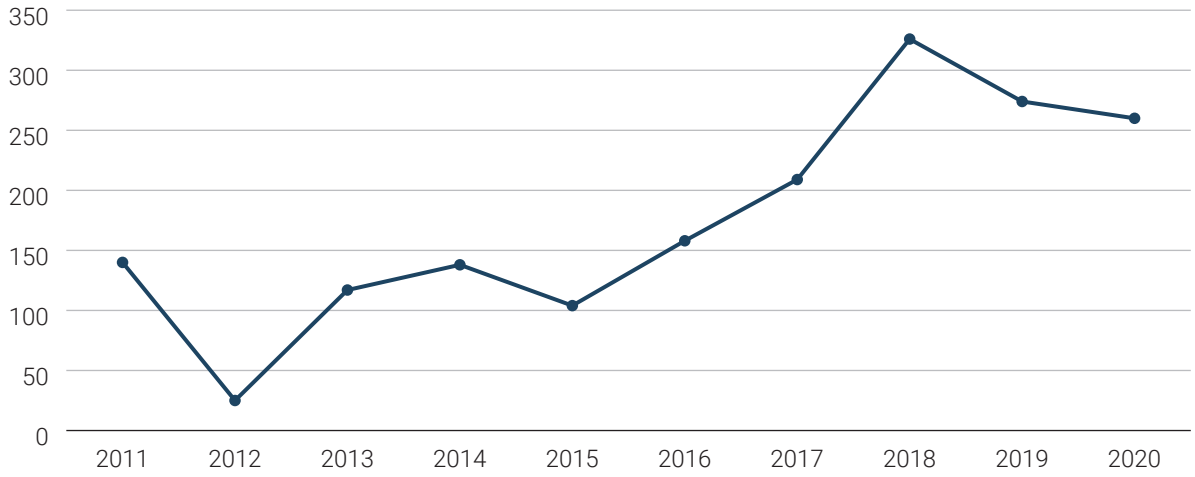
9 **Media reportage in Metro Manila and other urban areas within Muslim enclaves became a source and trigger of discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes towards Muslims. Whether intended or unintended, reporting on violent flashpoints tended to create more confusion and hate towards Muslims**. Stories from the Muslim youth in urban enclaves in Metro Manila showed strong feelings of discrimination due to the media frenzy during both the Mamasapano and Marawi incidents.

Analyzing news reports on the Mamasapano incident saw the more liberal use of the term "Moro Rebels" to describe the aggressors. Both online and offline media also tended to heighten references to religion in conversations about violence. Media reports monitored in Conflict Alert saw the wide and insensitive use of "Islamic terrorism" to describe the activities of violent actors. The repeated use of the word "Islamic," which is also found in the names of both the MILF and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, adds to the degradation of religious beliefs.

Many supportive tweets and comments emerged in response to a more neutral and inclusive hashtag "Mamsapanao 67" that was introduced by International Alert to highlight the shared victimization of both the SAF and the MILF including the civilians who also died. However, this hashtag was overwhelmed by the more popular and polarizing hashtag "SAF44" which encountered more likes, tweets, and online association. It was clear that extreme polarization had set in and the adverse public reaction could no longer be doused by counter-narratives.

10 **Continuous media coverage of violence shaped and was shaped by the ebb and flow of violent conflict, especially in social media, due to the focus and attention given to the actors involved. The relative privacy and anonymity offered by social media enabled witness accounts and whistleblower narratives to blow the lid on major acts of collective violence. The more the mainstream and the social media focused on these issues, the warier or more cautious actors had to behave. Violent groups were forced to lay low as authorities were alerted.** Evidence of this claim can be witnessed in the case of Maguindanao. There were a total of 1,218 media reports in Maguindanao in the period 2011-2020 in the Conflict Alert database (**Figure 5**). The number of media reports of violence dipped in 2015, or the year when the Mamasapano incident happened.

Figure 5. Number of Media Reports Covering Maguindanao (inc. Cotabato City), 2011-2020



Many of the leads about the origin of the actors, their recruitment methods, and their Salafist ideology, especially in the case of Marawi, were gathered by security forces from social media postings and conversations among netizens.

In subsequent years, media reports of violence increased as conflict incidents went down. The Conflict Alert database also showed that during this period, there were incidents that had multiple news coverage and media sources.

The Mamasapano incident was the most important flashpoint that caused people to hone in on the region and generate interest both from the general media and the public via social media. The net effect has been a return to the past whenever new flashpoints erupt, or even if smaller incidents occur. The kneejerk response from social media will be a recall of the Mamasapano. This effect is recycled every year during the anniversaries of such incidents.

11 **The spread of ideas and behaviors espoused by national figures is increased tenfold in social media, especially by troll armies with a clear agenda to weaken rival broadcast networks, spread fake news and disinformation online, and discriminate against certain groups for political, economic, and social reasons**. Marawi has certainly received wider attention because various political personalities, especially the president, either had something to say to enlighten, mislead, laud or castigate, inspire or blame while discussing Marawi.

Then President Duterte's perception became a magnet for rough, unruly, and noisy debates online. He was a divisive figure who inspired hate speech and physical threats. At the start, a lot of conversations focused on the military actions of the army, the actions they were taking to resolve the situation, and the rhetoric and language being used to address the situation. These include, as mentioned earlier, an unfair and callous attack on the Maranao.

Major broadcast stations were also attacked for allegedly painting an unbalanced and unfair accounting of the post-Marawi rehabilitation. News features about Marawi were maligned and even blocked by the government for so-called 'biased reporting.' Posts featuring experiences of the siege victims were ignored or worse, attacked and ridiculed by troll armies echoing the derogatory accusations that the Maranao were "coddlers of

Figure 6. A Facebook post of ABS-CBN News on Marawi rehabilitation in 2021

Source: ABS-CBN Facebook page

ISIS" or were "rich drug lords" anyway who could pay for their own rehabilitation (Figure 6).

It took the end of the siege and the beginning of the reconstruction process for online speech to shift towards a debate between the victims themselves about the sort of rebuilding, and the timetable for their return to their destroyed homes and properties. Despite the insensitive remarks and comments wielded by the president, he was lauded by many from Mindanao for his declaration of martial law that later segued into the pandemic lockdown.

To sum up

The task of promoting Muslim voices to talk about Muslim issues on social media remains daunting. Mainstream coverage or virality is far off when it comes to discussions about the fate of the youth, of violent extremism, or of the newly devolved BARMM authority.

Conversations around Marawi in the past year were ubiquitously tied to the 2022 elections. Though there are stories and online posts that cover the

continued recovery of the city after the siege and the commemoration of the siege, the more viral conversations frame Marawi through the lens of the 2022 political transition, rather than the conflict-to-peace transition that started when the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed.

This is not to say that the agreed normalization project, or the government's peace partnership with the MILF, has been absent in social media posts and netizen conversations. More recently, the MILF's support for a presidential hopeful who did not win has become a subject of a lot of anxiety and fear transmitted through social media about the future of the peace agreement and the new Bangsamoro government.

Yet in public online spaces, Moro voices are hardly given more attention, and even if they are, interaction is substantively low compared to media posts on political leaders in relation to Marawi. While there seemed to be mobilizations in terms of reacting to political posts, there were none to be able to really start relevant conversations about Islam nor were there any unifying actions for the provision of welfare.

Meanwhile, there are groups who continue to conflate Marawi with Mamasapano and the 2022 elections as way to predict a new cycle of violence. Their promotion of certain causes has reduced the Moros into mere accessories in these narratives instead of being leaders and visionaries in crafting their own future.

Breeding an online culture of inclusivity is very difficult especially as most social media sites can easily turn into echo chambers and because the algorithms used encourage close-mindedness. Muslims are both suppressed by general sentiment or by Facebook algorithms and are equally suppressed in public spaces.

Therefore, engaging and mobilizing the Moro is not enough if it is only done online. Using social media improves the perception of the non-Moro towards Moro, but parallel offline strategies are needed to engage Muslims in advocacy and community-building. While traditional media are often used to depict negative conflicts, social media can be used to tell Moro stories that are positive, to the same length and breadth as its counterparts. Public digital spaces can be cultivated so Moros feel safe to tell their stories and to be listened to, to curb fake news and stereotyping and reclaim their narratives.

Continuous media engagement can also be done to draw attention to Moro experiences, especially since stable internet connectivity is often absent in the BARMM. Both national and local media can be utilized as an early-response mechanism to project issues. The more scrutiny and attention in a space, the more there is hope that conflict and violence will be reduced or will be conveyed to a wider audience towards a wider call for justice or aide.

CASE STUDY

Bring Us Home and Bring Us Justice:

The Successful Advocacy and Social Media Campaign for the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act

Lobbying for the passage of a Marawi Compensation Bill in both the Senate and the House of Representatives was one of the many advocacy tasks needed to highlight the unfinished rehabilitation of Marawi. In 2018, a year after the Marawi siege, the internally displaced people (IDPs) were already calling on the government and the authorities to let them go home and rebuild their homes themselves. The phrase "let us go home" meant "give us our life back" and it resonated widely among the IDPs in several social media posts and became a recurring demand during congressional hearings, commemorations, and the presidential state of the nation addresses.

The development of a Marawi Compensation Bill came after months of uncertainty, insecurity, and frustrations amongst the IDPs due to the slow-paced rehabilitation by the government. It became one of the central advocacies of the Marawi Reconstruction Conflict Watch (MRCW), a multi-stakeholder dialogue group organized soon after the end of combat operations to hold government, private sector, donor groups, and civil society organizations accountable to the hopes and desires of the people most affected by the war. The MRCW included traditional and new leaders, women and youth, Muslims and non-Muslims, teachers, lawyers, development workers and some government

executives acting in their private capacity. Their task was to shine the spotlight on the rehabilitation process, allow people's voices to be heard, provide expert advice, prevent corruption and inefficiency, and ensure civil society accompaniment throughout the entire process. More important, the MRCW was designed to channel wider public attention and participation in monitoring the rehabilitation of Marawi in an inclusive and conflict sensitive manner.

Because some of the MRCW members were IDPs themselves, the objective of giving people back their dignity and giving justice to them as victims of war was at the core of the campaign and was channeled through the campaign to pass the Marawi Compensation Bill. Throughout the campaign, which started in 2018, social media was regularly utilized to bring the message to a wider audience, especially among the legislators. Variations of this message were used when social media campaigns were launched every year.

In May 2020, during the third Marawi siege commemoration, MRCW and Alert launched the *#KayaNgMeranaw* online campaign to showcase the Maranao's stories of strength, bravery, and perseverance amidst the constant delays in the Marawi rehabilitation. Using social media in this campaign was crucial to surface the realities of the situation of the Maranao and the IDPs, especially in the midst of the pandemic. Social media then became a space to democratize voices by encouraging the Marawi siege victims to speak and share their stories.

By the time of the third annual commemoration of Marawi Liberation Day in October 2020, the MRCW had spun a new narrative and definition of the "liberation" and "rebuilding" that the government often spoke about. **There would be "no liberation to speak of" unless the government was prepared to recognize the right to return and the right to reparation of the IDPs and the other victims of the war.** This message was borne out of the frustrations on the delays of the rehabilitation process and the absence of any accounting of its costs and of the people responsible for the destruction of the city.

Naturally, this strong emotional remark about so-called liberation garnered multiple media coverage. The massive delay in the Marawi rehabilitation process was exposed and social media became a tool for pressuring authorities to hasten the reconstruction process.

Thereafter, every commemoration of the Marawi war became a painful reminder of the continuous suffering that victims experience, especially the IDPs. The constant media engagement using stories, statements, and pictures from the ground was crucial in putting the Marawi issue back into the public consciousness.

Meanwhile, the government's Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) kept on delaying the date of return of the displaced and refused to declare a schedule for when the rebuilding of vital services would be accomplished. When the TFBM eventually produced a date, they fell into a media trap that they could not climb out of.

Indeed, despite the former President's patient support, and the incredible amount of aid from international donors, the failure to meet repeated promises of a final date of completion undermined the legitimacy and credibility of TFBM and the entire rehabilitation process and strengthened the demand for the quick return and the immediate and just compensation for the victims of Marawi. The MRCW was the focal point and collective action group that increased the pressure on government at various levels to fulfill their promises and account for the utilization of the generous aid from here and abroad.

The Marawi Compensation Bill was starting to pick up momentum in 2021 within and outside Congress due to the continued online and offline

Members of the Marawi Reconstruction Conflict Watch (MRCW) convened a press briefing on 7 November 2019 to discuss the state of Marawi City's rehabilitation and to urge legislators to prioritize the passage of the Marawi Compensation Bill.
Maureen Lacuesta/International Alert Philippines

campaigns waged by MRCW and its allies. The *#MarawiCompensationNow!* campaign launched at the third quarter of 2021 emphasized the clamor of people to urgently pass the compensation bill. Time was of the essence as this was only a few more months before President Duterte stepped down and a new government takes its place. Different media platforms were utilized in bringing attention to the issue. Aside from social media and national media, local broadcast media was also utilized to raise the issue to a wider audience.

In October 2021, during the fourth year of the commemoration of the Marawi liberation, the MRCW emphasized the importance of addressing the collective trauma and repairing relationships brought about by the Marawi siege. Collective healing was added as a measure to be achieved for true liberation to take place.

The continued attention toward the Marawi Compensation Bill was also reflected in the show of support by legislators to pass the bill. The MRCW had patiently and diligently cultivated champions in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Finally, at some point during the last three months before the congressional approval of the bill, the campaigners decided to include in the narrative the right to non-recurrence. Media statements and social media posts began to proliferate accentuating that the passage of the Marawi Compensation Bill was a recognition by the government that the Marawi IDPs were victims of war and injustice and that ending future wars will always need to be accompanied by reparations and compensation for the victims.

In 2022, after almost half a decade of continuous lobbying, the Marawi Compensation Bill was finally passed in both Houses of Congress. For the MRCW and Marawi IDPs, the passage of the bill was a historic and monumental gesture that provides tangible support and full recognition to the pain and sorrow inflicted on those who lost loved ones and their homes in the 2017 war. President Duterte's signing of the law was a true recognition of the State's responsibility to compensate the victims of war and the Marawi Compensation Act establishes a precedent for future victims of war and destruction.

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CHAPTER 10

Bangsamoro Autonomy and the Political Settlement in the Philippines

Commander Bravo (third from the left) and his MILF unit head back to barracks following the campaign parade for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) vote in the January 2019 plebiscite. **Najib Zacaria**

Bangsamoro Autonomy and the Political Settlement in the Philippines

James Putzel

The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL)[1] in 2018, followed upon the peace agreement struck between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2014. The agreement signaled an end to 50 years of war between the Philippine state and Bangsamoro rebel groups that had first demanded secession and later autonomy for the remaining Muslim populated regions of Mindanao.[2] The Organic Law established

[1] Republic Act 11054 (2018).

[2] Noble (1976) rightly states that war actually began back in the 16th Century, when the Spanish sought to assert their colonial authority over the entire Philippine archipelago imposing Christianity and hegemony over the Islamic communities of Mindanao and Sulu. The modern war began with the consolidation of the MNLF in 1972 and its launching of armed struggle for independence against the Philippine state, by then under the martial law regime of former President Ferdinand Marcos. For an account of the rise and fall of the MNLF, its peace agreement with the state in 1996 and its subsequent failure to consolidate its leadership of the ARMM, see Lara (2014).

the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), with authority over territories that voted in favor of joining it in referenda held in early 2019.[3] The BARMM replaced the earlier Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that had been formed in 1989 amid peace negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the MILF's predecessor. There is much hope that this law and the redrawing of an autonomous region can secure lasting peace, development, and inclusion of the Bangsamoro population within the Philippine state where earlier changes in the formal institutions establishing autonomy in the region had failed.

This chapter examines the possibilities for durable peace and development in Muslim Mindanao by looking at how the change in formal institutions represented by the BARMM affects the underlying 'political settlement' on which the Philippine state stands. A state is made up of first, formal institutions, or rules, that set out individual and collective rights and define legally acceptable behavior and procedures within its territory; and second, organizations (executive/administrative, legislative, judicial, and coercive) that implement the rules. This is true for all states, whether rules and organizations of the state are democratic, authoritarian, or anything in between. Looking at the 'political settlement' underpinning the state means exploring the configurations of power in society, which have historically emerged through processes of conflict and bargaining, that underpin the state and over which its institutions and organizations preside (Di John and Putzel 2009, Khan 1995). This configuration of power is described as 'political' because it refers explicitly to the state and referred to as a 'settlement' because it is the configuration of power that powerful actors in society 'settle for', through coercion, persuasion, or some combination of the two.

Since the political economist Mushtaq Khan (1995) first articulated this concept of 'political settlement' challenging institutional theories of the state that ignored power, there has been a raft of scholarship and policy research carried out elaborating a dizzying array of definitions and applications of this approach to looking at the state (Whitfield et al. 2015, Gray 2015, Behuria et al. 2017, Goodfellow 2017) and a fair number of critical assessments (Moore 2012, Bell 2015). One of the problems of much of this work lies in defining what is meant by 'configurations of power' and how these can be coherently and empirically studied. Khan's own work has looked primarily, though not exclusively, at economic power. The monumental work of sociologist Michael Mann on the sources of social power provides a framework to understand the configurations of power in a political settlement (Mann 1984, 1986, 1993, 2012, 2013).

Mann suggests that every society that reaches a certain level of activity will create a territorially defined state out of *necessity*. He argued, "most societies seem to have required that some rules, particularly those relevant to the protection of life and property, be set monopolistically, and this has been the province of the state" (Mann 1984, 184). The binding rule-making concerned certain key functions that societies require of the state related to the maintenance of internal order, military defense, or aggression against foreign foes, maintenance of communications infrastructures ("roads, rivers, message systems, coinages, weights and measures, marketing arrangements"), economic redistribution ("the authoritative distribution of scarce material resources between different ecological niches, age-groups, sexes, regions, classes, etc."). While actors in society at different times have carried out some of these, Mann argues, "only the state is inherently centralized over a delimited territory over

[3] The Organic Law repealed earlier legislation of 1989 that had created the ARMM. The referendum took place on 21 January 2019 in the provinces that constituted the ARMM, plus the independent component City of Cotabato and Isabela City in the province of Basilan. The second round of the referendum was then held on 6 February 2019 in municipalities and barangays in Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato. In the end, in addition to five provinces and Cotabato City, 63 barangays in North Cotabato became part of the new BARMM.

which it has authoritative power" (Mann 1984, 196–198). This is its unique characteristic, the basis of its autonomous power and its necessity. In the Philippines, endogenous processes giving rise to this necessary emergence of a state, were in fact most advanced in the Islamic regions of Mindanao and Sulu before the Spanish colonialists arrested these processes, subsuming them within a colonial state that aspired for control over the whole Philippine archipelago—something completed, at least juridically, only under the United States (US) colonial authority in the first half of the 20th century.

Mann argues that there are four sources (categories or domains) of social power: military, economic, ideological, and political, all with their own "techniques" and social groups (usually elites) who control these powers. Only political power is unique to the state, as it emanates from "the centralized and territorial regulation of social life" (Mann 2012, 12). Military, economic, and ideological power can be created, wielded, expanded by either societal or state actors at particular historical moments. These types of power and those who wield them can and almost always do overlap, but it is useful to analytically separate them when attempting to analyze particular political settlements. In studying how and why what states do changes over time, it is necessary to understand when, under what circumstances, and why societal actors cede powers to the state or retrieve them from the state and when and why state actors cede or seize powers from society. This is not the only way to analyze patterns of power, but it is a useful prism because it avoids a single calculus. It avoids economic reductionist analysis, for while economic power may have a certain primacy, due to the central role of material resources in doing anything, other forms of power can and do play a determinant role at given points in history.

Conceptualized in this way, political settlements are not static, but neither are they easily changeable. This approach to studying the state gives a different vantage point in which to look at what institutional theorists label "path dependency", the tendency for historically established institutions to determine future possibilities for economic growth and development and the difficulty in bringing about institutional change (North 1990, chapter 11). From this perspective, political settlements are always being challenged and tested at the margins, but major changes in what the state does and does not do, in what powers are ceded to the state or removed from it, can undermine or require a major shift in the political settlement.

Political organizations play a central role in shaping, maintaining, and challenging political settlements. They can take many forms (political parties, clan alliances, populist movements, or even military or religious organizations) but are defined as the organizations that individuals and groups in society form to control or influence state power at local, regional, central, or perhaps even 'supra national' levels (in the rare instances when independent states have ceded a portion of their sovereignty to regional state entities).

Political organizations are instrumental in determining what and how state power is defined, managed, enforced, and changed. They can often determine whether conflict is managed peacefully or violently. Political organizations that are built around different ideas, norms, and values, can build or block alliances between diverse interests in society. With different visions of what the state can and should do, they advocate and seek to implement the design of state organizations and whether some capacities or others should be invested within the state.

One weakness of many who discuss political settlements is the failure to fully account for the role of international actors. While political organizations within a state play a decisive role in forging, breaking, or consolidating political settlements, the direction and possibilities of changing political settlements are also enabled or constrained by external actors of all types. All the

sources of power mentioned can be influenced, enabled, or constrained by external actors that wield their own power. Think of states with immense military or economic power, or large corporations whose assets are bigger than some nation states, and as well international organizations, like those anchored in organized religions that can also wield immense ideological power and influence political settlements in any given country.

Another weakness among those who deploy the concept of political settlements, noted by Bell (2015, 16–17), is the failure to explicitly theorize gender power, or patriarchal power. Mann (2012, 7) labeled patriarchy as a form of "institutionalized ideology", which like racism is "often hidden inside institutions". Patriarchal power is laced through all four sources of social power. It is reproduced in competing ideologies and is a structural feature of economic, military, and political power. It is not incorrect to suggest that women have been adversely incorporated in all historically constituted political settlements. Women organized politically have sought to challenge the patriarchal configuration of ideological power, to transform economic power through the 'empowerment' of women, to condemn and uproot the particularly horrific violence against women that has been part of most expressions of military power, and to transform the institutions and organizations of the state that systemically discriminate and disempower women.

The place of Muslim Mindanao in the political settlement in the Philippines

The political settlement on which the colonial state was built was largely replicated in the Philippine state that gained its independence from the US in 1946. The formal institutional arrangements of the state were elaborated in the Commonwealth Constitution of 1935 and mirrored the liberal democratic constitution of the US, but the republic was established as a unitary state rather than a federation. However, the political settlement, the configuration of social power on which the state rested, was characterized by what Benedict Anderson (1988) labeled as "cacique democracy". At the core of this was the power of the prominent families that had emerged during the Spanish and US colonial period whose wealth originated primarily in their control over land and agriculture, but increasingly, their privileged access to finance and consequently their command over commerce and industry.

These combined with and often overlapped with what Sidel (1999) called local "bosses" that emerged as kingpins in the electoral system—able to deliver votes to candidates competing for public office at all levels of the republic and to leverage that political authority to gain access to wealth of all kinds. The power and wealth of prominent families and local bosses presided over a type of "cacique capitalism", or 'semi-feudal, semi-capitalist' society and economy marked by deep rural poverty and, over time, an expanded population of urban poor. It was this pattern of social inequality that made poor rural and urban communities fertile recruiting ground for successive radical armed movements that have challenged the military and police forces of the state since independence.

The Muslim communities of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, along with indigenous Lumad communities resisted incorporation into the Spanish colonial state but were largely subdued under US colonial authority. The traditional 'headmen' and 'datus' and wealthy families within the Muslim communities came to play a role similar to clan elites throughout the rest of the Philippines, leveraging their influence over voters to strike alliances in the political arena of the central state, which in turn allowed them to consolidate and expand their wealth.

However, there was a pattern of adverse incorporation of the Muslim territories into the Philippine state, revealing deeply exclusionary

characteristics of the political settlement underpinning the state. A process of resettlement of Christians from the northern and central islands on the territory of Mindanao, begun under US colonial authority and accelerated after independence, rendered the Muslim communities and the indigenous peoples minorities in their own traditional territories. It was in effect a process of 'internal colonization' and 'internal displacement', that was riddled with violence, even as it was accommodated by most Muslim elites.

Further, the dominant Christian and largely Catholic ideology in the Philippines, inherited from centuries of proselytization by Spanish colonial authorities and the Catholic Church, meant that Muslims were widely viewed in pejorative and even racist terms within the larger Filipino population and among Christian settler communities in Mindanao. The Christian state had no room for Islamic laws, norms, and traditions, marginalizing ordinary Muslims in the wider Filipino society (Madale 1998). The violence that emerged in Mindanao from the end of the 1960s can be understood by looking in more depth at the configurations of power embodied in the political settlement on which the Philippine state has rested.

Ideological power

Ideological power is central to establishing the legitimacy of the institutions and organizations of a state, as well as the legitimacy of political action to compete for or fight against an established state (Mann 2012, 7). The power of ideology is its response to people's desire for certainty in an uncertain world—to have beliefs that are "not in themselves scientifically testable", but that offer explanations for why the world is the way it is.

In the Philippine political settlement, wealthy clan elites who wield considerable ideological power over their communities, based on family, village, and regional histories and folklore, historically ceded significant ideological power to the state where ideologies of Filipino nationalism, economic liberalism, and democracy are projected to justify its legitimacy.

Since the Spanish colonial period, the Catholic Church has wielded considerable ideological power throughout the majority Christian population. Its endorsement of the state, its approval of the social, economic, and political role of clan elites within the political settlement, its influence over middle class and rural and urban poor, and its systematic justification of patriarchal norms have been central to the consolidation of the political settlement over time.

Its power has been waning in recent decades as illustrated, for instance, by the failure of its clergy's endorsement of Leni Robredo to have any significant effect in presidential elections in 2022 that brought the Marcos family back to the presidency. It also failed to defeat legislation on family planning from becoming law in 2012 and again failed in its challenge to that law at the Supreme Court in 2017. However, both abortion and divorce remain illegal in the Philippines, a testament to the remaining ideological power of the Church, particularly when it concerns patriarchy.

In the Muslim communities of Mindanao, the ideological power of clan elites has always been underpinned by both their adherence to Islam and to the traditions and norms of family and language group lineages among the Maguindanaons of the Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces, the Maranao of the Lanao provinces, the Tausug of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the Yakan of Basilan, and other Muslim ethno-linguistic groups.

While elites, in their participation in Philippine electoral politics have deferred to the ideological power of the central state, the association of the state with the Christian majority, has alienated many Muslim communities. Anti-Muslim attitudes, violence of Christian settler vigilante organizations against Muslim communities, and their economic marginalization did even more to increase that

alienation. It was this alienation and marginalization that allowed the armed movements (MNLF and MILF) to draw on the ideological power of Islam to motivate their followers.

This has also been accentuated by the more diffuse nature of the *ulama* in Islam than the clergy in the Catholic Church. When the MNLF launched its armed struggle against the Philippine state, its ideological power was drawn both from its articulation of a Bangsamoro nationalism as well as the identification of that nationalism with Islam. This was even more in evidence with the split within the MNLF in 1977 after its leader Nur Misuari signed the Tripoli Agreement for peace with the dictatorial regime of former President Ferdinand Marcos.

Hashim Salamat, the leader of the dissenting faction, established a parallel movement, ideologically anchored more explicitly in Islam, which became more disciplined than the old MNLF and eventually went on to establish itself as the MILF in 1984 (Vitug and Gloria 2000, 106–135). Vitug and Gloria convincingly argued that over the years, the MILF claimed to be more authentic Islamic leaders. They competed as the more authentic defenders of the faith with the traditional datu and clan leaders, who stressed the folk traditions of indigenized Islam. In the MILF camps, which were effectively full-blown local communities, the organization gave a much greater place to the *ulama* (the scholars and interpreters of Islam and Islamic law) than they had either under the datu or the MNLF.

One important characteristic of the ideological power exercised by the organized world religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) is that by definition, they operate across national boundaries. This allowed local religious powerholders a source of legitimacy and in some cases material support from beyond the national arena. This is one reason why authoritarian regimes make efforts to either ban religious organizations or cut off their connections with the international organization to which they are affiliated, or to foster rival independent religious organizations. From the outset, the Bangsamoro armed movements competed for recognition and, during some periods, material support, from centers of Islamic authority internationally.

Islam is a religion that offers more than guidance for individual and family behavior. It provides rules and laws to govern communities, economic activities, judicial authority, and punishment. External ideological power is exercised by Islamic states and international organizations like the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The MNLF and MILF have sought and received legitimation from states like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Libya, as well as the OIC.[4] They have also at times asked for the active role of these international Islamic organizations in peace mediation with the Philippine state. At times, the Bangsamoro organizations have come under pressure from these external forces to engage in negotiated settlements. This was true in relation to the Tripoli Agreement in 1976, the MNLF peace agreement in 1996, and the peace agreement leading up to the establishment of BARMM. This is but one instance of the role international actors played in shaping political settlements.

Over the years, in the wider Philippines, the ideological power associated with traditional elite families and the Catholic Church came to be subsumed by the ideological power of the state manifested in Filipino nationalism, economic liberalism, and formal democracy. This has been crucial to the political settlement on which the state is based. The biggest challenge to this configuration of ideological power within the settlement occurred during the years of martial law. At that time, the communist-led National Democratic Front made significant headway in appropriating ideological

[4] The various radical splinter groups from both the MNLF and MILF, often emerging after the major organisations engaged in peace negotiations, also sought recognition from international Islamist movements like Al-Qaida or the various incarnations of Islamic State.

power by presenting itself as a more authentic voice of Filipino nationalism and democracy in the face of dictatorship. This challenge, threatening a major shift in the political settlement, evaporated after the restoration of formal democracy in 1986.

However, in Muslim Mindanao, the Bangsamoro armed movements became an alternative site of ideological power in the form of Bangsamoro nationalism and Islam, creating a major fissure in the political settlement, at least in Muslim Mindanao. The drive toward the establishment and reestablishment of a form of autonomous government in the Bangsamoro region *within* the Philippine state, through processes of violent conflict and bargaining, has amounted to an attempt to shift and change the basic political settlement on which the state rests.

Economic power

In the Philippines and the Bangsamoro region, as elsewhere in the world, the configuration of economic power plays a decisive role in the political settlement underpinning the state. Remembering that, like with ideological and military power, the techniques and tools of economic power can be created either within society or the state, there are at least two central ways in which economic power shapes the political settlement that are decisive to what the state can and cannot do. The first relates to the extent to which those who hold economic power cede a portion of that power to the state (or vice versa). The second is the way in which the state presides over a particular distribution of power among economic powerholders in society. Both emerge historically through processes of conflict and bargaining and are constant sources of contestation and change within a political settlement.

The configuration of economic power, both between economic power holders and the state and among economic power holders themselves embedded in a political settlement has proven decisive in processes of development. Khan (1995) illustrated this when he explained why very similar institutional and organizational arrangements implemented in South Korea and Pakistan resulted in accelerated economic growth and development in the former and much less impressive development in the latter. But the configuration of economic power within the political settlement can also be decisive in determining whether a state presides over peace or descends into exacerbated conflict (Putzel and Di John 2012).

The unequal distribution of economic power that leaves a large number of people in poverty, with few possibilities for social mobility, particularly when that distribution originates in historical forms of injustice, creates a rich terrain for recruitment for armed movements challenging the state. This is accentuated when there exists what Frances Stewart (2000) has labeled, "horizontal inequalities", that is, when unequal distribution and access to income and wealth is correlated with different ethnic, linguistic, regional, or religious identities.

Historically, the configuration of economic power within the Philippine political settlement resulted in extreme inequality. Nowhere was this more evident than in the rural areas, where unequal access to and control over land between traditional landowning elite families and those who work on the land led to repeated rural-based rebellions against the state and successive struggles over redistributive agrarian reforms (Putzel 1992).

The wealthy families that gave rise to political dynasties either used control over land and people to access political power, or, through gaining political power accumulated control over land and lucrative activities in manufacturing, commerce, real estate, and finance (Sidel 1999, Putzel 1999). In some towns and provinces, rival families competed both through violence, or through the ballot box, and often a combination of both. In other provinces and towns, single families dominated and ran for political office unopposed, as in some areas of Ilocos Norte, where successive generations of the Marcos

family often run unopposed for seats in the House of Representatives or provincial and municipal offices. The common ground in the political settlement reproduced this configuration of economic power over time.

This pattern of control over land and resources by traditional elite families in a mutually reinforcing relation between economic and political power was largely reproduced in Muslim Mindanao, but with some important differences in the political settlement. Muslim elites by and large were integrated into the political settlement in a subordinate fashion, due to their numbers, their position on the periphery of the state, and due to the dominant ideological power within the political settlement, which was essentially Christian Filipino nationalism. The result was a position of horizontal inequality where the Muslim communities and territories of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago have been among the poorest and least developed regions of the country.

The data in **Table 1** reveal the extent of 'horizontal inequality' that exists between the Philippines, as a whole and the Muslim territories of Mindanao.

While the population of the autonomous region in 2020 made up almost 5% of the country's total, it produced only 1.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP).[5] The autonomous region's per capita GDP is the lowest of all the regions in the Philippines, three times lower than the average for the country as a whole. In 2018, while 16.7% of the Filipino population were living in poverty, 61.8% of the population in the autonomous region lived below the poverty line.

Horizontal inequalities also affect the communities *within* what is today the BARMM. **Table 2** captures this to some extent with comparative provincial poverty data. About 42% of people live in poverty in Cotabato City and 49% in the province of Maguindanao, but in Lanao del Sur, Basilan, and Sulu more than 70% of the population is living in poverty.

While poverty data is not captured separately for the Lumad (indigenous people) it is likely also to reflect another dimension of horizontal inequality between Muslim and Lumad communities in the autonomous region.[6] The evidence suggests that Lumad communities are significantly poorer than their Bangsamoro neighbors (Paredes 2015, 171).

Table 1. Horizontal Inequalities: Philippines vs. Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, 2020

	Philippines	BARMM
Population	**109,035,343**	**5,075,179**
Gross Regional Domestic Product (in thousand Philippine Pesos, 2018)	**17,537,843,279**	**244,524,738**
Per capita GDP (Pesos)	**161,235**	**51,758**
Poverty incidence (% population, 2018)	**16.71**	**61.81**

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority.

[5] The extent of the informal economy in BARMM discussed below means that official GDP figures need to be interpreted with caution, but they nevertheless reflect the relative position of the Muslim region to the rest of the country.

[6] According to the Minority Rights Group (n.d.), "The Lumad tribal groupings of Mindanao include Ata, Bagobo, Guiangga, Mamanwa, Magguangan, Mandaya, Banwa-on, Bukidnon, Dulangan, Kalagan, Kulaman, Manobo, Subanon, Tagabili, Takakaolo, Talandig, and Tiruray or Teduray".

Table 2. Poverty Incidence in the Bangsamoro Region, 2018 (% of population)

ARMM	**61.81**
City of Cotabato	**42.01**
Basilan	**73.50**
Lanao del Sur	**71.16**
Maguindanao	**48.55**
Sulu	**82.48**
Tawi-Tawi	**22.20**

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority.

There is no strong data about the numbers of Lumad in the BARMM, but in 2015, it was estimated that there could be as many as 9 million Lumad people across the whole of Mindanao (Paredes 2015, 168). The extent of paternalism that Lumad communities face goes beyond Filipino Christians to the Bangsamoro Muslims themselves. (ibid, 175).

Horizontal inequalities are more likely to lead to violent conflict because patterns of unequal access to land and other sources of wealth and livelihoods and services according to identity tend to be cast as 'all or nothing' rather than 'more or less' conflicts, or in Albert Hirschman's (1994) assessment, as "indivisible" rather than divisible terms. It is also because often the elites of these communities preside over and are enmeshed in conflict over land and resources, as has consistently been the case in the Muslim regions of Mindanao (Lara 2019).

The other dimension of the configuration of economic power within the political settlement is more difficult to document, which is the extent to which economic power holders cede a portion of that power to the state and the extent to which the state cedes economic power to non-state actors. There are two important ways to capture this. The first relates to the fiscal institutional and policy arrangements within the state, while the second concerns the regulatory policies. Both are hugely affected by the size and reach of the 'informal' or 'shadow' economy (Lara and de la Rosa 2016).

To some extent, one can assess the extent to which economic power holders cede power to the state within the political settlement by looking at the fiscal authorities that they agree to establish. This involves examining the capacity and authority created within state organizations to tax incomes and assets, as well as the more ephemeral and changing taxation policies adopted. The second is the capacity they agree to establish within state organizations to regulate their business activities, enforce quality and labor standards, accountancy practices, or sound data collection.

The other side of this equation is the pattern of fiscal spending carried out by the state. This involves looking at how state budgets are allocated and who benefits from state spending. The configuration of economic power in the political settlement can be reflected by detecting if state spending increases the fortune of one elite group or set of economic interests over another or whether the benefits are spread relatively evenly among them. The pattern of fiscal expenditure can also detect the extent to which economic power holders have gone along with spending focused on improving the living conditions of ordinary people and their access to health, education, and clean water. Through this prism one can also assess whether state spending is reducing or increasing 'horizontal inequalities'.

However, an even more important indicator of the configuration of economic power is the extent to which wealth is generated and assets hidden in the informal or shadow economy. This is the scope of economic activity that entirely escapes the purview of the state and therefore cannot be taxed or regulated. Lara and de la Rosa (2016, 57–64) estimate that Mindanao topped all other areas of the country with the share of employment in the informal sector in the autonomous region as high as 80% as late as 2009.

As more economic activities occur outside the purview of the state, the more likely it is that contracts and agreements are enforced and disputes resolved through the economic power holders' own coercive force. Here, the data on violent conflict in the Bangsamoro region reveals the ubiquitous presence of violent conflicts over land, drugs, and the arms trade (Lara 2019, Cagoco-Guiam and Schoofs 2016, Quitoriano 2016). According to Conflict Alert's data (2022), there has been a significant increase in the proportion of all documented incidents of violence that are linked with the shadow economy, comprising more than 20% of all incidents each year from 2018–2020.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that in such a configuration of economic power, most ordinary people survive through the informal or shadow economy. This is how they gain access to land, credit, or livelihoods to be made in simple commercial activities. Any attempt to challenge the institutional arrangements of the state that favor the existence of the informal economy need to make a sharp distinction between the more lethal endangering activities of drug smuggling and arms trading and the activities on which thousands of people depend for their livelihoods. This is one of the most important insights that comes out of Conflict Alert's study of the shadow economy in Mindanao (Lara and Schoofs 2016).

The more economic activity remains unregulated, the more difficult and costly it is to attract investors from outside the Bangsamoro region, whether from elsewhere in the Philippines or from abroad. The more unregulated, and the more authority rests in the hands of non-state actors, the more foreign investors will demand huge margins of return to cover risks. The more they will deal directly with the holders of economic power as well, bypassing the state altogether if they are able to do so. This is another instance in which foreign interests can come to influence for better or for worse the political settlement.

Military power

The last type of power that shapes the stability and durability of the political settlement is the configuration of military, or violent power embodied within it. One of the most important insights of the monumental work of Douglass North and his colleagues (2009) was to suggest that for most of human existence, society has been shaped by violence and the power of those who command the means for violence.

Groups that hold military power have great leverage in the overall configuration of power within a political settlement. The extent to which those who command military (lethal) power cede that power to the state, or retain it outside of the state, determines both the durability of a political settlement and the leverage state organizations possess to enforce rules and reward those who comply and punish those who do not.

In the Philippines, since independence, military power has been wielded by the state's Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) and their predecessors. However, the holders of military power in society have never fully ceded their power to the state. Elite families, corporations, criminal gangs, and political organizations have retained considerable capacities for exercising lethal violence, from private armies and private security companies to personal bodyguards. In fact the dispersal of lethal weapons has been prolific across the Philippines, particularly the dispersal of unregistered illegal firearms (Quitoriano 2016).

People everywhere crave security to be able to live and work in safety, which bestows great legitimacy and authority on state or non-state organizations that provide this most basic social protection. The extent to which state military power is deployed in regulated, predictable, and protective ways rather than ways that terrorize populations, favor elites over the public good, or favor some elites over

others, is a central determinant of peace. Social groups excluded from, or adversely incorporated within a political settlement can create military power outside of the state as a means to challenge and transform established political settlements. This was the strategy of the Communist Party of the Philippines in its struggle to oppose the Marcos dictatorship.

In the Muslim communities of Mindanao, successive Bangsamoro armed movements have won popular support by providing communities protection (Vitug and Gloria 2000). They gained legitimacy by protecting communities from both non-state armed groups, be they criminal organizations preying on the population, the private armies of powerful traditional elites and the state's own 'expeditionary' armed forces and police who unleashed lethal violence on village communities. In fact, more than any other factor, it was the armed power of the MNLF and the MILF that forced the issue of autonomous government onto the Philippine political agenda.

The Bangsamoro Organic Law, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and the decisive role of political organization [7]

The passage of the BOL, the establishment of an autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao, and the establishment of a Bangsamoro parliament and its executive represented a set of institutional reforms promising a transformation of the political settlement underpinning the Philippine state. It is uncertain whether the law and the institutional and organizational changes within that state that it has allowed will live up to the aspirations for peace and development hoped for in the communities that voted to be part of the new autonomous region. The possibilities for progressive transformation hinge both on the extent to which the provisions of the BOL and the political organizations within the BARMM can actually provoke and consolidate a change in the configuration of power in the region and the political settlement as a whole.

The law provided for the establishment of a Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA) within the region, which after elections, now delayed until 2025, will be replaced by a regional parliament whose members, through a majority vote, will install a government. The BTA is constituted to carry out the role of the parliament until elections. The MILF was given the position of interim chief minister. The BTA was composed of 80 seats, half-filled by nominees of the MILF and half by nominees of the central government that included representatives of the much-diminished MNLF, some of the important political families of Muslim elites, as well as members of the old ARMM assembly and its executive. Initially, the administrative organizations and personnel of the ARMM formed the bedrock of the administration of the transitional executive authority.

Ideological power within the BARMM

The establishment of BARMM to an extent represents an ideological victory for the Bangsamoro nationalist movement. The ideological power created by the MILF (and the MNLF before it) is ceded to the new state organizations of the BARMM. However, the BARMM is clearly defined as a subsidiary unit of the Philippine state, so it remains uncertain how much its establishment will allow those who occupy authority in the regional parliament to maintain leadership of the Bangsamoro Islamic nationalism that was so important to the rise and legitimacy of the MILF.

The BOL does not define the Bangsamoro people as Islamic, but rather as the descendants of those

[7] The reading of the BOL benefited from the insights of the careful study by Bacani et al (2021).

who inhabited Mindanao and Sulu before the arrival of the Spanish (Article 1, Section 2), which would include the Lumad as part of the Bangsamoro, while also recognizing their rights as distinct ethnicities (Article 1, Sections 9 and 10; Article 9, Section 3).

The BOL creates the potential for the state organizations of the BARMM to wield considerable ideological power. Article 9 on 'Basic Rights' recognizes historical injustices in providing for 'transitional justice mechanisms' and 'reparations for unjust dispossession'. It also guarantees indigenous people's rights within the Bangsamoro territory and 'customary rights and traditions', as well as the rights of 'settler communities'. While it guarantees all the individual rights and rights to social services granted by the Philippine Constitution, it provides for a "Madaris" educational system and Islamic and Arabic studies for Muslim students in public schools. It accords the Bangsamoro government the mission to protect Bangsamoro culture, arts and traditions inherited from pre-Hispanic Sultanates and authority over the Bangsamoro Commission for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

Importantly, while guaranteeing legal rights of the Philippine Constitution, Article 10 recognizes that the justice system should be 'in consonance' with Shari'ah, traditional and tribal laws. Shari'ah law applies only to Muslims and those who wish to submit to it and Shari'ah courts form part of the justice system in the BARMM. Importantly, the law allows jurisdiction of Shari'ah over marriage and divorce, the latter which is still outlawed for Christian citizens of the Philippines. While many of these provisions existed in the old ARMM, the BOL strengthened them, especially the power of Shari'ah courts.

While there will inevitably be break-off groups from the Bangsamoro nationalist organizations, which will challenge the constellations of ideological power in the BARMM, the BOL goes a long way toward consolidating ideological power in favor of Islam.

Economic power of the regional state and local elites

An important test over time as to whether the establishment of BARMM can succeed will rest on the possibilities that the new autonomous region can enter a period of economic growth and development. In the long-established political settlement, the holders of economic power in the region have ceded very little of that power to the state. That is, much of their wealth has been derived from and held within the shadow economy, in large part free from state regulations and taxation.

An important means to assess the extent to which the dominance of the shadow economy might change is to examine the exercise of fiscal authority, both in terms of taxation and in terms of spending over time. This means asking to what extent will those who hold economic power in the region submit themselves to the fiscal authority of the state and to what extent will the state spend its resources in a way that benefits investment (infrastructure including transport, water, and energy) and the education and health care of the working population.

One of the most important opportunities in the BOL, and one area where it may overcome some of the problems of the earlier ARMM, is its provisions on the fiscal authority of the Bangsamoro government and the transfer of revenue from the central state to the regional government. This is the area where the new government will enjoy the most autonomy, in contrast to its previous powers and beyond local government units in other parts of the country.[8] The budget of the BARMM will be approved by its own parliament, which differs from the fiscal mechanism under the old ARMM. The law states that the

[8] However, it should be noted that the 'Mandanas ruling' of the Supreme Court in 2018 (confirmed in 2019) means that from 2022 the fiscal authority of all local governments and their share of revenue from the central state will be significantly increased.

Bangsamoro will have fiscal autonomy "with the end in view of attaining economic self-sufficiency and genuine development" (Article 12, Section 1).

The Bangsamoro government will be allowed to generate its own revenue and will have a guaranteed share in revenue collected by the central state in Bangsamoro territory, as all local governments are entitled to (Article 12, Section 6). However, they will have a block grant automatically appropriated, rather than deliberated upon, from the General Appropriations Act of Congress. They will also be allocated a Special Development Fund, rather than this being set up through a parallel authority with the central state. Both recognize the special need for 'catch up' development in the Bangsamoro region. Additionally, they will be entitled to dividends from government owned companies. The Bangsamoro government will have the power to impose more taxes than the previous ARMM, like capital gains tax and other transactional fees.

Importantly, where the ARMM was entitled to 35% of taxes collected in the region by the central state with local governments having their separate allocations, the BARMM will be entitled to 75%, but this is inclusive of the share all local governments directly receive under the Local Government Code. This will enable the regional government to add funds directly to the development of the villages, towns, and cities within the region than it could under the ARMM. This could strengthen the links between the regional authority and local governments and lessen the 'parallel' links with the central state that were so damaging in the ARMM. It also creates an institutional arrangement whereby local governments will need to work with the Bangsamoro government. The regional government will also establish its own regional auditing authority, in compliance with central state rules and standards, but it will be vested with the auditing power over local governments within its territory.

The regional government will be able, as its predecessor was, to provide tax incentives to investors, so long as these do not undercut the central state's revenue collection. But it will not be able to impose income tax, customs duties, trade duties, taxes on agricultural products, excise taxes, value-added taxes, or any of the other central state-controlled taxation instruments (Article 12, Section 9).

While the fiscal powers and resources allocated to BARMM offer opportunities for the regional government to shape and define development strategies in the region, the extent to which it will do so remains entirely dependent on the politics and exercise of political power by those who will control the regional government. This is true in terms of the capacity they decide to create within the regional government administration and the relationships they create with local, Philippine wide and international investors.

Ultimately, the ability to cajole economic power holders within the region to submit to state authority will depend on what transpires in relation to military and political power. They will need to come to believe that acting outside the purview of the state is both more risky and less advantageous than ceding some of their economic power to the state. Of course, the quality of government, its reliability, and predictability will play a big role. But not only does the Bangsamoro government need to be able to demonstrate a 'credible commitment' (to deliver on promises, to protect property rights, to act lawfully), it also will need to be able to demonstrate a 'credible threat' to private interests that act outside the law and evade taxation and regulation.

In a very telling interview at the time of the referendum on the BOL with Rappler, MILF head and Interim Chief Minister Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, saw the fiscal powers granted to the BARMM as one of the most important concessions gained from the government. However, when questioned as to whether the BTA would use its taxation powers to address the local wealthy families, he suggested that this would "create problems among

the business sector" (Ebrahim 2019). In Mushtaq Khan's (2010) terms the economic "holding power" of the wealthy political clans considerably threatens fundamental change in the political settlement.

Military and policing power in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

Under the terms of the peace agreement between the MILF and the central state in 2014 the MILF committed to decommissioning and eventually dissolving the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). The Basic Organic Law requires the MILF to cede its independent military power entirely to the state and here rests the riskiest and most difficult change required in the political settlement.

Article 11 of the BOL makes it clear that the security of the BARMM is vested in the central state, in the AFP whose commander-in-chief is the president. It further declares that public security and safety will be undertaken by a "Police Regional Office" created by, and under the authority of, the PNP. The law requires that the head of the regional police be appointed after "consultation" with the chief minister, but this means the new BARMM government has no control over the police, compliant with the fact that BARMM is an instance of local government under the Philippine Constitution. The head of the regional police office is appointed by the central state's secretary of the Interior and Local Government. The head will lead the National Police Commission Bangsamoro Regional Office, where any complaints against the regional police must be directed.

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of how far and how comprehensively the MILF will ensure the dismantling of the BIAF, not least because of the somewhat hazy picture of how many combatants and how many arms are really at stake. At the time of the signing of the peace agreement in 2014, a number of news reports estimated that the MILF had about 40,000 combatants (Sarmiento 2021). Decommissioning, understandably, got off to a slow start in Phase 1 with about 145 BIAF soldiers decommissioned as a gesture of goodwill. It was only in Phase 2 in 2019 that some 12,000 combatants entered the decommissioning process turning over 1,200 weapons. Phase 3 began in 2021 and according to the BTA would see some 14,000 BIAF members decommissioned (BIO 2021). In December 2021, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process reported the decommissioning of 5,250 BIAF combatants during the year with the rest of the Phase 3 target to be completed in 2022 (OPAPP 2021). The number of weapons turned over is far smaller, but Chief Minister Ebrahim (2019) argued that the MILF had agreed only to turn over weapons it owned, saying many combatants owned their own weapons.

There is a clear provision in the BOL (Article 11) to allow former 'certified' combatants of both the MILF and MNLF to apply to join the regional force of the PNP within five years from the ratification of the BOL. Some relaxation of age, height, and educational requirement is allowed (though the educational requirement must be met within 15 years of joining). In late 2021, Chief Minister Ebrahim signed a memo of agreement with the National Police Commission that would allow 5,060 decommissioned soldiers from both the MILF and MNLF to sit an exam to enter the PNP in May 2022. It is unclear how many took the exam, but it was subsequently reported that some 1,600 passed the first of a series of exams that would allow them to become temporary members of the PNP (Carreon 2022). With the five-year threshold for combatants to enlist in the PNP, this means that the process must be completed by January 2024, before the election of the new Bangsamoro parliament now planned for 2025.

The peace agreement of 2014 was centrally based on a commitment that the military in partnership with the MILF would disarm the private armed groups (PAGs) that belong to traditional clan leaders and wealthy families. There are regular reports about the disarming of small numbers of armed members

of the PAGs in the Philippine press. However, there is no compelling evidence that there has been any sort of general decommissioning of these organizations. Thus, the holders of military power in society likely remain intact. The traditional leaders and political clans that possess lethal force have not ceded that power to the state and this fundamental characteristic of the underlying political settlement remains a real danger to peace in the future.

At the same time, every past peace agreement in Mindanao has seen the emergence of rival armed forces from the organized Bangsamoro armies. This happened successively with both the MNLF and the MILF, given either the poor prospects combatants had when reintegrating into civilian life, or their disgruntlement with the lack of far-reaching change following ceasefires and peace agreements. For some, the dilution of the ideological power of their former leaders has led them to seek connections with radical Islamic armed actors sometimes with international links. The redrawing of military power within the political settlement in the Philippines is by no means ensured by the formation of the BARMM.

Political power

In the end, it is political organizations that can shift the configuration of power in a political settlement, through either gaining themselves ideological, military, and economic power or building alliances with some of those power holders through the quest for control of the state. By achieving authority within the state, political organizations shape its executive power, its competencies, and its development policies, which in turn can consolidate or provoke changes in the underlying political settlement. The BARMM represents only a regional manifestation of the Philippine state, but the Bangsamoro armed organizations—their command of military power mobilized for political purposes—succeeded over time to achieve the formation of the patch of state power occupied by the BARMM. It remains to be seen how far this will affect the political settlement, at least within the territory of the autonomous region.

The BOL very explicitly limits the BARMM to a form of local government within the Philippine state. In Article IV, Section 2, the right to "self-governance" is asserted but this falls short of a right to "self-determination". However, one of the important innovations of the BARMM, is the establishment of a parliamentary form of government (Article IV, Section 3), which means that the executive authority will be chosen by the majority in the parliamentary assembly and the chief minister will be accountable to the assembly.[9] This could allow the establishment of a more stable system of programmatic political parties in the region, in contrast to the shifting coalitions in the rest of the country.[10]

The political powers granted to the Bangsamoro government are substantial, with power to govern most productive sectors and services (Article 5, Section 2). However, its powers are limited to those allowed to 'local governments' under the Philippine Constitution and could be curtailed by the judgment of the Philippine president, who could suspend the chief minister for up to six months (ibid. and Article 6, Section 1). The exception here, and it is an important one, is that the BARMM will have considerable fiscal power.

One-half of the assembly will be elected by political parties in a system of proportional representation (Article 7, Section 7). The way is left open for new political parties to be formed, though the Electoral Code, still to be elaborated, will define criteria that need to be met. This could, of course, be a vehicle for traditional clan politicians to gain power in the region's government.

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[9] This is an improvement on most other elected posts in the Republic where the winner simply needs a plurality. In this assembly run-off ballots will be held among assembly members until one person receives a majority.

[10] This is reinforced by a provision in the law that disallows defection of a party representative to another political party (Article 7, Section 7).

Forty percent of seats will be directly elected representatives from district constituencies (with the districts being drawn by the BTA for the first election and the new assembly able to redraw districts). A further 10% of seats (and no less than eight seats) will be reserved for two representatives from each recognized non-Moro and "settler" community and one "sectoral seat" allocated each for women, youth, traditional leaders, and *ulama*. A further provision states that election of the reserved seats for non-Moro communities will be subject to a number of principles including customary laws but also gender equality. As mentioned above, the indigenous identity and rights of the Lumad are enshrined in the BOL and their own political structures and justice systems are respected while they will be guaranteed reserved seats in the assembly (Article 9, Section 3; Article 7, Section 8).

While these formal institutional arrangements of the BARMM encourage the formation of programmatic political parties, it remains to be seen whether the organizations that fought many years of armed struggle will be able to constitute themselves as viable political parties. That means developing the skills to rule and to build the kind of alliances that will be necessary to ensure the government of the region is devoted to a developmental agenda.

On 9 April 2014, less than three months after the MILF signed the peace agreement with the Government of the Philippines, Ghazali Jaafar, the organization's vice-chair for political affairs, announced the formation of the United Bangsamoro Justice Party (UBJP), which would be the MILF's political party to contest elections. While MILF officials and members were all declared members of the party, he said it would be open to anyone who wished to join. He claimed there were UBJP groups in 14 provinces and two major cities in Mindanao. Initially, officials were selected by the Central Committee of the MILF, but Jaafar promised that when it would be time to select candidates for elections, this would be done through a democratic process (Manlupig 2014).

The UBJP, however, remained relatively inactive as an organization until it was used as the vehicle to intervene in the 2022 national elections. In a sense it remains an MILF 'parallel organization', whose officials have been preoccupied with trying to establish the organizations, rules, and policies of the BTA. The BTA governs the region as an appointed version of what will become the BARMM parliament after elections are held in 2025.

It was perhaps not surprising that Chief Minister Murad Ebrahim and his Cabinet had to request a three-year prolongation of the life of the BTA, with elections delayed from 2022 to 2025. The transitional authority had a heavy agenda of elaborating legislation to govern the BARMM, not least of which involved mapping out the electoral districts of the new parliament, procedures for registering political parties and rules governing what is a complex system of proportional representation. Many of the MILF officials, while having experience in governing their base camps, were entirely new to the business of constitutionally compliant government organizations and institutions.

Yet, while not consolidating their legitimacy and securing their leadership through an election, the UBJP decided to field candidates and support candidates affiliated with national political coalitions in the May 2022 national elections within the Bangsamoro territories. These involved candidates running for the presidency and vice presidency, provincial governors, and city mayors. It was, in a sense, an initial test of strength of the MILF reconstituted as a political party to fight over state power through the ballot box. This essentially is what the BTA's minister for the Interior and Local Government who is also UBJP Secretary General, Naguib Sinarimbo, said when summing up the UBJP performance in the elections: "The MILF participating in the local elections was a good way to test the ground if it is already ready and prepared to abandon the armed struggle and move toward a democratic process" (Esguerra 2022).

However, not holding elections for the Bangsamoro parliament also meant the UBJP running the risk of dealing with a new central government, with no electoral mandate for itself. This is all the more important because the legislation passed to extend the date of elections to the new parliament to 2025, explicitly states that, "the President may appoint the eighty (80) new interim members of the BTA who shall serve up to June 30, 2025" (Republic Act 115931, 2021). When asked what the UBJP would do if 'local partisans' try to enter the regional government, Minister Sinarimbo responded, "We will continue to fight that, not because we do not want them to hold the reins of power at the regional level. But more importantly because *yung* regional government and the institutions created is a result of a peace agreement" (Esguerra 2022). Sinarimbo, one of the most accomplished lawyers in the UBJP leadership, was perhaps hinting at the line of legal argument the UBJP/MILF would take if newly elected President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. were to attempt to replace the BTA membership and Interim Chief Minister Ebrahim.

In the end, the UBJP won a close but decisive victory in Cotabato City, where they were pitted against an incumbent mayor who had opposed the formation of the BARMM. However, elsewhere in the Bangsamoro region, candidates they fielded or endorsed were generally unsuccessful. Most tellingly, the UBJP took a stand against Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of the former dictator in support of Liberal Party candidate Leni Robredo in the race for the presidency. Marcos won handsomely across the region. The UBJP lost to incumbent candidates in Maguindanao, the heartland of the MILF for many years. This does not bode well for the future in terms of wresting political influence and power from traditional elite families whose alliances are built on ties with the political factions operating at the level of the central state.

Indeed, while the MILF had built considerable legitimacy as a political military organization over the years, it may find the task of maintaining legitimacy reincarnated as a political party in a competitive electoral system beyond its capabilities. Its legitimacy now will depend on whether it can establish new institutions and a policy agenda for accelerated development that appeals to a broad section of the population in the BARMM. It needs to do this with speed, or one will expect that its members and supporters will opt out of the project and return to arms.

Concluding reflections

During the long years of war, Bangsamoro rebel groups were essentially fighting to transform the configuration of social power enforced by the Philippine state that has left Bangsamoro communities among the poorest and least developed in the republic. They fought the armed forces of the Philippine state who were defending an old order that enshrined elite privilege combined with second class status for the marginalized Muslim and Lumad communities in Mindanao. In doing so, they created and accumulated considerable ideological and military power outside of the state, challenging the long-established political settlement.

However, their struggles were not enough to break loose from the state, though they were able to force a significant change in its formal institutional architecture. This saw first the establishment of the ARMM under the leadership of the MNLF. When that failed and the political leadership of Bangsamoro nationalism shifted to the MILF, the struggle for autonomy was reconstituted in the form of the BARMM. This was more than a Pyrrhic victory, but it did involve considerable compromise with the dominant powers of the Philippine state.

The performance of the MILF since taking leadership of the BTA raises questions about its capacity to use its access to state power to bring about a lasting shift in the political settlement. Most of the top positions in the BTA were filled by MILF leaders, many from its central committee. But it

Ahod "Al-Hajj Murad" Balawag Ebrahim casts his vote at the Simuay Junction Central Elementary School in Maguindanao during the plebiscite for the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. **Keith Bacongco**

was striking that there appeared to have been little work done in the preceding period to hammer out a strategy for development. Without such a strategy, the ideological power won by Bangsamoro leaders during the fight for autonomy will bleed away. On assuming office, the new ministers of the BTA were mostly taking their cues from central state ministries and foreign development agencies.

In terms of economic strategy, the BTA's ministry of finance has largely been preoccupied working with the central state and external organizations like the World Bank around an agenda of 'normalization'. The World Bank is managing a trust fund to solicit aid from donors. While there have been some original initiatives around Islamic finance, there is no sign of a strategy to begin taming the 'shadow economy', or challenging the stranglehold over wealth enjoyed by traditional clan elites.

The Ministry of Public Order and Safety has presided over a number of peace consolidation programs. However, there is no sign of a strategy to confront the PAGs of traditional elites. It is difficult to identify any strategy coming from the BTA to address the illegal guns and drugs trade in the BARMM. These are the issues that affect the lives of people in the region and at least beginning to address them could demonstrate that the new authorities of BARMM have plans to transform the region, not just manage the administrative systems they inherited from the ARMM.

Looking ahead, the future consolidation of BARMM and the prospects for promoting development in its territories will depend on the ability of the Bangsamoro leaders to transform politico-military organizations into an effective programmatic political party. The challenge of holding on to political power beyond the BTA and deploying that power to developmental ends will require recruiting talented and capable young people to a programmatic political party and the administrative organizations of the regional government.[11]

Even more importantly, consolidating political power requires building alliances not only between former opponents among the Bangsamoro but also winning over to a developmental agenda some of those who command economic power in the region. This will involve a new contest in the political arena with the considerable economic and political power wielded by traditional elite families and their allies in the central state. There is little sign, so far, that this struggle has been engaged.

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[11] This will prove all the more difficult as leaders of the MNLF faction participating in the BTA have formed their own separate Bangsamoro Party (BASA) in January 2022 (Jannaral, 2022).

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Masjid Dimaukom, also known as the Pink Mosque in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao was painted pink to represent peace and love and was constructed by Christian builders to represent interfaith unity. **Martin San Diego**

ANNEX 1

Data tables

Chapter 2: Shifts in Conflict Dynamics in the Bangsamoro

Figure 1: Number of Conflict Incidents and Deaths in the Bangsamoro

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Incidents	871	643	1,059	1,500	2,303	4,362	4,132	2,898	2,679	2,361	**22,808**
Deaths	509	330	491	664	827	1,241	2,261	907	847	750	**8,827**

Figure 3: Number of Conflict Incidents by Province

Conflict incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.	Total
Maguindanao*	328	203	401	847	1,111	2,357	1,877	1,409	1,147	1,015	**1,070**	**10,695**
Lanao del Sur	138	79	285	306	420	514	941	372	482	413	**395**	**3,950**
Basilan**	203	184	174	185	380	796	631	468	419	434	**387**	**3,874**
Sulu	147	117	150	107	332	559	553	508	453	327	**325**	**3,253**
Tawi-Tawi	55	60	49	55	60	135	131	141	178	172	**104**	**1,036**
Total	**871**	**643**	**1,059**	**1,500**	**2,303**	**4,361**	**4,133**	**2,898**	**2,679**	**2,361**		**22,808**

Figure 4: Number of Conflict Deaths by Province

Conflict deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.	Total
Maguindanao*	204	92	177	342	364	443	497	450	422	364	**336**	**3,355**
Lanao del Sur	90	48	108	106	184	310	1,358	99	125	103	**253**	**2,531**
Basilan**	86	71	115	96	142	221	231	220	197	158	**154**	**1,537**
Sulu	111	108	70	99	115	220	137	97	78	94	**113**	**1,129**
Tawi-Tawi	18	11	21	21	22	46	39	41	25	31	**28**	**275**
Total	**509**	**330**	**491**	**664**	**827**	**1,240**	**2,262**	**907**	**847**	**750**		**8,827**

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Figure 5: Number of Conflict Incidents per 1,000 Square Kilometers, by Province

Conflict incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.
Basilan**	55	50	47	50	103	216	172	127	114	118	**105**
Maguindanao*	32	20	40	83	110	232	185	139	113	100	**105**
Sulu	32	26	33	24	73	123	122	112	100	72	**72**
Tawi-Tawi	15	17	14	15	17	37	36	39	49	47	**29**
Lanao del Sur	9	5	19	20	28	34	63	25	32	27	**26**

Figure 6: Number of Conflict Deaths per 1,000 Square Kilometers, by Province

Conflict deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.
Sulu	19	16	25	21	31	49	51	48	43	35	**34**
Maguindanao*	20	9	17	34	36	44	49	44	42	36	**33**
Basilan**	30	29	19	27	31	60	37	26	21	26	**31**
Lanao del Sur	6	3	7	7	12	21	90	7	8	7	**17**
Tawi-Tawi	5	3	6	6	6	13	11	11	7	9	**8**

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Figure 7: Number of Conflict Incidents per 100,000 Population, by Province

Conflict incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.
Maguindanao*	55	50	47	50	103	216	172	127	114	118	**105**
Lanao del Sur	32	20	40	83	110	232	185	139	113	100	**105**
Basilan**	32	26	33	24	73	123	122	112	100	72	**72**
Sulu	15	17	14	15	17	37	36	39	49	47	**29**
Tawi-Tawi	9	5	19	20	28	34	63	25	32	27	**26**

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Figure 8: Number of Conflict Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Province

Conflict deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.
Maguindanao*	19	16	25	21	31	49	51	48	43	35	**34**
Lanao del Sur	20	9	17	34	36	44	49	44	42	36	**33**
Basilan**	30	29	19	27	31	60	37	26	21	26	**31**
Sulu	6	3	7	7	12	21	90	7	8	7	**17**
Tawi-Tawi	5	3	6	6	6	13	11	11	7	9	**8**

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Figure 9: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, in Percent

Conflict incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Undetermined	37%	43%	40%	40%	47%	36%	27%	16%	18%	19%
Single cause	44%	43%	44%	42%	39%	47%	42%	54%	49%	46%
Multiple causes	19%	14%	16%	18%	14%	18%	32%	30%	33%	35%

Figure 10: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, in Percent

Conflict Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Undetermined	46%	55%	55%	47%	56%	47%	19%	25%	32%	38%
Single cause	24%	33%	26%	39%	29%	8%	4%	21%	12%	11%
Multiple causes	29%	12%	19%	14%	15%	45%	77%	54%	56%	51%

Figure 11: Number of Incidents and Deaths by Single Cause

Single cause	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Incidents	382	277	462	626	908	2,041	1723	1,555	1325	1080	**10,379**
Deaths	123	108	126	257	238	105	99	189	104	81	**1,430**

Figure 12: Number of Incidents by a Single Cause of Conflict

Issues	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Shadow economy	207	125	241	269	319	1008	1009	1164	992	865	**6,199**
Common crimes	55	36	55	166	335	589	391	176	131	80	**2,014**
Identity	21	22	24	81	96	335	283	102	105	63	**1,132**
Political	70	79	120	79	134	62	7	36	35	5	**627**
Governance	13	3	7	13	9	13	11	62	53	61	**245**
Resource	16	12	15	18	15	34	22	15	9	6	**162**
Grand Total	382	277	462	626	908	2,041	1,723	1,555	1,325	1,080	**10,379**

Figure 13: Number of Deaths by a Single Cause of Conflict

Issues	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Shadow economy	14	12	20	15	23	53	51	136	60	53	**437**
Common crimes	18	11	9	15	16	12	13	11	7	14	**126**
Identity	7	3	14	17	9	22	19	20	17	4	**132**
Political	64	75	68	185	183	14	2	8	5	3	**607**
Governance	5	2	5	10	3	2	12	9	14	6	**68**
Resource	15	5	10	15	4	2	2	5	1	1	**60**
Grand Total	123	108	126	257	238	105	99	189	104	81	**1,430**

Figure 14: Number of Conflict Incidents due to Multiple Causes

Incidents	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
2 causes	155	779	144	245	302	690	1186	752	761	650	**4,964**
3 causes	10	8	23	20	14	63	103	112	98	146	**597**
4 causes	4	1	2	4	0	13	12	12	13	24	**85**
5 causes	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	2	4	**13**
6 causes	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**2**
All multiple causes	169	88	169	269	317	768	1303	880	874	824	**5,661**

Figure 15: Number of Conflict Deaths due to Multiple Causes

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
2 causes	120	34	49	79	95	484	1,605	418	407	318	**3,609**
3 causes	7	5	32	13	28	62	119	60	48	54	**428**
4 causes	23	2	14	3	0	10	6	5	18	12	**93**
5 causes	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	7	1	0	**14**
6 causes	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	**3**
All multiple causes	150	41	95	95	127	558	1,733	490	474	384	**4,147**

Figure 16: Number of Conflict Incidents and Deaths from Undetermined Causes

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Incidents	320	278	428	605	1078	1552	1107	463	480	457	**6,768**
Deaths	236	181	270	312	462	577	430	228	269	285	**3,250**

Figure 17: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Maguindanao

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	120	93	155	346	506	832	603	220	258	226	**3,359**
Single	141	87	176	359	478	1,173	862	738	546	446	**5,006**
Multiple	67	23	70	142	127	352	412	451	343	343	**2,330**

Figure 18: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Maguindanao

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	85	54	92	135	184	279	206	122	161	148	**1,466**
Single	36	28	39	159	118	44	21	77	45	32	**599**
Multiple	83	10	46	48	62	120	270	251	216	184	**1,290**

Figure 19: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Lanao del Sur

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	51	37	126	103	169	148	113	55	71	63	**936**
Single	39	21	108	125	159	243	243	194	192	145	**1,469**
Multiple	48	21	51	78	92	123	585	123	219	205	**1,545**

Figure 20: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Lanao del Sur

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	49	28	80	67	116	98	61	25	31	34	**589**
Single	10	6	16	19	16	23	19	29	13	16	**167**
Multiple	31	14	12	20	52	189	1,278	45	81	53	**1,775**

Figure 21: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Basilan

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	83	78	69	94	213	325	168	70	77	97	**1,274**
Single	85	81	82	62	130	343	312	271	221	229	**1,816**
Multiple	35	25	23	29	37	128	151	127	121	108	**784**

Figure 22: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Basilan

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	51	58	39	65	77	57	56	27	41	57	**528**
Single	35	43	25	24	33	16	6	24	11	12	**229**
Multiple	25	7	6	10	5	147	75	46	26	25	**372**

Figure 23: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Sulu

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	48	51	55	41	162	195	196	84	55	41	**928**
Single	83	50	73	54	112	222	218	260	231	152	**1,455**
Multiple	16	16	22	12	58	142	139	164	167	134	**870**

Figure 24: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Sulu

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	36	31	41	29	65	115	88	33	25	29	**492**
Single	42	30	44	51	69	8	41	41	30	17	**373**
Multiple	8	10	30	16	8	98	102	146	142	112	**672**

Figure 25: Number of Conflict Incidents by Number of Causes, Tawi-Tawi

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	18	19	23	21	28	52	27	34	19	30	**271**
Single	34	38	23	26	29	60	88	92	135	108	**633**
Multiple	3	3	3	8	3	23	16	15	24	34	**132**

Figure 26: Number of Conflict Deaths by Number of Causes, Tawi-Tawi

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Undetermined	15	10	18	16	20	28	19	21	11	17	**175**
Single	0	1	2	4	2	14	12	18	5	4	**62**
Multiple	3	0	1	1	0	4	8	2	9	10	**38**

Box 1: Conflict Terrains

Figure 1.1: Number of Land-Related Conflict Incidents and Deaths in the Bangsamoro

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Incidents	17	11	10	19	13	23	46	30	27	34
Deaths	42	12	12	15	9	7	17	22	21	30

Figure 1.2: Number of Land-Related Conflict Incidents in Bangsamoro Provinces

Conflict deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Maguindanao*	11	4	3	15	9	15	28	20	14	21
Basilan**	4	3	2	1	1	6	8	1	1	0
Lanao del Sur	1	2	3	3	3	2	6	8	7	12
Sulu	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	1
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Figure 1.3: Number of Deaths due to Land-Related Conflict Incidents in Bangsamoro Provinces

Conflict deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Maguindanao*	28	5	8	12	8	6	13	18	19	26
Lanao del Sur	1	2	1	3	0	0	3	4	0	4
Basilan**	11	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Sulu	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*including Cotabato City ** including Isabela City

Chapter 4: Untangling Conflict Strings: The Role of Identity and Vengeance in Perpetuating Violence

Figure 1: Incidents of Vertical and Horizontal Conflicts

Deaths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Horizontal	481	293	517	810	1,078	2,641	2,327	2,155	1,998	1,672
Vertical	70	72	114	86	147	171	699	281	201	232
Undetermined	320	278	428	604	1,078	1,550	1,106	462	480	457
Total: Vertical + Horizontal	551	365	631	896	1,225	2,812	3,026	2,436	2,199	1,904

Figure 2: Collective Violence Leading to Deaths

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Ave.	Total
Common Crime	0	0	1	1	0	3	5	5	2	12	**3**	**29**
Governance Issues	1	0	0	3	2	5	2	25	23	51	**11**	**112**
Identity Issues	9	3	11	4	5	42	91	100	60	63	**39**	**388**
Political Issues	19	15	32	30	28	45	82	102	59	60	**47**	**472**
Resource Issues	5	0	1	7	2	1	4	9	8	7	**4**	**44**
Shadow Economy	4	2	7	7	7	7	79	114	182	201	**61**	**610**

Figure 3: Clan Feuds by Province and Year

Province	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Basilan	9	6	6	3	3	5	18	6	10	7
Lanao del Sur	27	10	19	32	37	24	32	38	61	49
Maguindanao	23	8	24	29	16	23	47	45	53	35
Sulu	5	7	10	3	4	10	8	6	11	5
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0

Chapter 5: VII and the Patterns of Violence in the Bangsamoro

Figure 1: Violence Intensity Index in the Bangsamoro

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Intensity	2.202	2.153	2.220	2.303	3.448	3.799	4.929	3.603	2.559	3.530

Figure 2: Number of Violent Incidents

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Incidents	871	643	1,059	1,500	2,303	4,362	4,132	2,898	2,679	2,361

Figure 3: Number of Deaths and Injured Individuals, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Deaths	509	330	491	664	827	1,241	2,261	907	847	750
Injured	439	498	526	589	1,027	1,990	1,570	970	896	713

Figure 4: Number of Displaced Individuals, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Displaced	2,510	1,885	2,793	2,010	16,510	44,077	220,116	16,455	8,705	12,599

Figure 5: Violence Intensity Index by Cause

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Common Crimes	0.030	0.020	0.029	0.075	0.126	0.238	0.209	0.136	0.130	0.087
Governance Issues	0.012	0.005	0.007	0.014	0.019	2.039	0.023	0.076	0.087	0.178
Identity Issues	2.077	0.032	2.056	1.080	3.102	3.380	4.763	3.339	2.284	3.274
Political Issues	2.066	0.063	2.089	1.089	3.125	3.229	4.575	3.230	2.192	3.178
Resource Issues	2.023	0.008	1.011	1.013	1.009	2.019	1.023	2.034	2.027	3.037
Shadow Economy Issues	0.136	0.085	2.149	1.194	1.237	1.576	1.630	1.689	2.651	0.568

Figure 6: Violent Incidents by Cause

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Common Crimes	86	57	94	274	485	898	733	434	392	246
Governance Issues	29	9	14	28	36	65	30	187	200	450
Identity Issues	140	73	110	210	223	736	1,254	633	556	504
Political Issues	94	93	171	101	159	260	707	356	311	260
Resource Issues	28	17	20	29	23	52	59	72	56	77
Shadow Economy Issues	354	210	414	527	603	1,591	1,649	1,780	1,682	1,387

Figure 7: Violence Intensity Index, by Province/City

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
City of Isabela	0.037	0.018	0.016	0.011	0.004	0.263	0.191	0.121	0.126	0.102
City of Cotabato	0.072	0.011	0.029	0.216	0.085	0.572	0.335	0.358	0.261	0.205
Basilan	0.096	0.130	1.086	0.107	0.194	2.223	0.158	2.165	1.116	0.167
Lanao del Sur	0.085	0.054	0.153	0.159	0.246	3.358	4.814	2.242	0.289	0.282
Maguindanao	2.133	2.110	1.207	1.237	3.514	3.570	1.651	2.520	2.455	3.486
Sulu	0.108	0.090	1.107	2.101	0.252	0.368	0.371	0.382	1.341	0.298
Tawi-Tawi	0.026	0.031	0.027	0.032	0.030	0.076	0.072	0.089	0.147	0.137

Figure 8: Violence Intensity Index, Rebellion

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	1.380	0.465	2.526	1.711	1.983	0.012	0.019	0.021	0.012	0.010

Figure 9: Frequency of Rebellion Issues, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	70	72	114	86	147	2	7	7	4	3

Figure 10: Rebellion-Related Deaths, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	68	73	68	186	199	2	0	1	0	1

Figure 11: Number of Displaced Individuals, Rebellion

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	100	0	2,284	376	305	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 12: Number of Rebellion-Related Incidents, by BARMM Province/City

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Isabela City	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cotabato City	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Basilan	27	29	24	12	27	0	1	0	0	0
Maguindanao	12	29	59	55	70	2	3	3	1	2
Sulu	25	11	20	14	44	0	0	0	0	0
Tawi-Tawi	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanao del Sur	0	1	7	3	5	0	3	4	2	1

Figure 13: Violence Intensity Index, Land Issues, by BARMM Province/City

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Isabela City	0	0	0	0	0	0.08	0.12	0.01	0.02	0
Cotabato City	0.03	0	0	0	0	0.03	0.03	0.03	0	0
Basilan	2.70	0.13	1.24	1.40	1.34	2.32	1.77	2.63	2.49	3.74
Maguindanao	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.13	0.25	0.12	0.26
Sulu	0.05	0.11	0.04	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.10	0.02
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.06	0	0.01	0
Lanao del Sur	0.19	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.03	0	0	0

Figure 14: Death-Incident Ratio, *Rido* or Clan Feud, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	1.359	0.645	0.814	0.809	0.967	0.908	0.783	0.705	0.733	0.625

Figure 15: Violence Intensity Index, *Rido* or Clan Feud, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	2.660	0.250	1.479	1.471	1.533	1.481	0.752	2.731	2.930	3.623

Figure 16: Displacement-Incident Ratio, *Rido* or Clan Feud, BARMM

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	37.66	0	5.93	0.75	1.67	8.80	0	26.32	34.05	3.62

Chapter 6: Violence in Borderlands: What Explains the Difference in Intensity and Magnitude?

Figure 2: Conflict Deaths by Cause of Conflict: Wao and Amai Manabilang, 2011-2020

	Wao	Amai Manabilang
Resource issue	1	0
Political issue	2	0
Governance issue	3	0
Shadow economy	28	4
Identity issue	20	3
Common crimes	18	8
Undetermined	52	14
Total	124	29

Figure 4: South Upi: Number of Violent Deaths, by Cause of Violence, 2011-2020

Resource issue	10
Political issue	5
Governance issue	1
Shadow economy	12
Identity issue	11
Common crimes	10
Undetermined	40
Total	89

Figure 3: South Upi: Number of Violent Incidents, 2011–2020

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BARMM	12	4	14	21	31	51	29	23	24	26

Chapter 7: In Search of Peaceful Solutions: Land Conflicts and the Plight of the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples

Figure 1: Land Conflict Deaths in Teduray-Lambangian Areas

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
South Upi	0	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	9
Datu Odin Sinsuat	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	4	1	2
Datu Abdullah Sangki	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Guindulungan	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
Datu Blah T. Sinsuat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Ampatuan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Upi	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Datu Hoffer Ampatuan	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Datu Unsay	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Chapter 8: Women and Conflict: A Gendered Analysis of Violence in the Bangsamoro

Figure 1: Gender-Related Incidents and Human Costs, by year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Incidents	15	17	14	85	119	334	306	125	97	100
Deaths	2	2	2	6	13	15	2	7	5	1
Injured	2	4	1	31	54	111	106	51	42	30

Figure 2: Gender-Based Violent Incidents 2019 and 2020, by month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020, including child abuse incidents	16	4	11	7	5	5	2	8	10	9	12	8
2019	8	3	4	2	1	5	12	12	4	6	7	6
2020	7	3	7	5	2	4	2	4	3	4	7	2

Figure 3: Female Deaths and Female Involvement in Conflict Incidents, by year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Female Deaths	62	22	64	34	91	116	129	123	114	89
Incidents With Females	110	74	127	280	512	1,122	1,004	574	524	413
Number of Incidents	871	643	1,059	1,500	2,303	4,362	4,132	2,898	2,679	2,361

Figure 4: Female vs. Male Involvement by Main Causes of Conflict

Main causes	Female	Male
Shadow Economy Issues	1,318	7,269
Common Crimes	1,210	2,891
Identity Issues	1,463	2,748
Political Issues	127	886
Governance Issues	116	665
Resource Issues	53	292

Figure 5: Top Five Specific Causes with Female and Male Involvement

Cause	Female	Cause	Male
Illegal weapons	391	Carjacking	1,279
Child abuse	531	Violent extremism	1,287
Illegal drugs	532	Robbery	2,448
Robbery	630	Illegal weapons	4,344
Gender-related issues	1,241	Illegal drugs	5,356

Figure 6: Female and Male Involvement, by year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Female Victims	191	115	120	287	507	1,095	927	455	354	267
Female Suspected perpetrators	15	12	39	52	91	288	217	206	219	168
Male Suspected perpetrators	285	222	506	445	1,200	2,770	2,679	2,658	2,678	2,575
Male Victims	461	299	677	558	1,418	2,292	1,889	1,162	1,101	884

Figure 7: Top 10 Specific Causes with Female and Male Perpetrators

Cause	Female	Cause	Male
Illegal drugs	439	Illegal drugs	4,897
Illegal gambling	256	Illegal weapons	2,585
Illegal weapons	76	Gender-related issues	1,120
Child abuse	75	Illegal gambling	1,118
Illicit financial transactions	60	Robbery	1,001
Executive and judicial decisions	44	Violent extremism	613
Robbery	36	Executive and judicial decisions	567
Personal grudge	36	Personal grudge	458
Gender-related issues	29	Child abuse	431
Other common crimes	28	Carjacking	424

Figure 8: Top 10 Specific Causes with Female and Male Victims

Cause	Female	Cause	Male
Gender-related issues	1,134	Illegal weapons	1,481
Robbery	586	Robbery	1,394
Child abuse	365	Carjacking	826
Human trafficking	280	Clan feud	588
Illegal weapons	264	Personal grudge	520
Carjacking	126	Religious conflict	364
Clan feud	114	Violent extremism	364
Damage to properties	112	Damage to properties	301
Personal grudge	106	Kidnap-for-ransom	295
Violent extremism	105	Alcohol intoxication	206

Figure 9: Family Honor Above the Rest

Ang karangalan ng aking pamilya ang una kong iniisip sa paggawa ng desisyon.

Translation: "The honor of my family is my first consideration when making decisions.""

	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	7	1.79
Disagree	4	1.02
Neutral/Not sure	10	2.55
Agree	229	55.42
Strongly agree	142	36.22

There are five "no response" and two "not applicable" responses that were excluded in the total of opinion poll.

Figure 10: Fear of Bringing Shame to the Family

Natatakot akong mapahiya ang pamilya ko dahil sa mga aksyon ko.

Translation: "I fear bringing shame to my family because of my actions."

	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	10	2.54
Disagree	9	2.29
Neutral/Not sure	23	5.85
Agree	191	48.60
Strongly agree	160	40.71

There are four "no response" and two "not applicable" responses that were excluded in the total of opinion poll.

Figure 11: Women Should Follow the Commands of Male Family Members

Ang mabuting babae ay sumusunod sa utos ng mga lalaki sa kanyang pamilya.

Translation: "A good woman follows the commands of male family members."

	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.01
Disagree	9	2.27
Neutral/Not sure	20	5.05
Agree	195	49.24
Strongly agree	168	42.42

There are two "no response" and one "not applicable" responses that were excluded in the total of opinion poll.

Figure 12: Male members of the Family Dictate What Women Should Wear

Nararapat lamang na diktahan ng mga lalaki ang tamang pananamit ng mga babae.

Translation: "It is only right that male members of the family dictate what women should wear."

	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	9	2.28
Disagree	15	3.80
Neutral/Not sure	28	7.09
Agree	154	38.99
Strongly agree	189	47.85

There are three "no response" and one "not applicable" responses that were excluded in the total of opinion poll.

Figure 13: Extremely Low-Salaried Incomes

Meron po ba kayong regular na sweldo?

Translation: Do you get regular income?

	Count	Percent
No response	29	7.27
Has salaried income	22	5.51
No salaried income	348	87.22

Figure 14: Informal Economies and Other Income Sources

Meron po ba kayong iba pang pinagkukunan ng pondo? Anu-ano po ang mga ito?

Translation: Do you have other sources of income? What are they?

	Count	Percent
No response	14	3.41
Selling (non-agricultural)	31	7.56
Owned business	35	8.54
Others*	38	9.27
Selling (agricultural products from own land)	43	10.49
Financial support from family	51	12.44
Farm work (not owned land)	63	15.37
None	135	32.93

Figure 15: Women's Reproductive and Other Work

Sa isang araw, anong mga gawain ang pinaka-pinaglalaanan ninyo ng oras?

Translation: In a day, what activities do you allot most of your time in?

	Count	Percent
None	17	3.85
Education (studying)	27	6.11
Others*	30	6.79
Gardening	43	9.73
Livelihood activities	67	15.16
Care-giving and household chores	258	58.37

Figure 16: Informal Economies and Other Income Sources Female vs. Male Involvement in Violent Extremism

Involvement	Male	Female
Victim	364	105
Suspected	613	15

Figure 17: Manifestations of Female vs. Male Involvement in Violent Extremism

Manifestation	Male	Female
Clash/Encounter	604	40
Shooting	407	26
Bombing	209	34
Murder	201	12
Confiscation	157	4
Surrender	156	0
Kidnapping/Abduction	67	10
Arrest	59	7
Ambuscade	35	1
Threat/Grave coercion	24	17

Chapter 9: Voices for Violence: Social Media in the time of Mamasapano, Marawi, and Maguindanao

Figure 5: Number of Media Reports Covering Maguindanao (including Cotabato City), 2011–2020

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Media reports	140	25	117	138	104	158	209	326	274	260

ANNEX 2

Methodology

Conflict Alert tracks and analyzes violent conflict, defined as incident/s where two or more parties use intimidation, force or physical violence to exert control, settle misunderstandings or grievances, or defend and expand their individual or collective interests (e.g., social, economic, political resources and power, etc.).

Data Sources. Key sources of data are the incident reports from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and news reports from 12 local and national newspapers. Multi-Stakeholder Validation Groups (MSVGs), composed of local people with knowledge of local conflicts, also add incidents to the database. MSVG members' backgrounds range from security provision, crime prevention, conflict research, and crime monitoring, to peacebuilding, local governance, policy formulation, journalism, and grassroots knowledge. The multiple data sources—police, media and the community—make Conflict Alert the largest repository of data on subnational conflict in the Philippines. From collection, the data undergo a strict process of evaluation, validation, and analysis before they are shared with the public.

Data Gathering. Incident reports are collected from the regional, provincial, and city offices of the PNP. Reports from 14 national and local newspapers are gathered.

Data Sorting. Incidents are classified into violent and non-violent. Only the violent conflict incidents are encoded and subjected to analysis.

Data Encoding. At the first stage, trained encoders record all details of the incidents using an online encoding form. They determine the cause or causes of the incidents as provided by the police and newspaper reports. They check for links between newly encoded incidents and previously recorded incidents, or for conflict strings. They geotag the incidents. Duplicate entries are voided using a search facility. At the next stage, data reviewers check the encoded data, in particular, the cause or causes of the incidents and conflict strings. At the third stage, a second reviewer makes random checks to further ensure data quality.

A distinct feature of Conflict Alert is the multi-tagging of incidents to capture their multicausality. This sharpens the analysis of conflict triggers and promotes understanding of conflict dynamics. Multi-tagging, however, creates a discrepancy between the number of reported incidents and the number of causes. For example, an incident involving illegal drugs and weapons, both shadow economy issues, is counted as one incident in the database. But as to cause, it is counted as one incident under illegal drugs and another incident under illicit weapons.

Conflict Alert also enables identification of conflict strings. Conflict strings refer to episodes of violence arising from a discrete incident with one or multiple causes.[1] It can also emerge

[1] De la Rosa, N. P. C. 2014. "Disrupting Conflict Strings in Sub-National Contexts" Experience from Muslim Mindanao, Philippines." Paper delivered at the WHO and University of Cambridge Global Violence Reduction Conference 2014 on 18-19 September 2014 in King's College, Cambridge, UK.

when the singular source of violence at the outset triggers other issues or causes of conflict. The database is able to track how a single incident is reproduced through violent confrontations or retaliatory actions. For example, politically-motivated conflict can induce an episode of violence that fuses with shadow economy or ethnic and clan identity issues, as it spirals out of control.

Data Validation. Multi-stakeholder Validation Groups (MSVGs) validate the list of violent conflict incidents. They also add details, such as the cause or causes of the conflict, when these are not provided by police and newspaper reports. Members also add incidents they know of that they did not find on the list. They use the meetings to discuss conflict trends to enhance the analysis of the data.

An MSVG is a multi-stakeholder body that draws together different individuals with distinctive expertise to examine and validate conflict data, determine the cause/s of conflict, identity conflict strings, and enrich data analysis. Three MSVGs have been established to cover three geographical clusters: Zamboanga-Basilan-Sulu-Tawi Tawi (Zambasulta); Maguindanao; and Lanao del Sur. They are convened bi-monthly by academic partners Western Mindanao State University and Notre Dame University.

Data Analysis. Data are tabulated and analyzed according to conflict incidence, density, causes, strings, and trends. In addition, the severity (frequency) and magnitude (or cost in terms of people injured, killed and displaced) of violence are examined using Alert's Violence Intensity Index to help pinpoint priorities and interventions in conflict-affected areas.
At this stage, cause or causes of violent conflict are doubly checked to see patterns or trends. Related incidents are examined for conflict strings.

Data Visualization. The findings are presented using visual tools such as charts, graphs and tables. Incidents are also mapped, providing locational context to the incidents. Users of the Conflict Alert website may generate their own charts, graphs, tables and maps using its charting and mapping tools.

Data Dissemination. Results are presented to key stakeholders such as government agencies, local government units, civil society groups, academic institutions, private institutions, and the security sector. The whole dataset is also stored in a comma-separated values or CSV files and written up in reports that are uploaded to the Conflict Alert website and made available to the public for free.

ANNEX 3

Definition of terms

Violent conflict. An incident where two or more parties use violence to settle misunderstandings and grievances and/or defend or expand their individual or collective interests. Violence entails the use of force or physical violence, or the threat to use force or physical violence.

Vertical conflict. These are separatist or non-separatist armed struggles against the State, including terrorist actions that destabilize a State. Rebellions, insurgencies and extremist violence fall under vertical conflict.

Horizontal conflict. These are conflicts between individuals, families, clans, ethnic groups, rival insurgent factions, political parties, private armed groups, among others.

Causal categories. Conflicts are categorized according to their main cause and specific cause. The main causes of conflict are shadow economy issues, common crimes, political issues, identity issues, resource issues, and governance issues. Under each main cause are specific causes. Conflict Alert presently has 59 specific causes of conflict.

Shadow economies. These pertain to the informal or underground sectors of the economy that tend to fuel violent conflict. In Mindanao, these include the illegal drug and illicit firearm trades, kidnap-for-ransom, cattle rustling, smuggling, illegal gambling, carjacking, and human trafficking.

Common crimes. These are cases of robbery, damage to properties, and violent conflict triggered by alcohol intoxication, among others.

Political issues. These include vertical conflict such as rebellion and extremist violence, and horizontal conflict caused by electoral competition, abuse of power and authority or political repression, and violent struggles between rival insurgent groups for politico-military control.

Identity issues. These include clashes between families and clans, violence arising from personal grudges between individuals, and gender-based violence. Religious conflict, an identity issue, is closely linked to extremist violence, a political issue, and manifests as brutal acts targeting individuals or groups holding different beliefs.

Resource issues. These are conflicts over ownership, use, and control of land, water and other natural resources.

Governance issues. These are violent struggles for government resources and rents, including conflicts due to bidding processes, violent responses to lawful actions and processes, and other government-related transactions and/or development projects, including COVID-19 issues.

Undetermined causes. If the cause or causes cannot be determined, the incident information on the manifestation of violence, for example, shooting, stabbing, mauling, etc., is still stored in the Conflict Alert database. The most common manifestations are: shooting, arrest, confiscation, murder, assault, clash/encounter, buy-bust/entrapment, and threat/grave coercion.

Najib Zacaria

About the cover

For the first time since 2013, we collaborated with local artists who brought to life the richness of analyses generated from the conflict monitoring system's 10-year panel data. We are indebted to **Luis Lorenzana**, who generously lent us one of his paintings for the front cover. Luis is a self-taught artist and illustrator who rose to fame through his unique brand of pop surrealism. The publication's cover features the painter's work entitled "Bliss" from the "Beautiful Pain" series he launched in 2012, with female characters portraying stillness from violence, elegance from distortion, and life from destruction. As with the subject's cracked-open face in the painting, this Conflict Alert book reveals the many fissures in the Bangsamoro society. This publication, like his art, was inspired by parallelisms and juxtapositions of factors. We drew on multidisciplinary expertise, demonstrating the interoperability and relevance of the Conflict Alert dataset across disciplines and fields. Peace is, after all, everyone's concern, and we all have a role to play in achieving it.

Lorenzana, Luis. *Bliss* from Beautiful Pain, 2012, Silverlens, Singapore.

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