

URBAN TERRORISM: THE SIEGE OF MARAWI CITY

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by

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ABSTRACT

URBAN TERRORISM: THE SIEGE OF MARAWI CITY, by Major Ervin C. Divinagracia, 148 pages.

This thesis analyzed the new form of urban terrorism as displayed in the siege of Marawi City. It sought to analyze the factors in the operational environment that bred the expansion of urban terrorism in the Philippines. The case study method was used to draw out the results of the study. Crenshaw's Theories on Terrorism, Elkus and Sullivan's Spectrum of Urban Armed Assault, Savitch's Typology of Urban Terrorist Attack, and the System's Perspective using the PMESII-RAFT model was used as a point of analysis. The results showed that there was a new form of terrorism that has bred out of the older forms of terrorism in the Philippines. The change in political ideology and organizational form is apparent as it evolved into an ISIS inspired ideology and leadership. Marawi City is vulnerable to urban terrorism when analyzed under the systems perspective using PMESII-RAFT model. These environmental factors influenced the rise of terrorism in the Philippines. Finally, the strategic assessment was done to draw out national and regional implications of urban terrorism was recommended for further study.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AFP | Armed Forces of the Philippines |
| ARMM | Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao |
| ASG | Abu Sayaff Group |
| BIFF | Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters |
| DIWM | Daulah Islamiyah Wilayatul Mashriq |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| MBG | Misurari Breakaway Group |
| MILF | Moro Islamic Liberation Front |
| MNLF | Moro National Liberation Front |
| OE | Operational Environment |
| PMESII | Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational, Infrastructure |
| RAFT | Relationships, Actors, Functions, Tensions |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Terrorism is defined as the “pre-meditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or sub-national groups against innocent civilians in order to force governments to bend to the terrorist’s will.”¹ This general definition of terrorism cuts across all incidents of terrorism across the world. Terrorism has become a global menace and is deadlier and more indiscriminate with the rise of new terror groups such as the Islamic State/Daesh, Al Qaida, and Boko Haram among others. It has raised the level of violence through terrorist attacks. Its effect on human casualties and destruction from terrorism has become deadlier. There is also a rising trend in terrorism targeting urban cities like New York, Paris, Mosul, Mumbai, among others.

Terrorism in Southeast Asia is persisting mostly driven by jihadist ideology and Islamic extremism. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines have been battling transnational and homegrown terrorism. Jemaah Islamiyah, a transnational terrorist organization operating in Southeast Asia has been supporting several homegrown terrorists to further their jihadist ideology. Thailand has been fighting the Malay Muslim extremist and Indonesia has been battling several nationalist Islamists.²

Historically, the Philippines have been fighting terrorism since the 1970s. The fight against the Communist and the Moro insurgents has been going on for years. The Communist Party of the Philippine’s armed wing, the New People’s Army that began in the 1960s adopts a Maoist guerilla warfare and terrorism as its method of exerting their

political agenda of establishing a communist state.³ The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the 1970s, and later the National Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the 1990s have been pursuing an armed struggle for a Bangsamoro Republic.⁴ The MNLF and the MILF both have been waging semi-conventional warfare and terrorist attacks targeting mostly government forces.

The rise of the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG) in the 1990s heralded a new form of terrorism in the guise of Islamic extremism. The ASG was established in Basilan under the leadership of Abdurajak Janjalani. The ASG was a break-away group of the Moro National Liberation Front under Nur Misuari. This group has been known to use bombing, high profile kidnapping, beheading, assassination, and small scale atrocities in Southern Mindanao in the areas of Zamboanga, Sulu, and Basilan targeting both military forces and civilians. The fight against this group was limited to the jungles of Southern Philippines where they engaged government forces.⁵ Since then, several homegrown terrorists emerged in southern Philippines. As of late, there have been sporadic attacks in other areas of the country as well.

Today, terrorism remains a serious problem in the Philippines. According to the 2016 US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism, it has noted an “emergence of ISIS-affiliated extremist groups in the country, persistent bombings by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), attacks on government forces, bombings in key cities”⁶. Aside from the ASG, other terrorist organizations have emerged of late which are labeled as ISIS inspired.

In a study done by Thomas Samuel entitled *Radicalization in South East Asia: a selected case study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines* first published in

2016, he said that there has been very little information on ISIS inspired terrorist groups in the Philippines, and that their presence cannot be felt in a significant manner. This was despite the fact that there were recorded allegiance of several terror groups to the ISIS in 2014 namely the Abu Sayaff Group led by Isnilon Hapilon the proclaimed emir of Daesh in South East Asia , the Maute Group led by Omar and Abdulah Maute including their family members, Bangsa Moro Freedom Islamic Fighters, Ansarul Kilafa Philippines (AKP), Ansar Dawlah Fi Filibbin, The Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), *Ansar Khalifah Sarangani* (AKS) or *Jemaah Islamiyah Philippines*, and the Khilafa Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM). At the time, there has been challenge on whether these groups pledged allegiance for propaganda purposes, or are either ISIS inspired, or ISIS directed groups.⁷

Aside from the increase of terror organizations in the country, it has been observed that there was an increase in terrorist attacks in urban centers. Some of the noted urban terror attacks were the Zamboanga Siege in 2013 where 500 members of the Moro National Liberation Front attacked Zamboanga City to protest what they considered as a government failure to fulfill the provisions of the Peace Agreement.⁸ The three-week siege lead to the deaths of 19 government forces and 208 rebels. It caused the displacement of 24,000 families, and the destruction of the city.⁹ The rising terror group lead by the Maute Brothers laid siege on their hometown of Butig, Lanao del Sur on 26 November 2016, which led to the wounding of 30 security forces, and 61 rebels killed.¹⁰ The members of the Maute Group were also responsible for the Davao City Bombing last 02 September 2016 which claimed the lives of 14 people.¹¹

Urban terrorism is defined as the “use of terrorism aimed at city’s strength such as people, economy or infrastructure at cities by causing mass casualties and property

damage to broadcast the event shocking a large public.¹² Terrorists seek to control large swatches of territory, inflict damage on smaller spaces, and obtain logistical access to potential targets.¹³ Urban terrorism is a relatively new form of terrorism in the Philippines as the government forces have traditionally fought terror groups in the jungles of Southern Philippines.

Marawi Siege Timeline of Key Events

The just recently concluded Marawi Siege gave birth to a new type of terrorism in the Philippines, because of the conglomeration of pro-ISIS terror groups as well as the presence of Foreign Terrorist Fighters that were known as the Daulah Islamiya Wilayatul Mashriq (DIWM) or known as the Islamic State Province in East Asia. The DIWM is the umbrella organization of all local terror groups that pledged allegiance to ISIS. The siege was led by Isnilon Hapilon (the leader of the Abu Sayaff based in Sulu) who was declared Amir of the DIWM. However, the well-planned attack was largely commanded by the Maute Group who had complete access of and knew the city by virtue of their residence and clan membership.

The 148-day Marawi Siege started on May 23, 2017 in Marawi City, the only Islamic city in the Philippines, several days before the start of the Ramadan.¹⁴ The DIWM lead by the Maute Group, ASG, BIFF, and other terrorist fighters laid siege to most of the city's key infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, mosques, jails, business establishments, police stations and announced that they have pledged allegiance to the ISIS by raising its flag.



Figure 1. A Maute Member Places an ISIS Flag Atop a Mosque in Marawi City

Source: James Griffiths, “ISIS in Southeast Asia: Philippines battles growing threat,” *CNN*, May 29, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <http://cdn.cnn.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/170526123735-isis-flag-marawi-philippines-3-large-169>.

Allegedly, the siege was triggered when joint Military and Police forces attempted to capture Isnilon Hapilon, the head of the Abu Sayaff Group who was reported to be hiding in Marawi City. It was alleged that he was meeting with the Maute group that has pledged their support to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The operation turned into an urban battle as the ASG leader and its followers, reinforced by the Maute Group fighters took over the city, held hostage several civilians and freed prisoners.¹⁵ Two hundred thousand Muslims and Christians were caught in the operation and a vast exodus happened in the next few days as they walked to the next city where evacuation centers were set up. It was lately known that the government forces stumbled on a pre-meditated siege that should happen on the day of the Ramadan but it was botched because the military was pursuing Hapilon.



Figure 2. War Torn Marawi City

Source: Bong Sarmiento, “No Livelihood, No Home: Marawi Evacuees Face Hardship on Return to Devastated City,” October 24, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2017/10/marawi-evacuees-return/#Je6CxQb25wHMwCJ9.97>.

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Figure 3. Mass Evacuations in Marawi City Taken on May 26, 2017

Source: Eleanor Ross, “Could the Philippines become ISIS’s Southeast Asian Stronghold,” *Newsweek*, May 27, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <http://www.newsweek.com/philippines-isis-southeast-asian-stronghold-616282>.

The siege created a ripple of events which the military had to deal with. Ground troops were deployed as fighting escalated and mass evacuations were going on. President Duterte had to cut short his visit to Russia and came home with a major crisis at hand.

On the day of the terrorist attack, the President declared Martial Law in the whole of Mindanao. A 20-million bounty was given for the capture of the Maute brothers and Isnilon Hapilon. At the time of the fighting, it was believed that there were about 200-250 terrorists that have laid siege in the city.¹⁶The period of fighting was intense as both sides fought for crucial areas such as key bridges that provide a link from the main battle area and the consolidation and support areas.

In June 2017, Cayamora and Farhana Maute, the matriarch of the Maute Clan was arrested in separate operations in Davao City along with 16 Maute fighters. Government forces from the Marines recovered 52.2 million pesos (1.01 million dollars) and 27 million pesos (500 thousand dollars) worth of checks that was left in a safe house occupied by the Maute Group. A video obtained by the Associated Press showed the Maute brothers, Isnilon Hapilon, and Abu Humam planning the Marawi attack¹⁷.

On July 2017, the government forces were able to reclaim key bridges such as the Mapandi Bridge which provided a link towards the main battle area inside the city as well as the Safrullah Hospital which were considered the terrorist stronghold. By August, there were reports that five of the Maute brothers were killed in the battle, leaving Omar Maute as the only family who was fighting it out with Isnilon Hapilon. In September 2018, a major defensive position was reclaimed and the battle was limited to about 10 hectares with about 50 hostages holed up with the terrorists. The battle zone shrunk

further as the military reclaimed the third bridge controlling the passage areas for the terrorists.¹⁸

A major breakthrough came in October when Omar Maute and Isnilon Hapilon were both killed, and 17 hostages were released.¹⁹



Figure 4. Liberation of Marawi

Source: Undated Photo by 1st Lt. Bala Tamayo, SF. Used with permission.

On October 17, 2017, President Duterte declared the liberation of Marawi City or 153 days of fighting. In the aftermath of the siege, a total of 163 soldiers and cops died; 843 terrorists were killed by the military, and thousands were left homeless in one of the most violent urban terrorism events in the history of the Philippines.²⁰

The Marawi Siege was by far the most serious urban terrorist attack in recent history. It spanned six months, which far surpassed all other terror incidents in the last five years. It resulted to the city in ruins. It is said that the success of the Marawi Siege

may have an implication on how key cities in South East Asia will battle urban terrorism in the long term. Hincks noted that:

Marawi eclipses all those in deaths and duration. But perhaps it is most crucial significance is the potential for ISIS and its affiliates to grow and spread in Southeast Asia, where many countries are Muslim-majority or have sizable Muslim populations. At a recent security conference in Singapore, the city state's defense minister, Ng Eng Hen, said: "If the situation [in Marawi] is allowed to escalate or entrench, it would pose decades of problems . . . It can prove a pulling ground for would-be jihadists."²¹

Research Purpose

This research was undertaken to identify an emergence of a new form terrorism using Marawi Siege as a case study. This terrorist incident was unique in itself because of the magnitude of the casualties and the destruction that shocked the whole nation. It revealed a sophisticated terrorist organization motivated by a radical ideology that was capable of planning a magnitude of an attack, and are able to besiege Marawi City. It brought together a conglomeration of ISIS-inspired terror groups together with Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) that fought Philippine Security forces control over the only Islamic city in the Philippines. According to Jasminder Singh, "Marawi may well herald the start of a new Islamic State-Philippines (ISP) approach to capture territory opportunistically, sow interreligious discord and create a volatile environment that would draw fighters from the region and beyond."²² The consequence of a new form of terrorism has an implication to government forces, and future terrorist attacks in urban centers in the Philippines.

This research endeavors to describe the distinct features of this new form of terrorism that would distinguish it from other forms of terrorism. In particular, this research will look into the terrorist organizations' political objectives, religious ideology,

motives, structure as well as their methods of terrorism that are distinct from other terrorist organizations operating in the country.

This study analyzed the operational environment that may explain why vulnerable cities like Marawi City was targeted by this type of terrorist organization. This paper focused on understanding the interactions of the different systems in the operational environment in the realm of the political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure variables as well as the physical terrain, population and urban infrastructure that is distinct in an urban environment. By understanding these variables, this research may draw important inferences on why urban centers such as Marawi City were targets of this type of terrorism; and how government forces can predict such attacks in the future.

Research Questions

This research answered the general question: Is the Marawi Siege a new form of Urban Terrorism in the Philippines? This paper delved into the emerging form of urban terror by looking at the key factors which have contributed to the full scale urban battle in Marawi. The subsidiary questions which this research wants to answer are:

1. What was the form of urban terrorism that was revealed in the Marawi Siege?
2. What were the factors in the operational environment that influenced the siege in Marawi City?
3. What were the unique urban environment characteristics in Marawi City that made it vulnerable to this form of terrorism?

Context of the Research Question

The researcher speculates that there lies an emerging form of urban terrorism in the Philippines by studying the terrorist end states, ideology and organization, and the methods how they employ terrorism which lead to the Marawi Siege. This kind of urban terrorism can be compared to what has happened in Mumbai (2008), Nairobi (2013) and Paris (2015) in terms of motives, methods, government response and consequences.²³ The Marawi Siege also had semblance of terrorist's attacks made by ISIS in Iraq and Syria that may have inspired the homegrown terrorist groups in the Philippines to undertake similar attacks in vulnerable cities. The militants copied ISIS methods in Mosul by using hostages as human shields, employing snipers and developed an expedient tunnel system.²⁴

This paper looked into understanding of the key factors of the Marawi Siege and the reason why Marawi City was a suitable target by this form of terrorist attack. The research analyzed the operational environmental that made Marawi City vulnerable to this form of terrorism. An analysis of different operational variables (such as political, military, social, economic, infrastructure, and informational) as well as the specific in the urban environment factors of Marawi City may provide an understanding why Marawi was vulnerable to a terrorist siege.

Assumptions

The key assumptions of the study are as follows:

1. That terrorist attacks of Islamic extremists in urban centers are becoming more complex and lethal that is shaped by their political objectives, ideologies, and organizational structure and methods;

2. The Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Informational (PMESII) factors have contributed to the increase of urban terror attacks in the Philippines;
3. The physical terrain, population and infrastructure made Marawi City vulnerable to urban siege.

Definitions

Terrorism: is the premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or sub national groups against innocent civilians in order to force governments to bend to the terrorists' will.²⁵

Urban Terrorism: use of terrorism aimed at the city's strength such as people, economy or infrastructure by causing mass casualties and property damage to broadcast the event shocking a large public. Terrorists seek to control large swatches of territory, inflict damage on smaller spaces, and obtain logistical access to potential targets.²⁶

Instrumental approach: is the use of terrorism as a means to achieve a political end.²⁷

Organizational Approach: terrorism becomes self-sustaining because of the internal politics of the organization maintains itself regardless of the political outcome.²⁸

Systems Perspective: is a holistic approach to understand the complex relationships of the different systems within the environment.²⁹

Operational Environment: is the composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.³⁰

Daesh: The term use for the Islamic State; from the group's Arabic name of "al Dawla al Islamiya fi al Iraq wa al Sham" which also means "to trample down and crush."³¹

Wilayat: the province of the Islamic State.³²

Rido: refers to a state of recurring hostilities between families and kinship groups characterized by a series of retaliatory acts of violence carried out to avenge a perceived affront or injustice.³³

Shadow economy: is an economic activity outside state regulated frameworks that takes place in violent conflicts and emerges as a result of economic problems and opportunities emanating from the state capacity and legitimacy.³⁴

Mass Casualty Urban Terrorist Assault: also known as MCUTA. It is a terrorist modus operandi which is executed against a specific soft target or a set of separate targets within an urban area by highly trained and prepared suicide assault teams.³⁵

Scope

This study focused on the Marawi Siege in the context of the evolving form of urban terrorism. The scope of this study are the following:

1. Mapping of prominent Islamic terrorist organizations namely the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG), Maute Group, and the Daulah Islamiyah Wilayatul Mashriq (DIWM) who had perpetuated recent terror attacks in urban centers, in order to describe the different forms of urban terrorism;

2. Analyze the forms of terrorism using Crenshaw's theory of terrorism, Sullivan and Elkus' Spectrum of Urban Armed Assault, and Savitch's Typology of Urban Terrorism;
3. Analyzing Marawi Siege in the context of its operational environment through systems perspective using the PMESII-RAFT model that will describe why Marawi City was vulnerable to such as a siege.

The analysis of the events in the Marawi Siege may shape future security policies of the Philippine Government in addressing urban terrorism. This will form part of the recommendations of the study. The study covered the period from May 2017 to April 2018. The method employed is a case study which covered the time Marawi Siege incident started until its end in October 2017.

The analysis will only run through the key events until the siege was concluded. The scope does not include the strategies employed by the enemy and government forces on the tactical level and the detailed tactics, techniques, and procedures done by the terrorists and government forces.

Limitations

This study was limited to an interpretation of the researcher on the events that led to the Marawi Siege and the available information that has been published. This study is limited only the period where the Marawi Siege started until its culmination last October 2017. The researcher is constrained in securing classified information of the events that has transpired in the Marawi Siege such as After Battle Reports, Intelligence Summaries, information from captured terrorists and the like. The paper is limited in terms of data gathering since researcher is located in the U.S. The research only focused on Islamic

terrorism in the southern Philippines as the background of the study. This did not dwell on terrorism activities perpetrated by other groups such as the communist insurgents or criminal groups. The research did not focus on analyzing terror group nor the Philippine security forces strategies and how they employed tactics during the Marawi Siege.

Despite limitations from classified information, there are a lot of published materials regarding the study that will enable the researcher to gather to substantiate the paper. These are news articles, published videos, press conferences, current assessments from defense and security agencies, relevant reports done by subject-matter experts, government and non-government organizations and credible think-tanks as well as local and foreign literature which will provide a clearer understanding of the subject matter at hand.

Delimitations

This paper is qualitative in nature specifically on a case study of the Marawi Siege. The researcher will attempt to interpret the data generated from related published articles, news articles, videos of press conferences and related literature. The data collection of this study will cover from September 2017 up to April 2018 where the researcher will finish the MMAS. The findings of the study will only reflect the researcher's interpretation on urban terrorism in the context of the Marawi siege and will no way generalize urban terrorism in the Philippines or provide a comprehensive solution to either the national military strategy or national security policy of the current Philippine administration.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on urban terrorism. There have been several studies done on urban terror attacks that cover Europe, East Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The emergence of South East Asia as a hot bed of terrorism rose when ISIS militants are being defeated in the Middle East. This study has an implication to the AFP military strategy as it develops its capabilities on urban warfare to address urban terrorism. It has also implication to the Philippine Government national security policies as it need to address political, social, economic and cultural factors that incited the Marawi Siege. The involvement of transnational terror networks one of the key actors in the Marawi Siege will shed light on how far the urban terrorism has evolved that threatens regional security in the Southeast Asian Region.

¹ Ahmed Hashim, *Cities Under Siege: Mass Casualty Urban Terrorism Assault*, Policy Report (Singapore: Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2016), accessed September 23, 2017, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PR160505_Cities-under-Siege.pdf, 4.

² Peter Chalk, Angel Rabasa, William Rosenau, and Leanne Piggott, *The Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), accessed 20 October 2017, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG846.pdf, xiii.

³ Ibid., 36.

⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁶ US State Department, *2016 Country Reports on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Counter Terrorism, 2016), accessed October 15, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/>.

⁷ Thomas Samuel, *Radicalization in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: The Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016), accessed October 20,

2017, https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2016/Radicalisation_SEA_2016.pdf, 81.

⁸ Carmela Fonbuena, “Zamboanga Siege: Tales from the Combat Zone,” *Rappler*, September 13, 2014, accessed September 24, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/68885-zamboanga-siege-light-reaction-battalion>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Reuters*, “PH Military ends 5-day siege against Maute Group,” *ABS-CBN News*, November 30, 2016, accessed September 17, 2017. <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/30/16/ph-military-ends-5-day-siege-against-maute-group>.

¹¹ Kimberly Jane Tan, “Maute Group men arrested over Davao City blast,” *ABS-CBN News*, October 7, 2016, accessed 04 November 2017, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/07/16/maute-group-men-arrested-over-davao-city-blast>.

¹² H. V. Savitch, *Cities in a Time of Terror: Space, Territory and Local Resilience* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2008), 25.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Michael Bueza, “Timeline: The ‘Liberation’ of Marawi,” *Rappler*, October 25, 2017, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/185978-timeline-liberation-marawi-city>.

¹⁵ Joseph Hincks, “The Battle of Marawi,” *Time*, May 25, 2017, accessed September 14, 2017. <http://time.com/marawi-philippines-isis/>.

¹⁶ Bueza, “Timeline: The ‘Liberation’ of Marawi.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *GMA News Online*, “Isnlon Hapilon, Omar Maute killed,” October 16, 2017, accessed April 21, 2018, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/629644/isnlon-hapilon-omar-maute-killed/story/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hincks, “The Battle of Marawi.”

²² Jasminder Singh and Muhammad HaziqJani, “The Siege of Marawi City: Some Lessons,” *RSIS Commentary*, no. 153 (August 22, 2017), accessed September 14, 2017, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/icpvtr/co17153-the-siege-of-marawi-city-some-lessons/#.WdHAOmhSxPY, 2/>.

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- ²³ Hashim, *Cities Under Siege: Mass Casualty Urban Terrorism Assault*, 4.
- ²⁴ Tom Allard, “One week to cross a street: how IS pinned down Filipino soldiers in Marawi,” *Reuters*, September 25, 2017, accessed November 25, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-militants-battle-insight/one-week-to-cross-a-street-how-is-pinned-down-filipino-soldiers-in-marawi-idUSKCN1C00FW>.
- ²⁵ Hashim, *Cities Under Siege: Mass Casualty Urban Terrorism Assault*, 4.
- ²⁶ Savitch, *Cities in a Time of Terror: Space, Territory and Local Resilience*, 25.
- ²⁷ Martha Crenshaw, “Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches,” in *Inside Terrorist Organization*, ed. David Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 13.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ²⁹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), IV-3.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, IV-10.
- ³¹ Samuel, *Radicalization in Southeast Asia*, 81.
- ³² Sydney Jones, *Marawi, the “East Asia Wilayah” and Indonesia*, IPAC Report no. 38 (Jakarta, Indonesia: Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2017), 1, accessed September 22, 2017, http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2017/07/IPAC_Report_38.pdf.
- ³³ Wilfredo Magno Torres III, *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao* (Makati City, Philippines: The Asia Foundation. 2007), 12.
- ³⁴ Pugh as cited in Francisco Lara, Jr. and Steven Schoofs, *Out of the Shadows: Violent Conflict and the Real Economy of Mindanao* (London, UK: International Alert, 2013), 19, accessed 25 September 2017, https://www.academia.edu/26506043/Out_of_the_Shadows_Violent_Conflict_and_the_Real_Economy_of_Mindanao.
- ³⁵ Hashim, *Cities Under Siege: Mass Casualty Urban Terrorism Assault*, 4.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter lays down a review of related literature that frames the different factors that has influenced the new form of urban terrorism as the focus of this study. Literature on different theories and concepts presented will form the foundation of how this research will be framed. Other related concepts will also be discussed. This chapter is organized on the topics based from the three subsidiary research questions stated in Chapter I as follows: 1) Theories of terrorism, spectrum of urban terrorist attack and typology of urban terrorism; 2) Operational Environmental Factors; and 3) Urban Environmental factors. This will be followed by review of literature that are relevant to the Marawi Siege.

Theories of Terrorism

Martha Crenshaw, an expert in terrorism studies and author of the article “Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches in *Inside Terrorist Organization*,” proposes two ways to explain how terrorist organizations behave. These are the Instrumental and Organizational Approach. ¹The instrumental approach suggests that “violence is intentional; and terrorism is a means to a political end”.² It assumes that both the enemy and the government are analyzed based on how one affects the other; or the influencing factors that affect the other’s behavior.

Crenshaw notes that benefits and costs motivate extremists. She stated that:

Non-state organization using terrorism is assumed to act on the basis of calculation of the benefit or value taken from the action, the cost or the attempt or

of its failure, the consequences of inaction, or the possibilities of success. Terrorist's action may occur for several reasons such as the value sought is overwhelmingly important; the costs of trying are low, the status quo is intolerable, and the probability of succeeding even at a very high cost is high. Extremists may act out of anticipation or reward out of desperation in response to an opportunity or threat.³

Crenshaw pointed out that this strategy of terrorism coincides with the “surprise attack” which compensates for their small number and their capability to demonstrate destruction. Terrorists consider both as a weakness which may be used to their advantage. This “surprise attack” also highlights the government's failure to either appreciate intelligence information, or the failure of intelligence altogether. This also exposes the weakness of the government as it fails to anticipate these attacks. The cost for the government to deploy its forces to anticipate terrorists attack is greater than just conducting surgical raid.⁴

The author also delved into the motivation of surprise attacks that has a political incentive in nature, the conditions which presupposes a surprise attack, the terroristic ideology that fuels terrorism, and the government response which is described as defense and deterrence.⁵

According to Crenshaw, another way to understand terrorist behavior is analyzing the political structure of the terrorist organization and how its structure supports its terroristic activities. This theory goes beyond the success or failure of an attack. This comprises the personal ambitions of its leaders, the political positions they would have in the organization, and the political incentives that will arise from such organizations. The author recognized that “tangible and intangible incentives’ are vital for retaining members and enhance their end state.⁶

The author noted that the reason for joining a terrorist organization should be taken into consideration. This may range from earning the respect of people in a family or clan, the social need to belong as in the case of indigenous groups, separatist groups, or radical groups. The biggest factors that contribute to a member joining this organized terror groups are their basic contributions to a higher political ideology or cause.⁷

The longevity of terrorist organizations depends upon certain organizational incentives. The legitimization of ideas and ideologies allows these organizations to become self-sustaining that goes beyond tangible incentives. The ideas set by their predecessors, most specially those who have legitimized violence is also the reason why organizations can sustain itself even when there are setbacks in the achieving their political purposes.⁸

Crenshaw's Theory on Terrorism will guide the researcher into a deeper understanding of terrorist organizations present in the Philippines, and will provide the framework in analyzing their political, ideological, and organizational features that impact the way they conduct terroristic attacks.

Urban Terrorism

In an urban perspective, terrorism can be categorized in a spectrum of lethality and complexity of violent attacks. According to John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus in their article *Urban Siege in Paris: A Spectrum of Armed Assault*, on the lowest end of the spectrum is an assortment of individual "active-shooter" type of terrorist using random use of violence attacks, no prior training, no logistical support, no networks, but is very deadly; while on the higher end of the spectrum, the attackers are highly trained and

organized, highly driven, an established hierarchical leadership that provide command and control and well-supported from internal and external support.⁹

In the Policy Report entitled *Cities Under Siege: Mass Casualty Urban Terrorist Assaults*, Ahmed S Hashim stated that cities around the world are being confronted by a new kind of terrorism: Assaults by well-trained and motivated “terrorist commandos” whose primary goal is to reap as many casualties as possible. Here’s his analysis of three such attacks – Mumbai (2008), Nairobi (2013), and Paris (November 2015) where he used the term Mass Casualty Urban Terrorist Assault (MCUTA) to describe the coordinated multiple terrorist attacks by terrorist’s cells. There were also similar forms of multiple urban terroristic attacks that has happened in London, Spain and other key European cities.

Why are these recent large-scale urban terrorist attacks happening in cities? According to Savitch in his book *Cities in a Time of Terror: Space, Territory and Local Resilience*, cities under a liberal democracy are most vulnerable to urban terrorism because of the nature of its government as “free, complex, fluid, with an unbounded social structure. Other characteristics such as high density, mixed-use, continually developing and bounded environments coupled with diversity generate a host of Synergistic interactions”.¹⁰ the logic behind terror attacks on urban centers is classified into three typology of terrorism:¹¹

Cataclysmic Terrorism- allows for a “rapid and widespread transmission of attack that shock the public. Such attack must be characterized as spectacular, distressing, and widely communicated. This is most common to terrorist attack that wants to be known globally, and can be transmitted to propaganda by deed,”

Mega Terrorism- is defined as “the tactical advantage gained by heavy casualty, mass abduction, and large scale damage. The heavy casualties are a result of the dense environments which makes the attack more lethal;”

Smart Terror “ is used to convey the notion that the attacker can aim more precisely at high value targets whose destruction has much multiplier effect; and can cause large scale instability.”¹²

Jo Beal reinforced this concept of cities being a target of terrorists. According to Jo Beall in her report entitled *Cities, Terrorism and Urban Wars Of The 21st Century*, the cities in developing countries are vulnerable to terrorism because of poverty, urbanization and rapid and unplanned expansion of cities.¹³ Beall further stated that unchecked urban growth encourage the proliferation of weak infrastructure, delivery of poor public services and encourage government corruption.¹⁴ Jo Beal added that cities are targets of urban terrorism because of its role as driver in national development and a safe and secure environment for its people. These elements become tempting for terrorists as they seek a maximum effect for their acts of violence.¹⁵

The concepts of Sullivan and Elkus will help determine the lethality of attacks by terrorist’s organizations, and how this may be linked to their political objective and religious ideology.

Systems Perspective

JP 3-0 *Joint Operations* states that a system is “a functionally, physically, or behaviorally related group of regularly interacting or interdependent elements forming a unified whole”.¹⁶ Each elements of the system has symbiotic relationship with the other elements, and that an effect to one of the elements has a corresponding effect to the other elements. Each system has also a correlation to a broader environment where there are other systems that are interacting with each other. A systems perspective is a holistic approach to understand the complex relationships of the different systems within the environment. By understanding the existence of these systems and their elements and

how they are linked with other systems in a larger environment helps improve how we affect changes in the system.¹⁷

In a military point of view, these systems can be described as operational variables that always interact in an operational environment. These operational variables are known as political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure or the PMESII variables. These variables are interconnected and continuously interact with each other like a network of nodes and links. In military problem solving, systems perspective allows staffs to develop a more comprehensive methodology to identify problems and develop solutions.

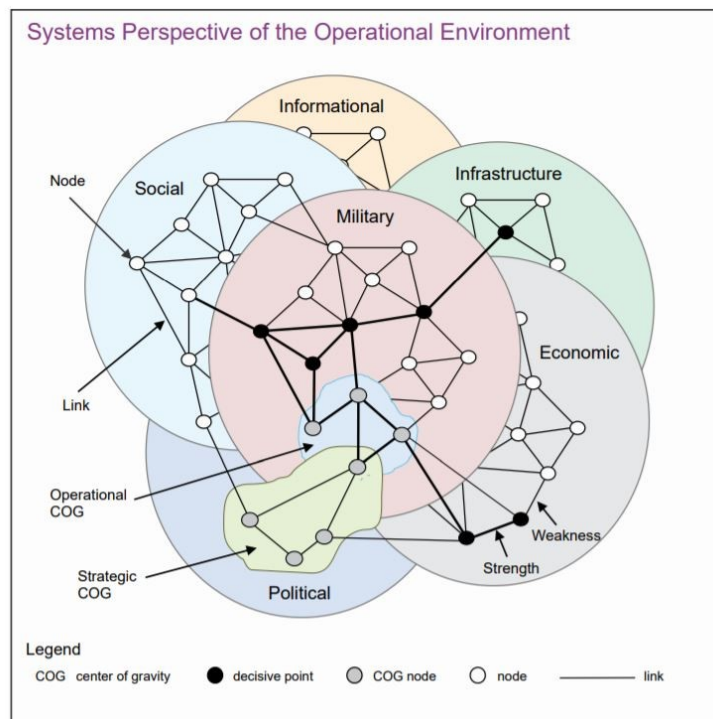


Figure 5. Systems Perspective

Source: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 2-0.1, *Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), III-34.

Joint Publication 2-01.3 Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment further describes the PMESII variables into systems and sub-systems as follows:

a. The Political System is comprised of central and local governments, political organizations including political parties and interest groups, and regional/international actors, unofficial power brokers, political affiliations.

b. The military System includes the military leadership, its armed forces to include its different components, the internal security component or police, the military-industrial complex, and sustainment.

c. The economic system includes the monetary and financial systems, key commercial areas, labor markets, laws and regulations impacting business, industrial, agricultural, and technological factors, markets that affect production, distribution, and consumption. It also includes informal economies such as drug trade, human trafficking, and terrorism funding.

d. The social system includes the different social interactions such as affinity groups, social institutions (religion, health, NGOs, education) and the basic needs (Identity, sustenance, and critical resources). It also considers cultural impact of armed conflicts, ethnic disputes, religious conflicts, and cultural peculiarities and sensitivities.

e. Infrastructure system includes utilities, transportation, industrial, and public facilities.

f. Information system are means on how information reach to the populace. This include global, national and defense information systems. This will also consider how information was passed within the actors in the OE.¹⁸

Systems perspective entails the need to identify the relevant actors in the operational environment, and their interrelationships with the other actors in the system.¹⁹ These actors may include the adversary, local government, the population, civil society, international community and other relevant groups that have a significant impact to the operational environment. Dale C Eikmier, a professor in US Army Command and General Staff College suggests that one way to study an environment is the RAFT method or Relationships, Actors, Functions, and Tensions.²⁰ Eikmeir specifies that an environment consists of actors representing the different PMESII systems. These actors are connected to each other through relationships and functions that provides the purpose of its relationship. Tensions depicts the characteristics of the relationship whether it is supportive, adversarial, neutral, positive, negative, critical, strong, vulnerable among other characteristics. Understanding the actors, tensions, relationships and functions of the different systems provides commanders and planners deeper knowledge on how actions in the systems impacts other systems in the environment.

Urban Environment

JP 3-06 *Joint Urban Operations* emphasized that there are special considerations in the operational variables that is unique in the urban environment. Urban areas are more complex compared to rural areas because of the density of the area of operations in terms of the terrain, populace and the infrastructure. JP 3-06 suggests that urban areas can be described as an “urban triad” that is composed of physical terrain, a dense and sizable population with varying sociocultural grouping and complex infrastructure.²¹

The physical terrain consists of a complex web of man-made structures of varying types, sizes, materials either arranged in order or irregular that is superimposed to natural

terrain.²² Cities are built around natural terrain such as hills, rivers, and open fields among other natural terrain features. The urban landscape such as cities are characterized in a multi-dimension man-made structures such as buildings, canals, tunnels, towers and other man-made features.

The man-made and natural terrain features in an urban environment can also be characterized as follows: airspace, surface, super surface and sub-surface areas.²³ The airspace areas are areas where aircraft and aerial munitions can be utilized. Surface areas are ground level terrain such as ground buildings, streets, fields and other outside spaces that can be used as cover and concealment, observation and fields of fire and mobility corridors. Super surface areas consist of top of buildings, towers, and other structural feature that provide observation and fields of fire and maneuver. Subsurface areas are below the surface areas such as tunnels, drainage system and other subterranean feature that can be utilized for cover and concealment, movement and maneuver.

The population feature in an urban environment are characterized by population density that ranges from around 100,000 to 20,000,000 in areas covered from several square miles to about hundreds of square miles.²⁴ The human environment should be considered in analyzing the population feature. This requires understanding of the demographic, the social-cultural, religious, political, economic interactions that make up the society in an urban terrain.

The urban infrastructure aids in the over-all functioning of the urban environment. The infrastructure may be influenced by social, political, cultural, economic and historical composition of the city.²⁵ These structures may be composed of transportation

and communication network, public drainage systems, government, medical, educational and business centers, cultural and religious buildings.

Overall, the physical terrain, the population, and infrastructure are interwoven into a complex myriad of man-made and natural features that are dynamic and is unique on each city. Careful analysis on the urban environment is required to understand the intricacies and the complex interaction among the different operational variables in an urban environment.

Related Literatures specific to the Case Study

Daesh in Southeast Asia

The rise of ISIS/Daesh in South East Asia has been documented in the study *Radicalization in South East Asia: A Selected Case Study of Daesh in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines* by Thomas Koruth Samuel (2016). The study showed that there is a growing influence and aspirations that Daesh has been able to exert in Southeast Asia; as well as their capability to radicalize local terror groups to advance its ideological objectives.²⁶ Even in 2016, a year before Daesh-inspired local terrorists took over Marawi City, there were already predictions that Daesh next step was to establish a “Wilayat” or the Daesh province in Mindanao, located in the Southern Philippines.²⁷ The author pointed out in his study that

Daesh places importance in a particular geographical area by normally expanding its activities through setting up of its branches in those areas. The act of setting up its branches is determined by how strategically significant and important is that particular locality in furthering its interests and/or by the acceptance or willingness of homegrown groups to be part of the organization; submitting to its leadership and sharing its aspirations.²⁸

The author concluded that the role of religion, the Daesh manner of transmitting their jihadist messages, the migration of foreign fighters, Daesh recruitment methods, the lack of counter propaganda and dissemination networks, and their desire of establish a Southeast Asia “Wilayat” will decide how the battle against Daesh will be fought.²⁹

Pro-ISIS Groups in Mindanao

According to the IPAC Report entitled *Pro-ISIS Groups in Mindanao and their Links to Indonesia and Malaysia*, there were four reported pro-ISIS groups in Southern Philippines: Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Ansarul Khilafa Philippines (AKP), the Maute Group, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).³⁰

The Abu Sayaff was founded 1991 by Abdurajak Janajalani in Basilan, Philippines. He was once a member of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Moro Secessionist Group now in peace talks with the Philippine Government. Janjalani was radicalized during his education in Saudi Arabia, Libya, and other Muslim countries. He studied the Iranian revolution which gave birth to his dream of transforming the Southern Philippines into an Islamic State. Upon his return in the Philippines, he recruited disgruntled MNLF members and organized “al-Harakat al-Islamiyah” or Islamic Movement, the precursor of the ASG.³¹ The aim of the ASG is connected with the Moro narrative of independence which dates back from the Spanish, American, and now the Philippine Government. Since its inception, it has conducted several terrorist activities such as kidnappings, bombings, and assassination in Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga, Cotabato and Lanao del Sur, all in the southern Philippines. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) led a counterterrorist campaign against the group since its inception in 1991 that have left hundreds of soldiers and terrorists dead and displaced thousands of

civilians. The AFP had in several instances decapitated the leadership of the ASG with the death of Janjalani in 1998, Khadaffy Janjalani in 2006, and Abu Solaiman in 2007. Isnlon Hapilon, emerged as the current leader of the ASG.

Several weeks after the proclamation of the establishment of the Islamic State by its self-proclaimed emir al-Baghdadi, Isnlon Hapilon and some 30 members of the ASG pledged their allegiance to the new “caliph”.³² In January of 2016, a video showed that the ISIS leadership in Syria declared Hapilon as the overall emir in the Philippines and the unification of four other pro-ISIS groups with Hapilon as their leader.³³

The Maute Group is a Lanao del Sur based terrorist group mostly of Maranao ethnicity and considered to be the “smartest, best educated, and most sophisticated” among the pro-ISIS group in the Philippines.³⁴ It has deep relationships with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a Moro Secessionist Group currently having a peace negotiation with the Philippine Government, It has also strong links with international terrorist organizations in Indonesia. Leading the Maute group are the two brothers, Abdullah Maute and Omar Maute, though the whole Maute family is involved in forming the terrorist organization known by their members as Daulah Islamiyah Fi Ranao (DIFR) or the Islamic State of Lanao.³⁵ The DIFR officially pledge their allegiance to Abu Bakr Baghdadi, the ISIS emir in September 2014.³⁶ The Maute group has been involved in several urban terrorist attacks notably the Davao City bombing in September 2016, the Butig Siege in November 2016 and the infamous Marawi Siege in May 2017.

The Ansarul Khilafa Philippines (AKP) has strong ties with terrorist groups in Indonesia Malaysia, and even in Syria. Their leader, Mohammad Jaafar Maguid alias Tokboy, was a former MILF Commander of the 105th Base Command. They operate in

the areas of Saranggani province in Mindanao. The AKP network helped reinforce the Abu Sayaff leader connect to foreign fighters. It also helped Maute Group during the Davao City bombing.³⁷

The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict Report Number 38 entitled *Marawi, the “East Asia Wilayah” and Indonesia* explained that the conflict in Marawi was part of the grand scheme of ISIS to establish a province in Southeast Asia and will become a jumping board for other jihadists to extend their ideology in neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The report cited several videos and transcripts that showed “ISIS central” in Syria exercising their influence to the IS Philippines’ operations by directing foreign fighters to join the cause in Marawi and providing direct funds to their operatives in the Marawi Siege. The IPAC report provides a glimpse of how ISIS provided motivation for the development of the Islamic State Philippines strategy of establishing a caliphate in Mindanao. In the ISIS online magazine named “Dabiq,” it provided guidance to be recognized by ISIS:

[This] is a reference to the process that must be followed by the jamā’āt of any distant region in order to officially be recognized as a wilāyah of the Islamic State. This process includes documenting their bay’āt, unifying the jamā’āt who have given bay’ah, holding consultations to nominate a wālī and members for the regional shūrā assembly, planning a strategy to achieve consolidation in their region for the Khilāfah so as to implement the Shari’ah, and presenting all this to the Islamic State leadership for approval.³⁸

One of the key contributors of armed conflict in the Philippines is the proliferation of shadow economies. According to their study, *Out of the Shadows: Violent Conflict and the Real Economy of Mindanao*, Francisco Lara Jr and Steven Schoofs pointed out that armed conflicts are a result of political, economic, and social aspects that revolve around “shadow economies”. The shadow economy “includes a broad range of

actors and motives, ranging from political and economic elites in pursuit of wealth and power to individuals and groups that rely on the shadow economy for their economic survival”.³⁹ This shadow economy stems from weak governance and their inability to impose its regulatory functions.⁴⁰

Armed conflict and violence in the Southern Philippines had been in existence for several decades. The historical as well as the social aspect of armed conflict was influenced by “Rido” or clan war. In his book, *Rido, Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*, Wilfredo Torres expressed that Rido between feuding families and their kin prevalent in southern Philippines where most of the different Moro ethnic communities reside. It is usually armed violence of retaliatory attacks between the warring clans to avenge a family or relative to regain the clan’s honor, shame. Torres noted that:

The causes of rido are contextually varied and may be further complicated by a society’s sense of honor and shame. While the triggers of conflicts can range from petty offenses like theft and jesting to more serious crimes like homicide, the studies show that land disputes and political rivalries are the most common causes of rido. Factors that aggravate a rido include the formation of alliances by the principals with other families and armed groups or the interaction of rido with state-level conflicts and other armed conflicts. The proliferation of firearms, lack of law enforcers and credible mediators in conflict-prone areas, and an inefficient justice system all contribute to rido.⁴¹

The effects of rido has more serious repercussions to the security environment in the Philippines because of its interaction with other forms of conflict in the Philippines such as insurgency and terrorism. There are several instances that government troops clashed with armed elements of feuding clans. Rido may also fuel the growth of local terrorism in Mindanao.

¹ Crenshaw, “Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches,” 13.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 14.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 15-17.

⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus, “Urban Siege in Paris: A Spectrum of Armed Assault,” *Small Wars Journal* (02 February 2015), accessed 03 October 2017, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/printpdf/20955>.

¹⁰ Savitch, *Cities in a Time of Terror: Space, Territory and Local Resilience*, 7.

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jo Beall, *Cities, Terrorism and Urban Wars of the 21st Century* (London: Crisis States Research Centre, 2007), 5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ CJCS, JP 3-0, IV-3.

¹⁷ Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Tactics Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, *Army Design Methodology* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-7.

¹⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publications (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), D-9 – D-16.

¹⁹ Ibid., III-34.

²⁰ Dale C. Eikmier, *From Operational Art to Operational Plans: A Joint Planning Primer*, 8th ed. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army CGSC, 2012), 15.

²¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-06, *Joint Urban Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), I-2.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., II-10.

²⁴ Ibid., I-2.

²⁵ Ibid., II-8.

²⁶ Samuel, *Radicalization in Southeast Asia*, iii.

²⁷ Ibid., 23.

²⁸ Ibid., 24.

²⁹ Ibid., 101.

³⁰ Sydney Jones, *Pro-ISIS Groups in Mindanao and their links to Indonesia and Malaysia*, IPAC Report no. 33 (Jakarta, Indonesia: Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2016), accessed October 15, 2017, http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2016/10/IPAC_Report_33.pdf, 1.

³¹ Ibid., 3.

³² Ibid., 6.

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁵ Rommel Banloi, "The Maute Group and rise of family terrorism," *Rappler*, June 15, 2017, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/173037-maute-group-rise-family-terrorism>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Jones, *Pro-ISIS Groups in Mindanao and their links to Indonesia and Malaysia*, 6.

³⁸ Jones, *Marawi, the 'East Asia Wilayah' and Indonesia*, 3.

³⁹ Francisco Lara, Jr., and Steven Schoofs, *Out of the Shadows: Violent Conflict and the Real Economy of Mindanao* (Quezon City, Philippines: International Alert, 2013), 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Torres, *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao* 16.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Methods

The study made use of the qualitative research design. This method was used to have a deeper understanding of a certain phenomenon which takes the perspective of the researcher. The study falls under the interpretivist approach as it seeks to understand the events in the Marawi siege and interpret its implication to urban terrorism. This research is descriptive and explanatory in its research approach basing from the research questions.

The researcher used the case study method which is defined as an “intensive and holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit”.¹ The Marawi Siege is considered a single event which have a deeper effect on the operational environment in regards to how to combat urban terrorism. The case study covered the period May 23, 2017- October 2017 or about six months of fighting until Marawi City was declared terrorism free by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Data Gathering

The researcher gathered data from primary and secondary sources mostly from online published articles and videos. The primary sources used by this study came from press conferences and interviews of individual who took part in military operations during the Marawi Siege. Prominent personalities who were interviewed and spoke in press conferences include the President of the Philippines, Secretary of National Defense, AFP Chief of Staff, AFP spokesperson, soldiers, hostages that were freed, to name a few.

Their testimonies provide first-hand information on what had happened in the Marawi Siege. The secondary sources of information came from reports written by subject-matter experts on Islamic extremism in the Philippines and Southeast Asia such as Rommel Banlaoi, Sydney Jones, among others who are experts in the field of terrorism. This research also used reports coming from credible think-tanks such as the RAND Corporation, International Alert, Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, and other research organizations. Other sources of information came from published online news articles from credible news agencies in the Philippines and the international media.

Data Analysis

The researcher used document analysis to interpret the primary and secondary data gathered. Using the theories and concepts about urban terrorism, the researcher formulated a research framework to provide a logical analysis of the information gathered in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions. Shown on figure 6 is the research framework used by the author adopting Crenshaw's instrumental and organizational approach to understand how terrorists behave, Theories on Terrorism, the Spectrum of Urban Armed Assault by Sullivan and Elkus and the Savitch's Typology of Terrorism, as well as doctrinal frameworks on systems perspective to analyze the operational and urban environment.

Research Framework

The research framework as shown in the Figure 6 describes the framework of this study based on the research questions and theoretical framework. It is composed of two parts namely: Form of Terrorism and the Operational Environment.

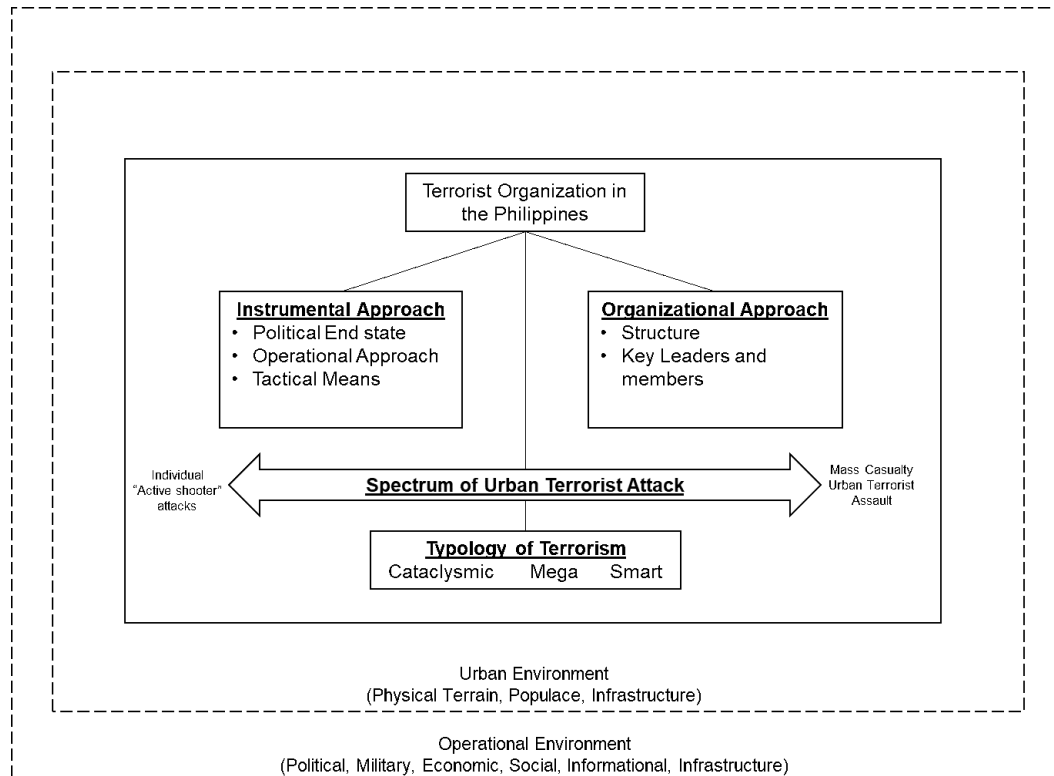


Figure 6. Research Framework

Source: Created by author based on concepts formulated by Martha Crenshaw, “Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches,” in *Inside Terrorist Organization*, ed. David Rapoport, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 13-31; John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus, “Urban Siege in Paris: A Spectrum of Armed Assault,” *Small Wars Journal*, February 2, 2015, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/urban-siege-in-paris-a-spectrum-of-armed-assault>; Hank V. Savitch, *Cities in a Time of Terror: Space, Territory and Local Resilience* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2008).

The form of terrorism is composed of Crenshaw’s instrumental and organizational approach to terrorism by careful study of the terrorist organizations’ political end state, operational approach, and the methods that they use, as well as the key leaders’ and member’s ideology, and the organizational structure. Sullivan and Elkus’ Spectrum of Urban Armed Assault describes urban terror attacks in terms of the level of complexity

and lethality. Savitch’s Typology of Urban Terrorism identifies the purpose of why terrorists attacks in the urban centers by categorizing it in terms of cataclysmic, mega and smart terror. By framing urban terrorism in the context of the terrorist organization’s end states, methods, motives, structure, and purpose, this research attempts to develop an urban terrorism model to the describe a form of terrorism that is unique to Philippine terrorism particularly in an urban environment. The study focused on the various prominent Islamic secessionist organizations and extremist terrorist organizations in the Philippines from its inception in the 1990’s up to 2017. The researcher compared and contrasted the form of terrorism perpetuated by the terrorist organizations prior to the Marawi Siege and that of the DIWM to confirm if there was new form of terrorism that was adopted. This was summarized table 12 shown below.

| Table 1. Profile of Terrorist Organizations | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Name of Terrorist Organization | Political Objectives | Ideology | Organizational Structure | Methods of Terrorism |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Source: Created by author.

The second part of this research identified the different PMESII variables of the operational environment. Using the systems approach, the study analyzed the dynamics of these operational variables using the RAFT method to identify the different actors,

their functions and relations with other actors in the system, and the tensions in order to identify cause and effect that would determine how these factors lead to the Marawi siege.

The PMESII-RAFT Model was used to analyze environmental factors that made why Marawi City prone to urban terrorism. To provide the readers a more comprehensive assessment of the operational environment, the scope of the research assessed the operational variables using the PMESII-RAFT analysis of the broader geographical area of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). This study further narrowed down to the urban environment of Marawi City. By analyzing the operational environment at different geographical perspectives, valuable insights form varying levels of viewpoints in terms of the PMESII factors was analyzed to produce a unique profile of Marawi City.

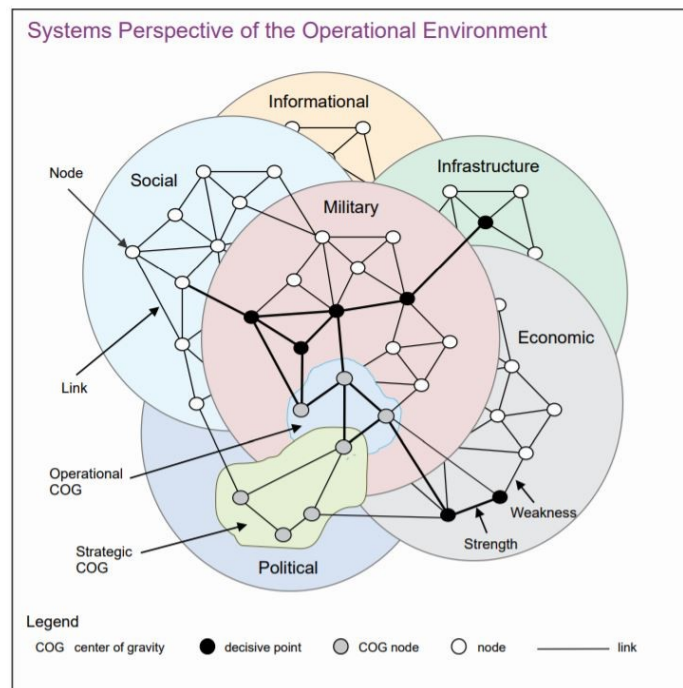


Figure 7. Systems Perspective

Source: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 2-0.1, *Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), III-34.

The operational environment in the ARMM have unique set of elements in the different PMESII systems that are different from the rest of the regions in the Philippines because of its demographic, historical as well as social-cultural context. Marawi City, as part of ARMM, have unique set of urban characteristics in terms of physical terrain, population density, and infrastructure. By analyzing the Marawi City's urban environment and relate it to the broader lens of the region, we could draw a broader appreciation on why Marawi City was vulnerable to an urban siege by ISIS-inspired terrorist organization.

¹ Sharan Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1998), 27, accessed October, 1 2017, <http://www.appstate.edu/~jacksonay/rcoe/merriam.pdf>.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The recently concluded Marawi Siege represents a new form of urban terrorism in a backdrop of Islamic violent extremism in the Philippines. The case study employed in the siege of Marawi City drew out a deeper understanding on the dynamics of terrorism in an urban setting. The results and discussion will follow the research questions stated in Chapter 1 to wit:

General question: Is the Marawi Siege a new form of Urban Terrorism in the Philippines?

The subsidiary questions which this research wants to answer are:

1. What was the form of urban terrorism that was revealed in the Marawi Siege?
2. What were the factors in the operational environment that influenced the siege in Marawi City?
3. What were the unique urban environment characteristics in Marawi City that made it vulnerable to this form of terrorism?

The research framework stated in Chapter 3 will be the basis for analysis; identifying the forms of terrorism employed by different Islamic terrorist organizations. The assessment of the different PMESII variables in the OE as well as significant characteristics of urban environment were analyzed to come up with the correlation between the features of the urban environment and terrorism.

Part I: Mapping the Forms of Terrorism in the Philippines

Terrorism in the Philippines has been a major concern in national security. Urban Terrorism has been in existence in the Philippines for several decades. Revolutionary movements such as the communist insurgents and Moro Islamic separatists and have been conducting small scale terrorist attacks in rural and urban centers. However, the emergence of Islamic extremism brought about more violent terrorist attacks in urban centers. Islamic extremism started in the 1990s with the rise of the Abu Sayaff Group that have conducted several high profile terrorist attacks. This was followed by the proliferation of other homegrown terrorist groups in Mindanao, bringing instability and serious security concerns in the southern Philippines. The Marawi Siege was by far the most violent terrorist attack in recent history in the Philippines. This highlighted the progression of urban terrorism from random kidnappings, executions and small scale atrocities in the rural areas to a more organized and violent coordinated attacks in an urban landscape. By understanding the different terrorist organizations that operated in the Philippines, we are able to deduce the changing form of terrorism that is happening in the country.

Islamic Extremist Groups and Their Form of Terrorism

This portion will describe the different terror organization to include their political objective, ideology, organizational structure, and methods of terrorism. By juxtaposing the different terror groups, we can distinguish the similarities as well as the differences of the form of terrorism. I would then compare the Marawi Siege incident and what form of terrorism did the ISIS inspired DIWM terror group employed during that

event. This will lead us to an assessment of the changing form of terrorism that is reflected in the Marawi Siege.

The Abu Sayaff Group (ASG)

The ASG was one of the dreaded and violent terror groups in the Philippines. The ASG was the forerunner of Islamic extremism in the Philippines. The Moro and communist insurgents emerged in the 1970's and 1960's, respectively have employed terrorism to target government forces to pursue their aim of armed revolution. The ASG were the first armed group who have adopted offensive Jihad as their ideology and engaged in terrorism against innocent civilians to sow fear and terror as their aim to achieve their political objectives. The ASG had received international funding from al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and continues to provide safe haven to foreign terrorists.¹ The U.S. Department of State declared the ASG as one of the Foreign Terrorist Organizations in 1997.²

The ASG's primary goal was to unify the different Muslim provinces in Mindanao setting up an Islamic State that is governed by the Sharia law and eradication of Christian influence in the region.³ The ASG distinguishes itself from its predecessors, the MNLF and the MILF because their aims are noticeably aggressive because of the inclusion of Islam as part of their political agenda.⁴ The ASG has been competing with the MNLF and MILF in recruiting members to its fold.

The ASG's concept of Jihadism was to cleanse society of "infidels until they embrace Islam."⁵ This ideology embraces radical means to eliminate non-believers and enforce Islam in its purest form. The ASG's form of jihad justifies the use of terrorism and banditry to exact revenge against the Philippine government while kidnap for ransom

was the means to generate funds for their Jihad.⁶ Janjalani would form a group of “Muslim Mujahedeen committed to *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* that is fighting and dying for the cause of Islam.”⁷ The group eventually turned into terrorism and established its links with foreign terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah. These “foreign Muslims” were training the members of the ASG to conduct urban operations.⁸

According to the counter extremism project website,⁹ the ASG organization was highly centralized organization until its founder’s death in 1998. It declined into a small band of terrorist subgroups which allowed the groups to be more decentralized. It broke into a cellular-type structure where several commanders lead the sub-groups in their respective geographical territory particularly in Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.¹⁰ There were two major factions in the ASG, the Sulu-based faction under Radulan Sahiron and the Basilan-based faction under Isnilon Hapilon. The Sulu-based faction remained to be non-aligned to ISIS and instead pursue their original goal of establishing a local caliphate in Mindanao. The Basilan based ASG leader Hapilon was more inclined to aligning with ISIS. In 2014, Isnilon and his group pledge allegiance to ISIS, and he was eventually designated as the emir of Daesh affiliated group that took over Marawi City until his death during the Marawi siege.

The ASG has become a resilient terrorist group. According to Banlaoi, the ASG’s strength reside from its ability to network with different terrorist, criminal, insurgent and political groups to fuel their intentions of establishing an Islamic state.¹¹ These armed groups can be utilized as their force multipliers increasing their strength as they clash with government forces. However, they have evolved into extortion activities such as kidnap for ransom, drugs and illegal arms trade. Due to their training with foreign

terrorists, they have become skilled in manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Their combat experiences against government forces made them more adept in jungle and urban warfare.¹²

Abdurajak Janjalani belongs to a Tausig ethnic group, one of the Moro Muslims in the Philippines. He was a member of the National Moro Liberation Front and went to Pakistan and joined the Mujahidin in 1987.¹³ He was attracted and influenced by the concept of Middle-East Sunni jihadist ideology that would include the principles of returning to Islamic fundamentalist roots, jihad, the establishment of Allah's sovereignty or al Hakmiyah to society, revival of the caliphate and creation of the Muslim umma based on *salafiyahh*.¹⁴ He was attracted to the Jihadist concept where he would form a group of "Muslim Mujahedeen committed to *Jihad Fi-Sabil-lillah* that is fighting and dying for the cause of Islam."¹⁵ Upon returning to the Philippines, he was disillusioned with the MNLF's moderate Islamic ideals that motivated him to form the ASG.

Isnilon Hapilon was the current leader of the Abu Sayaff until his death in the Marawi Siege that led to the defeat of the DIWM. Hapilon served in several senior positions and even became the deputy of Khadaffy Janjalani.¹⁶ He was notorious for leading several high profile kidnappings and beheadings. He gained international media attention when he swore allegiance to ISIS and to its Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi in January 2016 and was declared emir of ISIS wilayah or province in southeast Asia ISIS¹⁷ by June 2016.

Hapilon had connections with foreign Islamic extremists and other ISIS affiliated terror groups in southeast Asia. It was believed that Hapilon aspired to be associated with a foreign jihadist terror group and not driven by ideology as what his predecessors did. It

was reported that he was not well versed in the Islamic religion and cannot speak the Arabic language¹⁸. Nevertheless, his ASG followers in Basilan were loyal to him and claimed him as their leader. The group has amassed so much money from ransom activities that they used these to buy high powered arms, and provide a living for their members.

The ASG has been staging various terrorism activities such as kidnap for ransom of Filipino Christians and foreign tourists, assassinations, bombings against government forces. Some of the more notable acts include: the 2004 bombing of a ferry boat that killed 116 passenger and crew; coordinated 2005 bombings in three cities (General Santos City, Makati City, and Davao) known as “Valentine’s Day bombing,” a series of motorcycle assassinations in 2006, foiled plan of coordinated attacks on ASEAN and East Asian regional summits in 2007.¹⁹

Based on the independent investigative research conducted by the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR), almost 90% of the funds of the ASG are derived from illicit activities, mainly from kidnap-for-ransom and extortion activities.²⁰The ASG has also demonstrated its inherent capability to conduct acts of piracy and maritime terrorism.²¹ The ASG has been one of the most notorious enemies of the government forces, and have claimed the lives of many soldiers through the years.

Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)

The BIFF was formed on December 2010 as a breakaway faction of the MILF. Its leader, Ameril Umbra Kato , the leader of the BIFF and former MILF commander of the 105th Base Command separated with the MILF over disagreement with the latter on the

agreement with the government on the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain.²² The interim agreement between the Philippine Government and the MILF sparked a string of violent attacks committed by Kato and the BIFF against government forces and civilians. The BIFF under Kato pursued jihad for Bangsamoro independence. The rift between the BIFF and the MILF was exacerbated because Kato accused the MILF of abandoning the Bangsamoro ideology in favor of concessions with the Philippine Government.²³ Despite their severe differences, both groups were too inter-related by blood or marriage. This confusing relationship cast a doubt on how the MILF was sincere in the continuation of the Peace process. Kato died in 2015, and was replaced by Ismael Abubakar, the BIFF vice chairman.²⁴

The BIFF still retains its Jihadist ideology of Moro Islamic independence but it accused the MILF of abandoning the ideology in favor of concessions with the government. The BIFF was more sympathetic with Islamic extremists and that they were working together with Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists Marwan and Usman, Bali bomber suspects Dulmatin and Umar Patek by providing them safe havens in their territories in Maguindanao, a province in Mindanao.

BIFF declared its allegiance to ISIS when the latter declared the caliphate in 2014. At this time, the leadership of the BIFF was reported to be moving closer with the Maute Group. Esmael Abubakar alias Kumander Bungos was said to be in closer alliance with other pro-ISIS groups and that the Mautes refer the BIFF as the “IS-Maguindanao.”²⁵ It was reported that during the Marawi Siege, the group sent a platoon size BIFF fighters to support the siege.²⁶

Umbra Kato lead the MILF splinter group mostly from the 105th MILF Base Command where he was the commander until he left the organization over disagreements in the MILF leadership. The BIFF had a sizable number of high powered firearms, mortars, high caliber machine guns, IEDs because its former leader, Kato was once a commander of 105th Command that is the largest MILF field divisions and had the best equipment to other field divisions.²⁷

They had conducted several atrocities against government forces and civilians. In 2008, Kato led his forces in a violent rampage against Christian villages in Mindanao to protest against a decision from the Supreme Court where it declared an agreement between the Philippine Government and MILF unconstitutional.²⁸ It caused widespread death and destruction targeting military and civilians through a series of raids, destruction of property, beheadings for several months that lead to a large-scale military offensive. In effect, it displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians. Another notable incident was the death of 44 Police Special Action Force, one Marwan, a foreign HVT, 18 MILF fighters and several civilians when government forces clashed with the BIFF in Maguindanao,²⁹ Another clash occurred when 1st Mechanized Brigade, Philippine Army against BIFF who have sealed off highways in Maguindanao that resulted to the displacement of about forty thousand civilians.³⁰ The violence usually perpetuated by the BIFF were strikes against military detachments and civilian in remote villages.

The Misuari Breakaway Group

The Moro National Liberation Front-Misuari Group (MNLF-MG) was a faction that broke off with the main stream MNLF under the leadership of Nur Misuari. The MNLF had already reached a peace agreement with the government back in 1996.

However, Nur Misuari and his group broke off with the government because he accused them of excluding their group in the ongoing talks between the Philippine government and a rival secessionist movement, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).³¹ By August 2013, the MNLF-MG group declared their independence in the island of Sulu. On September 2013, MNLF-MG group led by Misuari's right-hand man, Habier Malik occupied a town hall in Zamboanga city and raised the flag of the Bangsamoro Republic. This incident sparked the siege of several coastal villages in Zamboanga City at the southernmost region of the Philippines in 2013. The Zamboanga siege lasted for about three weeks where hundreds of persons have been killed including MG (Misuari Group) rebels, Filipino soldiers, and civilians. More than a hundred thousand residents were forced to evacuate the villages to escape the battle area. At that time, it was touted as one of the biggest urban battles that the Armed Forces have faced in recent history.

The Misuari Breakaway Group continue to pursue the full implementation of the 1996 Peace agreement between the government and the MNLF that was set aside because of the current administration focus on the peace process with the rival MILF. The MBG continue to fight for an independent Bangsamoro state through armed struggle.

The rogue MNLF faction is composed of dissident MNLF members lead by Habier Malik, a former MNLF commander and was known to be the most violent commander of the MBG. It was estimated that the members are down to about 660 after the violent siege in Zamboanga in 2013. Most of the members of the group were Misuari followers or those who became disillusioned to the officially recognized MNLF that was integrated with government after the 1996 peace process.³²

The most notable attack perpetrated by the MBG was during the Zamboanga Siege in 2013. It provided a glimpse for government forces of the intensity of urban warfare which they will be facing in the Marawi Siege. Philippine government forces were hard up in pressing the attack where MBG have established defensive positions in built-up areas, putting up gun holes at concrete walls to fire against the soldiers. One soldier remarked that they suspect that these terrorists have some exhibited some form of urban warfare tactics from the Middle East as indicated by position layers of defense around buildings.³³ One glaring tactic employed by the terrorists was the use of hostages as human shields. They were also burning building to mask their locations and impede the movement of government forces.

The Zamboanga Siege was just a latest of violent incidents committed by the MBG wherein they have attempted to take violence into urban areas. A similar incident took place in Zamboanga City several years in 2001 that MBG engaged in bloody encounter with the Philippine government forces in Cabatangan complex. It also attacked an army brigade headquarters in the vicinity of Jolo, a major municipality of Sulu province.³⁴

The MNLF-MG continued to pose a threat to the Philippine government. With its current strength of around 650 armed individuals, it may again conduct in various acts of violent extremism as what happened in the Zamboanga Siege.³⁵ It was also reported that they have active links with other lawless armed groups, the ASG and Jemaah Islamiyah in the southern Philippines. The implication of the siege was the potential of other similar armed groups currently dealing with the peace process with the government. Despite being armed and their unrestricted movement will repeat the same incident in the future.

The Mautes: A Family of Extremists

The rise of the Maute Group as a major player in the rise of terrorism in the Philippines is unique in itself because they are described as a family of terrorists. They were a powerful clan that has its roots in both Lanao Del Sur and Marawi City. The Maute family are a highly religious clan who is fighting for a society under Allah. The name Maute has been synonymous to violence and terrorism.³⁶



Figure 8. Maute Family

Source: Rommel C. Banlaoi, “The Maute Group and the Rise of Family Terrorism,” *Rappler*, June 15, 2017, accessed September 26, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/173037-maute-group-rise-family-terrorism>.

The ideology of the Maute Group was influenced Salafi Jihadist brought about by its leaders, blood brothers Abdullah and Omarkayam Maute. Abdullah Maute studied in

Egypt while Omarkayam Maute was educated in Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Both became fluent in Arabic and were immersed in the Salafi and jihadist ideology. It is believed that they have many connections with IS supporters in the Middle East. This is what many believed to be the reason why the brothers turned to extremism. It was in Cairo that Omar met a daughter of an Indonesian cleric who was leading towards conservatism and extremism. They married and settled in Indonesia where Omar taught in his father in law's school. It was early 2011 when Omar went back to the country. Many speculated that it was in Indonesia where he acquired his extremist ideology.³⁷

The Maute family is an influential, political and wealthy clan. They used this position of influence to recruit members into the Maute Group; and the staging of future take-over of Butig, and Marawi City. The family owns a construction business and have relatives who are politicians in Butig Lanao Del Sur. The business has been alleged as the funnel where financing of terrorists has passed through. The Mautes are largely matriarchal in nature and is largely influenced by the mother Farhana Maute. Sources said that Farhana is a "king maker" in the political arena because of her vast influence in the clan. The provinces like Lanao del Sur and Marawi are highly lawless places and the Mautes have their own private armed groups which is comprised of their clans and her seven sons. Farhana is also related to one of the leaders of the MILF and was deeply influenced by the ideals which has turned into a more radical way of militancy.³⁸

Banlaoi, an expert on terrorism in the Philippines has coined them as a family of terrorists because they held the highest positions in what we call now as an ISIS inspired organization. While ASG's Isnilon Hapilon took the reign, the whole of the Maute family took most of the high position in DIWM due to the influence, political status, wealth; and

the presence of their private militias. Omarkayam Maute was the vice chairman for political affairs, Abdullah Maute was the vice chairman for military operations; and another brother Mohammad Khayam Maute is the head of operation and intelligence. Their parents, Cayamora Maute and Farhana Maute were in charge of logistics and finances.³⁹

The Maute Group also pledged allegiance to the ISIS leader Abu Bakar Baghdadi after they performed a bay'ah to the ISIS leader and established the organization *Daulah Islamiyah Fi Ranao* (DIFR) or the Islamic State of Lanao. They formed and trained two armed groups namely called *Khilafah sa Jabal Uhod* (Soldiers of the Caliphate in Mouth Uhod) and *KhilafahsaRanao* (Soldiers of the Caliphate in Lanao). It is believed that they have formed an ISIS inspired fortress in their hometown of Butig, Lanao Del Sur. They also formed satellite camps in the towns surrounding Lanao like Marogong, Lambuyanague, Masiu, and Marawi City.⁴⁰

While the ASG is a radicalized group, the Maute group is mostly comprised of a clan which has deeper implications for the new form of terrorism forming in the Philippines. The large involvement of the Maute family in the terroristic activities in the Philippines is a clear indication of the phenomenon of the rise of family terrorism. By recruiting members of the families, the organization becomes solidified not only by ideology but also by blood. This will exact a deep loyalty and this decreases the reasons for betraying any members of the family. They have formed the core of the private army which has exacted a training that is highly disciplined.

Their branding as a terrorist family has been one that has sowed fear and is almost iconic in Southern Philippines as they were engaged in terroristic activities such as illegal

drugs, illegal possession of firearms, kidnapping, extortion, money laundering, and the manufacture of explosives. They have been known to have smuggled in foreign terrorists fighters.⁴¹

The notoriety of the Maute brothers was felt when they were connected to the Indonesian radical Sanusi who sowed terror at the Mindanao State University in Marawi City back in 2012. Sanusi was eventually killed by the police. Next came the attack in a Marawi prison freeing about 23 inmates. They later bombed Davao city which killed 23 people. The Maute group has been making waves in the intelligence community when they beheaded a Philippine Army officer in Butig on February 2016, this was followed by the beheading of two Christian workers in the name of ISIS on April 2016. In early February of 2017, another Army Officer died while gathering intelligence on the Maute brothers in Marawi City. It was in November of the same year when the Maute group have launched an attack in Butig Lanao, and it took six days of fighting before the town can be re-taken. Butig Lanao del Sur is one of the political strongholds of the Maute group and this is said to be a test mission for a bigger siege that happened in Marawi City.⁴²

Daulah Islamiyah Wilayatul Mashriq (DIWM)

The IPAC Report 38: *Marawi, "The East Asia Wilayah" and Indonesia*, outlines the history of Daesh (ISIS) in the Philippines that arose shortly after ISIS leader Abi Bakar Al-Baghdadi took over Mosul Iraq and founded a caliphate on June 29, 2014.⁴³ Support of the ISIS soon grew in the Philippines with several individuals and groups pledged allegiance to the ISIS including Indonesian Saifullah Ibrahim who was imprisoned at the Manila's maximum security prison. In July 2014 the Abu Sayaff Group

led by Isnilon Hapilon pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi in Basilan which included some of the groups like the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, based in Maguindanao; Ansar al-Khilafah Philippines (AKP), based in Sarangani; Ghuraba (a precursor of the Maute group), based in Lanao del Sur; and Junud al-Khilafah. Jamil Yahya, a former MILF cleric swore in the oath of loyalty of around 100 locals which included Khilafah Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM) under the leadership of Humam Abdul Najid alias Owayda. Owayda appeared in a video released by the Armed Forces of the Philippines as one of the people behind the planning video of the Marawi Siege.

The alliance between the Abu Sayaff Group and the Maute brothers started when Isnilon Hapilon, the leader of the ASG was badly wounded during a government encounter late in 2016, and was recuperating in Lanao Del Sur. Reports said that there was a dangerous alliance between the three groups who are called “hard line insurgent forces” refusing a government peace talk.⁴⁴ From this alliance, a new organization was born that was leaning towards Islamic extremism.

In 2015, four pro-ISIS groups which does not include the Mautes made a video showing them uniting under ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon as the Amir of the Daesh or ISIS in the Philippines. They began to identify themselves as the “Islamic State–Eastern Region” or “Daulah Islamiyah Wilayatul Mashriq” or DIWM. None of the official ISIS media, however, use the term *wilayah* or considered it as a province of ISIS. In April of 2016, the Maute Group formed the group IS-Ranao which came with a video of themselves swearing allegiance to al-Baghdadi. It was unclear at this point if the group have completed

the whole process of their recognition as a Wilayah or a province of the Islamic State and the recognition process was not completed at this point.

The DIWM is a conglomeration of the groups that have pledged the allegiance to the ISIS. Government intelligence released the supposedly umbrella organization of the DIWM which is shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. DIWM Umbrella Organization

Source: Rommel C. Banlaoi, “The Maute Group and the Rise of Family Terrorism,” *Rappler*, June 15, 2017. Accessed on September 26, 2017’<https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/173037-maute-group-rise-family-terrorism>.

It can be noted the ASG, BIFF, the private armed group of the Mautes, as well as the Anshar Khalifa Philippines (AKF) and the Khilafa Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM) are

some of the more prominent armed groups that have joined the organization. The next figure shows the organizational structure of DIWM:

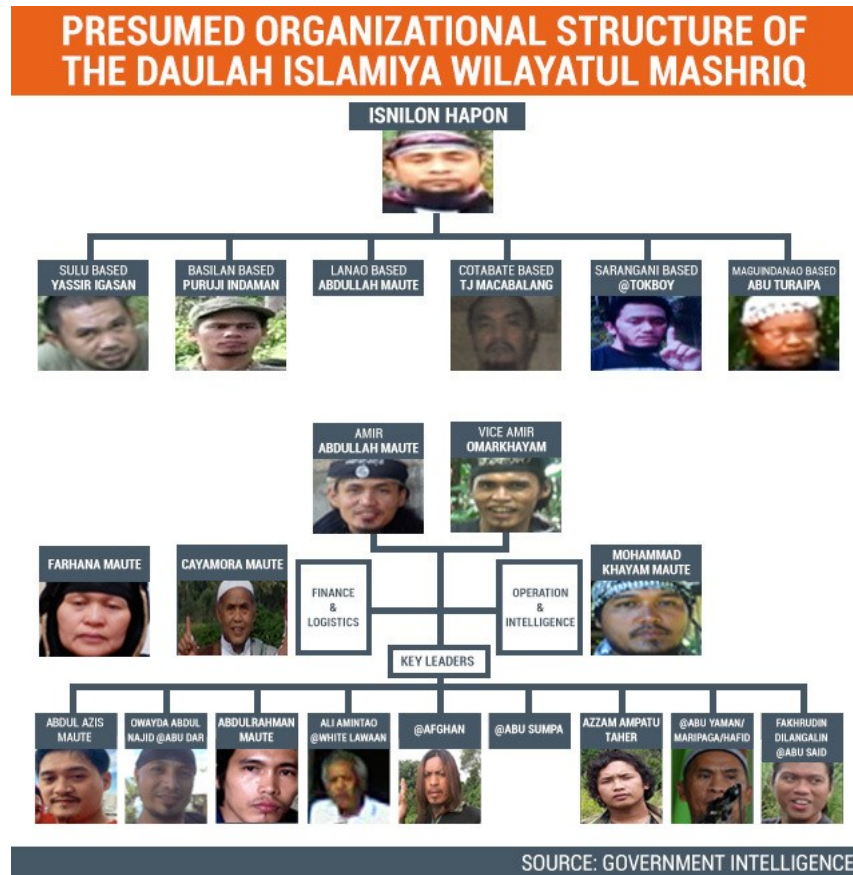


Figure 10. Presumed Organizational Structure of the DIWM

Source: Rommel C. Banlaoi, “The Maute Group and the Rise of Family Terrorism,” *Rappler*, June 15, 2017, accessed September 26, 2017, <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/173037-maute-group-rise-family-terrorism>.

As cited in the previous discussions, Isnilon Hapilon was proclaimed the emir and the head of the DIWM, but it is apparent the organization was highly controlled by the Maute family. It was the Mautes who have shaped the coalition.⁴⁵

The Marawi Siege was a well-planned attack which was largely commanded by the Maute Group who had complete access of and knew the city by virtue of their residence and clan membership. It was the Maute Group who led the attack on Butig and Piagapo in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Although it was Isnilon Hapilon who served the leader of the DIWM, Isnilon was more familiar with the Basilan and Sulu area, thus the Marawi Siege was completely their operation.

Videos that have emerged showed the Maute Group planning the attack which was uploaded on You Tube showed men carefully planning the attack on Marawi.⁴⁶ One of the purported reasons was to get the recognition of ISIS leadership and Syria and its success will usher the recognition of a *wilayah*, or a province of ISIS in South East Asia.

That the takeover of Marawi was an extremely well-planned attack, and it is clear that Abdullah and Omar Maute were in command. The Mautes were familiar with the terrain and composition of the area since it was they, not Isnilon Hapilon, who knew the city and had prepared and led the operations in Butig and Piagapo in 2016 and 2017. But if the tactical decisions were theirs, they still seemed to crave recognition from ISIS central.

A few months after the coalition was organized, terrorist activities have started. In February 2016, a ten-day engagement with the Philippine Army was the first noted attack by the group. This has significance in terms of its relationship in the Marawi Siege as Butig is only two hours from Marawi City. This town also served as their headquarters. Butig was their staging place as they discreetly formed tunnels and positions in the City of Marawi. It can be noted that the Mautes have formed a stronghold in Butig as most of their clans lived in the town.⁴⁷

The Davao City night market bombing in September 2017 was one of the prominent terrorist attacks in which all the components of the DIWM coalition participated. The group then planned to reoccupy Butig in November 26, 2016 as they flew an ISIS flag in the town hall. The military engaged them in a 6-day battle. The loss in Butig have resulted to more recruits in the Maute Camp. It is said that Butig was a test mission which is the precursor of the Marawi Siege.

The nerve center of the DIWM was transferred from Basilan to Lanao del Sur between November 2016 to January 2017. The group included important players such as Dr. Mahmud Ahmad, and Indonesian IbnuQoyyim. There were several engagements with the group until March 2017; and it is believed that it was between this time that the plan for Marawi Siege took place. On April 22, 2017 the military launched an operation in Piagapo west of Marawi which have killed 16 militants. They also overran a Maute camp which had around 48 bunkers and trenches; which have surprised the military as a significant sign of the training and professionalism of the group. Finally, the presence of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) were also established when soldiers found an Indonesian passport of Mohammed Ilham Syahputra and explicit calls for FTFs to go the Philippines was more explicit.⁴⁸. The DIWM is lead group in the Marawi Siege, although this was largely headed by the Maute brothers and Isnilon Hapilon, the conglomeration of different terror groups had shown the magnitude of the changes in which terrorism is fought in the country. The fact that it was centered in an urban center is also another key issue.

The Daesh terrorists seek to achieve thier end-state of an Islamic Caliphate by Daesh-Philippines by taking over major political, economic, and social foundations that

would set the conditions for the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. This model was influenced by ISIS-central's pursuit of a global Islamic caliphate through jihadism.

According to a RAND report, the establishment of a caliphate requires a territory to govern and to export violence as an essential for "Offensive Jihad." Further, the report states that there are basic elements to establish a "caliphate:"

1. A workforce for the state to enable it to function;
2. Financial and other resources that would maintain its operations;
3. National and domestic security force.⁴⁹

Daesh-Philippines showcased its potential to establish a caliphate during the initial stage of the siege. They were able to attract, recruit and radicalize fighters that would later join them in the attack of Marawi City. Months before the siege, they were training their recruits in the jungles of Butig. These would later secure and control the city during the siege and form their security forces. Foreign fighters from the Middle East were attracted to join as part of ISIS central's aim of exporting violence to expand its territory in Asia.

They were able to access funds from local and foreign sources. ISIS Central was able to provide funds through discreet money transfers from Syria to Indonesia then to various contacts in the Philippines. They were also able to generate resources through the formal, informal and shadow economies. It was known that Farhana Maute, matriarch of the Maute group provided funds in the planning of the siege. During the siege, they looted banks and other business establishments that would later be used to sustain their operations, buy weapons and support their fighters when they achieved victory of establishing the Islamic State.

Isnlon Hapilon's role as "Amir" of Daesh-Philippines during the Marawi Siege provided the legitimacy of the terrorist organization's strategic narrative of establishing an Islamic State that would entice would-be Daesh fighters to join their cause. According to a Jihadist worldview, the caliph or ruler is the central figure that provides the legitimacy of establishing a political entity such as the Islamic state.⁵⁰ Hapilon also earns the respect of the other members of the terrorist coalition because of his experience as the figurehead of the Abu Sayaff that ties to other foreign terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah. This was evident during the planning of the Marawi siege where he was seen to be in command of key terrorist personalities who were discussing plans for the attack.

The terrorists were able to maximize the urban terrain, populace, and the infrastructure in an area defense by occupying key terrain and manipulating the populace either by urging them to join their cause or taking them hostage. According to Singh and Jani in their commentary about the Marawi Siege, the Daesh-Philippines utilized a "two-pronged approach" in engaging government forces in the Marawi Siege with the intention of turning the Marawi people against the government, frustrate the state security forces in protecting the people, and degrade the government's ability to protect its territory.⁵¹ The terrorists drew the military forces in the urban centers. The urban centers gave them tactical advantages in prolonging the war until such time that other terrorist forces will join them in the fight.

The terrorists transformed concrete buildings into fortresses in order to defeat government forces' offensives. The terrorists emplaced snipers at rooftops or at the higher level floors to offer good observation and fields of fire against attacking

government forces. They developed layers of defensive positions at the different floor level of the buildings. They exploited the protection of concrete walls and built holes as gun ports. They also rigged entryways of buildings with IEDs using unexploded munitions.

They also set up defensive positions and established kill zones along key bridges as their choke points. In one deadly clash, 13 government soldiers were killed and 40 others were wounded when the troops tried to retake a bridge that would provide government forces access to the main battle area.⁵²

During the initial stages of the siege, the terrorists were able to control more than 4,000 buildings that provided the enemy effective cover and concealment. Some of these structures have multiple levels that provided the terrorist a good vantage point for their snipers and fighters. Most of the walls are made of concrete slabs or “buhos” that is difficult to breach even using M203 grenade.⁵³

The terrorists occupied mosques as their safe haven, knowing that military will avoid destroy them as part of the rule of engagement. Eventually, ground commanders were given the go signal to bomb mosques.

During the last weeks of the siege, the terrorists retreated to Banggolo district, the financial district of Marawi City where densely built buildings and narrow roads proved to be significant advantages for the terrorists because the urban terrain offers them multiple defensive positions, kill zones, cover, concealment and mobility corridors. They were becoming desperate by utilizing suicide attacks and use civilians not as human shields but also as human bombs by strapping bombs.⁵⁴

The terrorists were able to avoid bomb attacks from government air force aircraft because they were able to hole up underneath the city through a series of underground network of shelters believed to be built years ago, according to senior officers involved in the fighting.⁵⁵ According to LTG Carlito Galvez, WESTMINCOM commander, there were underground tunnels and shelters that cannot be penetrated by air force bombs. He added that the militants stockpiled food, guns and ammunitions before the siege erupted. The reinforced bunkers and tunnels underneath the houses in Marawi was exploited by the extremists. Residents built these bunkers and tunnels as a form of protection after a Muslim uprising in the 70's led to large swaths of the city razed by fire.⁵⁶

The extremists were able to hide from religious infrastructure such as mosques and Islamic schools because they know that government forces will not attack these structures since it is covered under The Hague Protection that put limitation on military rules of engagement.⁵⁷

The terrorists also employed commercially available drones against government forces. This readily available equipment provided the terrorists expedient Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability to monitor government troops' movement and avoid decisive engagements, though not that sophisticated.

Analysis: Forms of Terrorism in the Philippines using Crenshaw's Instrumental and Organizational Approach

Crenshaw's Theory of Terrorism explained how terrorist organizations behave as explained in the concepts of Instrumental Approach which focuses on violence as a means to reach political objectives. The Organizational Approach focuses on the political structure and how it supports its terroristic activities. The instrumental approach was used

as basis for analysis to compare and contrast how each of these terror groups' political objectives, ideology, and tactics in order to identify significant changes in its form. Key leadership and organizational structure which influenced the actions of the different Islamic terrorist organizations in employing its distinct form of terrorism was analyzed.

Table 2 to 4 provides a summary of the various form of Islamic terrorism in the Philippines from the 1990's up to the present. The researcher included two Moro Islamic secessionist movements to provide the background on where the recent Islamic Extremists came from. The beginning of Islamic extremism in the Philippines in the form of the Abu Sayaff Group in the 1990s to the recent Marawi Siege were a conglomeration of ISIS-inspired terror groups under the banner of the DIWM, terrorism has becoming more violent and complex.

| Table 2. Profile of Moro Islamic Separatist Groups in the Philippines | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Group | Political Objective | Organizational structure | Ideology | Methods of Terrorism |
| MNLF 1970 - Present | - Bangsamoro independence as an ethnic - Seeks an independent state coupled with secularism | - Nur Misuari as head - Conventional structure which has a political structure and an armed wing | - self-determination - Egalitarianism | - Guerilla attack in the rural/jungles of Southern Philippines - Kidnapping Small scale clash - Execution Assassinations |
| MILF 1995 - Present | Policy of creating a gradual Islamic society in the Moro region using the Islamic Law | - Hashim Salamat as head - Political group and Armed group (BIAF) | Islamic democracy | - Guerilla attack in the rural/jungles of Southern Philippines - Kidnapping Small scale clash Execution Assassinations |

Source: Created by author.

| Group Name | Objective | Leadership | Ideology | Activities |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Abu Sayaff 1991 - Present | Creation of the Islamic State of Mindanao | <p>Khadafi Janjanlani as founder</p> <p>Isnilon Hapilon (Basilan Faction)</p> <p>Radullan Sahiron (Sulu Faction)</p> <p>- Centralized organization until the death of its founder</p> <p>- Disaggregated organizational structure composed of two factions – the Basilan Group and the Sulu cell</p> | <p>Jihadist Islamic fundamentalism</p> <p>Anti-Christian ideology</p> | <p>Kidnap for ransom</p> <p>Extortion</p> <p>Bombings</p> <p>Assassination</p> <p>Beheadings</p> <p>Executions</p> <p>Small scale atrocities usually in rural areas/remote villages</p> <p>Coordinated attacks on urban centers</p> |
| BIFF 2008 - Present | Moro Islamic Independence | <p>Umbra Kato</p> <p>Centralized structure based from MILF field com</p> | <p>Salafi Jihadism</p> <p>Radical Islamism</p> | <p>Engagements with government forces</p> <p>Strikes against military detachments and civilians in remote villages</p> <p>Landmines</p> |
| Misuari Breakaway group 2001 - Present | Moro secessionism | MNLF structure | Islamic Secularism | <p>Strikes against military forces</p> <p>Urban Siege - Zamboanga Siege (2013)</p> |

Source: Created by author.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Maute Group 2010 - present | ISIS Caliphate Wilayah in East Asia | - Omar and Abdullah Maute (Maute Brothers) Political and Armed group elements - Family structure | Jihadist Islamism connected with ISIS Radical Islamism | Bombings Executions Urban Siege - Butig (2016) - Marawi (2017) |
| DIWM 2016 - present | Islamic province/wilayah in East Asia | - Isnilon Hapilon as emir - Political and armed group elements that consists of several umbrella organizations with support from ISIS in East Asia | Jihadist/radical Islamism ISIS inspired | - Siege in urban setting - Butig (2016) - Marawi (2017) - The use of social media as propaganda and recruitment - Commercial drones - hostages as human shields - extensive use of IEDs - use of tunnel networks |

Source: Created by author.

The forms of terrorism from the different Islamic terrorist organizations in the Philippines have changed throughout the years from the Moro secessionist movements MNLF in the 1970's and MILF in the 1990's and its splinter groups the BIFF and MBG, the rise of Islamic extremism in the form of the Abu Sayaff Group, the Maute Group as a family of terrorists, and alliance of prominent and ISIS-inspired terror groups known as DIWM in 2014 that laid siege in Marawi City.

Political Objectives

The political objective of each of the terror groups have changed from its original form in the 1970's. The Moro Muslim secessionist movement was in conflict the Philippine Government primarily because of marginalization of the Bangsamoro people. The MNLF have pursued an armed rebellion in order to create an independent state for the Bangsamoro people that are predominantly Muslim. They have waged an insurgency campaign to subvert power against the Philippine Government. When the MNLF and the Philippine Government struck a peace accord in 1996, disgruntled MNLF leaders and members formed the MILF pursuing more on an ethno-religious perspective of putting up a Bangsamoro State under a Sharia Law or an Islam-based legal system. Both the MNLF and the MILF aim for the liberation of the Bangsamoro people. The Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG) and the BIFF also aimed for a separate Bangsamoro state, however its approaches were more violent than its predecessors.

The rise of the Abu Sayaff Group in the 1990s shifted its political objectives that are more radical and religious in nature rather than in ethnicity. The ASG's aim was to establish an independent caliphate in Mindanao consisting of Muslims all over the Philippines that is ruled by caliph or a Muslim leader. We could see here that that there is a shift of political end-states from an ethno-legal perspective to that of a more religious aspect of Islamic rule.

The Abu Sayaff Group under Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute Group were more radical in terms of its end-states. When they declared their allegiance to ISIS in the 2014, they were committed to establish an ISIS Wilayah or province in Southeast Asia. This means that they will be part of a global caliphate under ISIS that is based in the Middle

East. This attracted other homegrown Islamic terrorist organizations to join in the cause and formed the DIWM, a conglomeration of ISIS-inspired terrorist organization to form a new ISIS province in South East Asia and will become a jumping board for similar provinces in the Southeast Asian region.

In the perspective of political end-states, the different terrorist organizations have evolved from a purely independent Bangsamoro state for the marginalized Moro people, to an independent Islamic caliphate in the Philippines. However, with the rise of ISIS, radicalized Moro Muslims were drawn to form part of the global Islamic State.

Ideology

The ideology adopted by the different Islamic terrorist organization was influenced by its founders. The MNLF's founder, Nur Misuari provided the impetus for Moro secessionist movement based on a Bangsamoro self-determination ideology while Hashim Salamat lead the MILF with an idea of an independent Islamic State in the Philippines but following its MNLF's ideology of self-rule.

Khadaffi Janjalani founded the Abu Sayaff Group had instilled Jihadism as the way to achieve its end-state of an Islamic State in the Philippines. This was different from the MNLF and MILF of self-determination because their concept of Jihadism is more radical and extremist that espoused terrorism as a means to an end. While MNLF and MILF pursued an armed rebellion focusing on government forces, the ASG attacks both military and civilian targets that are considered as "infidels" who are against Islam. Khadaffi Janjalani and the ASG were anti-Christian and wanted to cleanse it through way of Jihad or "holy war." Its successor, Isnilon Hapilon was also influenced by Janjalani's Islamic views of Jihad. However, he was allegedly being not well-versed in Islamic

religion and was more concerned with being affiliated with foreign Islamists. The ASG's perspective of Jihad promotes terrorism and banditry as a way to exact revenge against non-believers of Islam.

The BIFF pursues similar objectives to those of its predecessor, the MNLF. However, its ideology is more inclined to jihadism. Its founder, Umbra Kato, was more radical in the use of violence to pursue its ideology. As a result, the group committed several violent attacks against government forces and civilians to perpetuate their jihad ideology.

The MBG were a rogue MNLF faction whose ideology was shaped by Nur Misuari's pursuit of self-determination to create an independent Moro state. Habier Malik who led the MBG during the Zamboanga Siege in 2013 was more about armed struggle for an independent Bangsamoro State rather than a jihadist perspective of establishment of an Islamic State.

The Maute Group that was mostly comprised of the Maute family and its relatives was influenced by its founders Abdullah and Omar Maute who were practitioners of Salafi Jihadism. However, when its leaders pledged allegiance to ISIS, their followers were radicalized in the ways of ISIS and were trained as "soldiers of the caliphate in Lanao."

The DIWM were a conglomeration of ISIS-inspired homegrown terrorists coming mostly from the Maute Group and the ASG with others terrorist organization like the BIFF, AKF, KIM among others. Their ideology was based from Salafi Jihadism whom ISIS was using to export "offensive Jihad" to other parts of the world to establish a global

caliphate. The difference between the previous terrorist groups is that the ISIS ideology requires a territory to govern and export violence as part of the Islamic State.

In terms of ideology, the ASG, BIFF, Maute Group and DIWM were radicals that practice Islamic extremism in the form of Salafi Jihadism. They were a great departure from their predecessors (MNLF and MILF) whose armed struggle was for the liberation of the Bangsamoro people while they espouse Jihadism that promotes violence to sow fear through terrorism in the name of Islam.

In view of Crenshaw's Theory on Terrorism, the political end state and the jihadist ideology were a significant driving force in the urban siege in Marawi City. Bearing an ISIS-inspired ideology of establishing an ISIS province in Southeast Asia, the DIWM needed to hold a territory as its primary campaign to carry out ideological premise of establishing a caliphate where the so-called 'true believers' would rule and that violence is the only means to force people to practice the purest form of Islam and purge the rest. This was a departure of previous terror groups whose political ideologies were focused more of an ethno-religious objective of an independent Moro Islamic state. By capturing Marawi City, they will gain the attention of ISIS Syria and the terrorist organizations in the region.

Organizational Structure and Leadership

The different Islamic terrorist groups were formed either as highly centralized group or loosely organized into small cells. This was a departure from its mother militant organization, the MNLF and MILF which were structured as a semi-conventional insurgent organization comprising of a political central committee and an armed wing.

The ASG was initially formed as a centralized leadership structure under its founder and leader Khadaffi Janjalani. The organization was broken down into small sub-groups when he was killed during a clash with government forces in 1998. Since then, it formed into cellular type structure which was led by sub-commanders according to each geographical territory. Despite being geographically separated, these sub-groups have maintained their ability to network with other terrorist groups and criminal organization.

The BIFF and the MBG was organized based from a command structure similar to MILF and MNLF, respectively since its leaders were former members of those organizations. The BIFF is structured into MILF base commands because its leader Umbra Kato was a former commander of the 105th MILF Base Command while most of its members came from the same command. The Misuari Breakaway Group was formed as a centralized leadership structure under Nur Misuari. However, it's members were loosely organized since Nur Misuari's loyal followers only represents a fraction MNLF membership.

Of interest is the organizational structure of the Maute Group. This group was known as a family of terrorists because most of its members came from the Maute Clan, a powerful political and highly religious clan that had its roots in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City. Its key leadership was composed of brothers' Abdullah and Omar Maute. However, the rest of the Maute brothers held key leadership positions in the Maute Group. The Matriarch, Farhana Maute, was influential to the organization since it had political and financial connections as well as connections to the MILF leadership. Since it pledged allegiance to ISIS, the Maute Group had formed and trained two armed groups forming a tight core of a private army that is highly motivated, trained and disciplined.

The DIWM was unique in itself because it comprised an amalgamation of prominent terrorist groups such as the ASG, Maute Group, BIFF, Ansar Khalifa Philippine (AKF) and the Khalifa Islamiyah Mindanao (KIM) to name a few that joined together under the banner of ISIS. Its leadership structure was ISIS inspired where ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon was declared as its caliph. It is noted that one of the requirements in establishing a caliphate is the designation of a caliph and Isnilon Hapilon provided that legitimacy for the ISIS narrative of an Islamic province in Southeast Asia. Also notable in the leadership structure is that the Maute Clan holding key leadership positions in operations, intelligence, finance and logistics. The DIWM structure showed that various terrorist organizations can possibly unite under one umbrella organization provided that it had the captivating ideology that binds them as well as international support from foreign terrorist organizations.

There were significant shifts in the organizational structure of the terrorist organizations in the Philippines. The MNLF and MILF organizations were already developed as an insurgent group composed of a politico-military organization. Its splinter group, the MBG and BIFF were less organized but highly centralized due to the presence of its influential leaders Nur Misuari, Umbra Kato and Habier Malik. The Maute Group was unique because it revealed the possibility of turning a whole clan into a family of terrorists through Islamic radicalization. Finally, the Marawi Siege exposed a changing form of terrorist organizational structure composed of different groups under the banner of a symbolic “caliph” uniting them through ISIS-inspired ideology of establishing an Islamic State and cleansing of “non-believers” of Islam.

The research revealed that the organizational structure of terror groups was leader centric exposing that the organization's center of gravity depends upon its key leaders. Although the DIWM was a conglomeration of the different ISIS-inspired terror groups, its key leaders Isnilon Hapilon, the Maute brothers, and Dr. Ahmad were providing operational directions to the organization. It showed that when these leaders killed in battle, the whole organization cannot hold its members as its key decision makers died in the process. However, the strength lies in its "clannish" nature which is common to the Muslims in the region. This means that they have the capacity to mass up and this poses future terroristic threats in the areas where there are large swaths of Muslim population.

Analysis: Typology and Spectrum of Terrorist Attacks

Savitch classified the logic behind terror attacks in urban centers as mega, cataclysmic and smart terrors. The purpose of cataclysmic is that terrorist attacks will be known globally and can be communicated through action. Mega is described as mass casualty, mass abduction and large scale damage. Smart Terror aims to target high value targets where its destruction has a multiplier effect.

| Table 5. Typology of Urban Terrorism and Spectrum of Urban Armed Attacks | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Group | Mega | Cataclysmic | Smart | Complexity and Lethality |
| Abu Sayaff Group | Large mass casualty and damage using bombings on densely populated areas | Wide-ranging effects towards national and international media and counterterrorist organizations | Indiscriminate attacks on urban and rural areas | Complex, operating in small cells in urban areas, company-size formations in rural areas, and Lethal |
| BIFF | Mass casualty, mostly in rural areas | Widespread panic in affected villages, large scale displacement of residents | Indiscriminate attacks in mostly rural villages | Lethal, operating in company/ battalion-size formations, complex |
| Misuari Breakaway Group | mass casualty and large-scale destruction caused by urban siege | Caused paralysis/widespread panic in Zamboanga City | Use Zamboanga City as a strategic location to exert pressure to the government to address their demands | Moderately lethal and leader centric, highly complex using urban siege |
| Maute Group | Moderate casualties against terrorists, minimal casualties against government forces and civilians, limited destruction of property | Moderately catastrophic (compared to DIWM) attacking a small town of Butig | Butig not a key urban center | Highly complex and lethal due to the organizational structure composed mostly of the Maute Clan, use of urban siege |
| DIWM | Mass Casualty and large-scale destruction caused by urban siege | Spectacular, distressing, widely communicated, with shock value Imposition of Martial Law in Mindanao | Marawi City represents the center for Islamic religion and culture, regional political, educational and economic hub of ARMM | Highly complex and lethal, urban siege, deliberately planned, multiple attacks, use of hostages, IEDs, tunnels, |

Source: Created by author.

Table 5 provides us a summary of the classification of the five prominent terror groups that had conducted urban terrorism in the Philippines in a significant scale of urban terror attacks. It is classified according to its purpose (mega, cataclysmic and smart) based from Savitch's typology of urban terror attack and complexity and lethality of urban terror assault as described by Elkus and Sullivan. This provides an understanding how each of these urban terror attacks might have progressed from the different Islamic terror groups in the Philippines.

As a background, the MNLF and MILF were the forerunners of the current Islamic extremist groups. They waged an insurgency for several decades. Most of the older members of the extremist terrorist groups were either key leaders or members of the MNLF and the MILF. They are classified as insurgents but are not terror organizations. The ASG's Isnilon Hapilon, BIFF's Umbra Kato, MBG's Habier Malik were former MNLF and MILF leaders. Some of their followers were also former MNLF and MILF fighters who broke off and join various terror groups. They were exposed to guerilla tactics. Likewise, they used various terror tactics such as bombings, beheadings, and assassinations that were employed by the members of the secessionist movements. However, these terrorist attacks were small-scale compared to their guerilla warfare activities mostly raids, harassments, and ambushes that target mostly government forces.

The ASG began a trend of high profile kidnap for ransom, executions and bombing activities mostly targeting civilians. These series of terroristic activities such as the 2004 bombing of a ferry boat, the Valentine's Day bombing, motorcycle assassinations targeted civilians that have resulted from individual to mass casualty. The bombing of the ferry boat in 2004 resulted to 116 people killed. These attacks were done

by group of terrorists and not of a singular terrorist or “lone wolf”. The ASG was capable of conducting coordinated attacks as what happened during the “Valentine’s Day bombing” where almost simultaneous bombings of key cities (General Santos, Makati City, and Davao City) which were geographically dispersed. The terror attacks appear to be cataclysmic terror that claimed international recognition receiving foreign funding from JI and al-Qaeda. The U.S. State Department acknowledged the ASG as one of the Foreign Terrorist Organization as early as 1997. The high profile bombings were considered as mega terrorism that incurred mass casualties. It was also smart terror because it targeted key cities that sowed widespread fear among the populace.

After the death of their founder Abdurajak Janjalani, the ASG reverted to small scale terrorist actions in Basilan, Zamboanga, and Sulu. However, it increased its kidnap-for-ransom (KFR) activities to sustain its organization with several high profile KFR of foreign tourists and missionaries.

The BIFF were known to conduct large-scale atrocities within their territory in Mindanao. The terror attacks in Christian villages in Maguindanao province and the encounter with police Special Action Force (SAF) resulted in several civilians and police killed. In terms of violence, the BIFF were brutal because of their past association with the MILF where it waged an all-out war with the Philippine Government in 2000. However, it has been observed that that BIFF attacks were initiated in retaliation to its perceived notion that the Philippine government was remiss to their plight. The purpose of their attacks were perceived to be mega terrorism on the scale of casualties as the result of their attacks.

The MBG were able to conduct large-scale atrocities even outside their territory of Sulu with the siege of Zamboanga City in 2013 that resulted to the deaths of hundreds of MBG fighters as well as several soldiers and civilians killed. It was notable that they used civilians as human shields. In terms of level of complexity and lethality, the MBG were able to demonstrate a higher form of urban terrorist attack as displayed in the Zamboanga terror attack by laying siege to one of the densely populated districts of Zamboanga City. It differs from other terrorist attacks. It involved hundreds of terrorist fighters' holed up in defensive positions in the city and targeted government forces as well as civilians. However, it was observed that the purpose of their terrorist actions was more about the issue of Bangsamoro independence rather than of Jihadism to establish an Islamic state. It could be considered as mega terrorism on the extent of casualties incurred in the siege.

The Maute Group started off by engaging in illicit activities such as drugs, gun smuggling, and money laundering. They have been known to smuggle foreign terrorists and were training to make IEDs. They conducted terror attacks with the bombing in Davao City that killed 23. There were also several incidents of assassinations targeting civilians and military intelligence personnel. However, the most notable terrorist attack of the Maute Group was the attack of the town of Butig in Lanao del Sur where they besieged the town for six days until government forces retook the town. It was known that the Butig Siege was just a "test mission" for the group in preparation for the bigger attack in Marawi Siege.

The Maute Group displayed its capability to conduct a form of an urban siege similar to what the MBG did in Zamboanga, however in a smaller scale in Butig town.

Their strength lies with the familiarity of the terrain; they knew about the physical features of the area because they have roots in Butig. It was an operational test for the group particularly on how government forces would react to the attack. Despite being repulsed after six days, they learned valuable lessons in term of government forces' response as well as capabilities and tactics. These initial terror attacks did not achieve a cataclysmic effect in a regional or global scale, or targeted a key city to create a rippling effect, but it showed how the Maute Group have the potential to create mass casualty and large scale damage. This was just a prelude to their plan to take over Marawi City in 2017.

The DIWM started its terror attacks a few months after the alliance was formed. Initially, the DIWM spearheaded by the Maute Group engaged the military in a ten-day battle in Butig in February 2016. Late in September that year, it conducted a bombing the Davao City market that killed scores of people. The bombing was observed to be participated by all components of DIWM. Though it was claimed that the Maute Group led the siege in Butig in November 2016, there were members from the DIWM including foreign fighters who joined the siege. A video showing DIWM recruits training in the mountains only show how dedicated, motivated and disciplined these fighters that were preparing for something big. Another video that was captured by government forces revealed a detailed plan of DIWM to take over Marawi City to include capturing of key infrastructures around the city that will serve as built-up fortresses against government forces who would attempt to attack them.

The attempt to capture the DIWM Amir, Isnilon Hapilon, ignited the siege in Marawi City. As what had shown in the video, the DIWM put up defensive positions around the city to secure mobility corridors and also as choke points.

The level of complexity and lethality of what the DIWM did in Marawi City was on the higher end of the spectrum of urban terror attack. The DIWM were far more sophisticated terrorist group among the rest of the terror groups. It is observed that they have learned the lessons from past engagements with the military in terms of urban warfare. Their approach to warfare shifted towards urban siege which is far more complex and lethal compared to what happened in Zamboanga city in 2013. It was intricately planned by the terrorists and have employed hundreds of terrorist fighters to secure the city. In terms of its lethality, the devastation caused by siege resulted in the destruction of the city itself as government forces try to retake the city using bombs and artillery while the DIWM would burn the buildings to prevent the military advance. They would use an intricate network of tunnels to evade government forces. The extensive use of IEDs were observed during the siege that claimed scores of casualties against government forces as they clear the buildings. They also extensively used snipers that also inflicted more casualties to the government forces. The extent of their financial capability was also surprising as shown with the high resources they have as shown by the vast amount of money they have. This means that they have the capacity to buy more arms, thus they can exact a more lethal war on government forces.

The effect of urban siege in Marawi City was cataclysmic in terms of scope as news around the world showed the tragic events that were unfolding in Marawi City. This was part of the DIWM propaganda in order to show the Islamic State in the Middle East

they are capable to establish ISIS roots in the Philippines. The terrorists would broadcast propaganda materials through social media to entice other extremist individuals and groups to join their cause. ASEAN countries were also worried that the events in Marawi City would spark similar urban sieges to their countries. It also resulted to enormous human suffering and extent of damage to the city.

The DIWM used civilians trapped in the city as human shield to prevent government forces from attacking them. The displacement of civilians was enormous that figures reached to about two hundred thousand residents fled the city and lived off either in evacuation centers or relatives in nearby provinces. The damage to the city was large scale that it will take about \$3 billion dollars to rehabilitate the city. The DIWM knew that taking Marawi City was symbolic since it was the only Islamic city in the Philippines and laying siege to the city will inspire foreign and homegrown terrorists to join them as what other the ISIS has done in Mosul and in Aleppo.

Analysis: Urban Siege as a New Form of Terrorism

Based from the discussions on the preceding section, we can draw out several inferences on the changing form of terrorism in the Philippines as displayed in the Marawi Siege. In view of Crenshaw's Theory on terrorism, we can distinguish the political objectives, ideology, leadership and organizational structure of the different terrorist organizations that have evolved that the can be seen in light of the terror attack in Marawi City. The DIWM end-state was to become the East Asia "Wilayah" or ISIS province as part of the global Islamic State. This concept of Islamic State was a significant leap from previous generations of Islamic terrorists in the Philippines were they pursue a more local independent Islamic state for the marginalized Bangsamoro

Muslims. The DIWM ideology was more radical compared with other terrorist organization because of its pursuit of a pure Islamic State and the eradication of non-believers as espoused by the Salafi Jihadism. This ideology motivated them to claim Marawi City as a territory for the Islamic State even at the cost of the destruction of the city and its people. The leadership and structure of the DIWM was a hybrid organizational structure influenced by the different terrorist organization. It had a centralized leadership structure under its caliph, Isnilon Hapilon and a robust “staff,” majority of which came from the Maute clan. Its fighters formed into cellular-type organization composed of the different terrorist organization that can operate either as small terrorist cells or can conglomerate into a formidable fighting force against government forces.

Following Elkus’ spectrum of urban terrorist attack, The DIWM was far more violent and complex compared to other terrorist organizations in terms of scale of human suffering and death and damage to property. It showcased the urban siege as an extreme form of multiple terrorist assault which was new in Philippine terrorism. It highlighted how the terrorists has taken hostage an entire urban center as an act of terrorism not to negotiate concessions with the government, but to actually to transform it into an Islamic territory for the Islamic State. A shift from single targets to multiple targets using a hybrid of conventional and unconventional warfare caught the Philippine security forces by surprise. The urban siege revealed considerable capability gaps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Government in dealing this form of terrorist threat.

The effects of urban siege in Marawi City was catastrophic. The terrorists attained what Savitch described as cataclysmic, mega and smart terror because it reached global

reach, incurred mass casualties and destruction, and the attack was centered to the only Islamic city of the Philippines. The message was clear to the ISIS that their brethren are ready to be part of the global Islamic Caliphate. The incident had far-reaching repercussions to its neighboring countries by providing them the template that they can simulate to other countries throughout Southeast Asian region.

Part II: The Environmental Factors that Influenced the Incident of the Marawi Siege

The operational environment is one of the greatest determinants of whether an urban terror attack will take place. This portion analyzed the environmental factors present in Marawi that makes it vulnerable to a terrorist attack. Using the PIMESII and urban environmental factors, a description of the operational variables in Marawi City to better understand its environment and how this led the DIWM to take over and laid siege of the City.

The Operational Environment

The PMESII-RAFT model is one of the tools commanders and staff use to analyze the complex interactions of the different systems in an operational environment in order to gain a deeper understanding of the operational variables, identify possible centers of gravity, decisive points and lines of operations/efforts. In regards to this study, the PMESII-RAFT model will be used as an analytical tool to determine how the different operational variables (political, economic, military, social, informational and infrastructure) might have contributed to the Marawi siege incident. The operational environment focused on Marawi City as well as the larger Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Background

Marawi City is the capital of the province of Lanao del Sur and is considered to be the largest and the most densely populated cities in Lanao according to the Autonomous Region of Muslim in Mindanao (ARMM) Census of Population & Housing of 2015.⁵⁸ Marawi City has a total population of 201,785, with a land area of 87.55 square kilometers, and a population density of 2,305. Marawi City beats other town and cities in the ARMM in terms of population and density. According to the report, Marawi City is home to 19.3 percent of the total resident of Lanao del Sur whose total population is 1,045,425 in 2015. That means one in every five resident of Lanao del Sur lives in Marawi City.

| Rank | City/Municipality | Province | Population |
|------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 | Marawi City | Lanao del Sur | 201,785 |
| 2 | Jolo | Sulu | 125,564 |
| 3 | Bongao | Tawi-Tawi | 100,527 |
| 4 | Datu Odin Sinsuat (Dinaig) | Maguindanao | 99,210 |
| 5 | Sultan Kudarat (Nuling) | Maguindanao | 95,201 |
| 6 | Parang | Maguindanao | 89,194 |
| 7 | Indanan | Sulu | 80,883 |
| 8 | Talipao | Sulu | 80,255 |
| 9 | City of Lamitan | Basilan | 74,782 |
| 10 | Siasi | Sulu | 67,705 |

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, *Population of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Based on the 2015 Census of Population)*, accessed March 8, 2018, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/population-autonomous-region-muslim-mindanao-based-2015-census-population>.

Marawi City is a predominantly Islamic city where the religion was introduced in the 14th century. It became a chartered city on April 1980 and was named Islamic City of Marawi. The people are called Maranaos or named after the Lake Lanao. They are also part of the major ethnic groups that comprise the whole Moro people in the Philippines. Marawi was formerly known as Dansalan “destination point”. Their history is traced back under the Spanish colonization, where there were numerous attempts to conquer Dansalan. In 1895, the Spanish colonizers defeated the Maranao warriors. The quest to conquer the Maranaos continued until the American period. The long history of war is part of the Moro narrative on independence. In 1907, Dansalan was declared as the capital of Lanao del Sur; and was officially created as a municipality under the Moro Province Legislative Council and was declared as a city that was last chartered by the Commonwealth of the Philippines.⁵⁹

Marawi City is known as a trading hub in Lanao del Sur. Figure 11 highlights the strategic location of Marawi City at the northern perimeter of Lanao lake. Marawi City is a transit point of trade from its neighboring towns along the lake to Iligan city, a more economically prosperous and major trade center in Mindanao.



Figure 11. The Map of Marawi

Source: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, “Quick Stats Marawi City,” May 25, 2017, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://pcij.org/stories/quick-stats-marawi-city/>.

The city is the home to the Mindanao State University and it is considered the largest in terms of student population as well as several colleges and primary and secondary schools. Most of the people from Lanao del Sur go to Marawi City for university education. Non-Maranaos such as the Chinese and Christians make up of a small population in the area. MSU became one of the strategic points where radicalization took place.

Political

The Philippines is divided into 16 administrative regions and one autonomous region.⁶⁰ These regions are composed of provinces, cities, municipalities and baranggays. The Local Government Code of the Philippines provides the legal framework wherein local governments are empowered “to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals.”⁶¹ The baranggay is the basic political unit of the Philippines that plans and implements national government policies, programs, projects and activities and where problems in the communities are resolved.⁶² The municipality is composed of several baranggays and serve as “general purpose government” for the coordination and delivery of government services to the people whom the municipality has territorial jurisdiction. The city is similar to that of municipalities in its role of delivering government services. However, it is more urbanized and has developed baranggays. The province is composed of municipalities and cities serves as “dynamic mechanisms for developmental processes and effective governance of local government units within its territorial jurisdiction”. The President supervises the different local government units through the Department of Interior and Local Government.⁶³

The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was created under Republic Act 9054 to provide the Bangsamoro people the capacity for “self-rule and self-determination”.⁶⁴ The ARMM comprise the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and the cities of Marawi and Lamitan. ARMM is the only region where majority of its populace are Moro Muslims.

Politics in the Philippines has been characterized by political dynasties where several members of the family are involved in politics. They may be related by either blood or marriage. In the ARMM, political dynasties are more pronounced considering that the political landscape consists of powerful clans that emerged from the different social clans of either genealogical lineage or have control of economic resources.⁶⁵ As an example, in Lanao del Sur, the family of Dimaporo is one of the longest surviving political dynasties where their family served as governor from 1992 to 2013.⁶⁶ Powerful clans hold dominance over security and political control over large areas in Mindanao. According to Adriano and Parks,⁶⁷ it is common in Mindanao that several baranggays and municipalities are controlled by powerful clans by blood relations and that there exist a political network up to the provincial and regional level. They also mentioned that these 'local elites' provide the security and governance to its communities.

Clan politics in these Muslim regions are characterized by violence and undermining democratic rule. Blood feuds or "*Rido*" are rampant with the different political clans fighting each other, even up to the last kin in order to regain their honor. That is why political clans maintain private militias and build their homes like strongholds to protect their clans against rival clans. Clans appear to disregard democratic rule as they attempt to protect their own members from external control.⁶⁸ Considering that powerful political clans compete in the electoral arena, a losing candidate may influence its kin not to support the rival political clan. A spike of violence is usually recorded during Philippine elections. It is common that politicians have relatives among the insurgents and terror groups because of its clannish culture. This is the reason why these terror groups were able to penetrate Marawi City, and are given freedom of

movement. Private armies also abound, and the fact that 80% of unlicensed guns are found in the area has supported the culture of violence.

Throughout Philippine history, local political clans have links to armed groups either by blood or marriage. The two major Moro separatist movements, Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have been waging an armed conflict with the Philippine Government since the 1970s. Some members of the MNLF and MILF have ventured into politics as members of different political clans. Armed clashes of rival clans have become normal because relatives who belong to these armed separatist groups fought with each other. Nur Misuari, founder of the MNLF and later became governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao was accused of instigating the Zamboanga Siege in 2013 that left almost two hundred killed and thousand displaced. The Mautes brothers, the key leaders of DIWM belong to a wealthy, political family in Butig, Lanao del Sur whose Matriarch, Farhana Maute was very influential.⁶⁹ Farhana holds considerable political influence because of her wealth and connections. The Mautes even have their own private armies including her sons.

Economic

A society's means of livelihood, financial aspirations, or their survival can be sustained through various economic activities that are usually state regulated. However, there is the existence of other means of economic activities that circumvent formal economic exchanges. Economic activities go through the informal economy and even to the shadow economy. The informal economy are activities that do not pass through institutional state regulations.⁷⁰ As an example, a moneylender lends money to an individual and be repaid with interest that is not regulated by state agencies. The shadow

economy, on the other hand, is similar to that of an informal economy since it circumvents outside state regulations. However, shadow economy persists in violent conflict, and that was caused by the ability of the state to enforce economic regulations or are disregarded by individuals and groups.⁷¹ As an example, the illegal gun trade fuels violence as it passes hands to groups who have intentions to disrupt law and order.

In Mindanao, illegal and shadow economies are rampant in mostly conflict affected areas where governance and security are almost non-existence. Strongmen and powerful clans control most of the informal and shadow economies of these regions. The resilience of the shadow economies is due to several factors: shadow economies provide livelihood to people who lived in poor communities; the legitimate government is weak to enforce to state regulations; political and other powerful clans override the legitimacy of the central government in the economic affairs through continuously violating state laws; and local executives trade political arrangements with these powerful elites to sustain their control over the region.⁷² According to International Alert, a non-profit organization focusing on peace building, violence caused by shadow economies ranked as the most frequent in the ARMM.⁷³ In their report, illegal drugs was the highest reported incidence from 2015-2016 while illicit firearms, clan feud, rebellion among other causes of violence.⁷⁴

The shadow economies allegedly supported the Daesh-Philippines terror group. According to Delfin Lorenzana, Secretary of National Defense, funds supporting the terrorists during the Marawi Siege came from drugs.⁷⁵ This information was corroborated by President Duterte who presented a matrix showing drug lords providing funds to the ISIS terrorists involved in the Marawi Siege. The President also exposed politicians who

are involved in the illegal drug trade that have links that supported the ISIS group using drug money. According to the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, funding for the group came from local sources.⁷⁶ Soldiers were able to find almost Php 80 million (\$1.5 million) in cash and checks in one of the houses located in the battle area in Marawi during the initial campaigns. Though, it was not confirmed if belonged to the terrorists, the owner of the house, or from money-lenders.

Eddie Qutoriano spoke about weapons readily available to the Maute group because the shadow economy of firearms in southern Philippines.⁷⁷ He added that there are about 400,000 illegal weapons, more than what the Armed Forces and other state security forces.

Formal economies were used by the terrorists as a disguise to support terrorism by circumventing financial systems to acquire funds coming from ISIS central. ISIS central were able to transfer funds using Western Union money transfers by directing funds coming from Syria to Indonesia, then to the Philippines.⁷⁸ The money transfer was intricate involving several personalities in both Indonesia and the Philippines to avoid detection by sending small amounts to different individuals. According to General Año, the Chief of Staff, AFP, ISIS provided funds worth \$1.5 million that triggered the movement of key terrorist personalities that included Isnilon Hapilon, the series of planning and the execution of the Marawi Siege.⁷⁹

The proliferation of illegal gun trade in the Philippines was reported in “Of Arms and the Man: the global arms trade and the Philippine context”.⁸⁰ The report says that the Philippines “ranked the 10th in the world for gun related killings, and more than half of the 2 million revolvers, pistols assault rifles and shotguns are unregistered and illegal”.

Further, the paper says that “80% of all illegal weapons are concentrated in Southern Mindanao”.

The proliferation of sophisticated weapons as well as sophisticated arsenal was traced to overseas pipelines that was run by separatist groups such as the MNLF and its runaway group the MILF. Such proliferation began in the 1970’s up to the present and it is concentrated in areas such as Maguindanao, and the Maranao populations in central Mindanao.⁸¹

Owning a gun in Mindanao is considered a must. Their continuing distrust of the government’s capacity to protect them together with the culture of violence perpetuate by clan wars or “rido” are the reasons Moro Muslims wanted to own guns. In 2012, Al Jazeera published a report entitled “Philippines illegal-arms trade rampant”⁸² where they documented gun makers in Southern Philippines where guns can be modified to the client’s specifications, and can fetch as much as 200-300 dollars. Being armed in the area is a must for people who are exposed to violence and their experience of ongoing wars within the separatist’s movement and the military.

Social

In a historical perspective, violent extremism emerged from decades-long rebellion of Moro revolutionaries who wanted to establish an independent Bangsamoro Republic in the 1970s. Bangsamoro came from two words, Bangsa coming from the Malay word meaning “nation,” and Moro, a term used by Spanish colonizers confusing Muslim people of Mindanao as “moors” coming in from North of Africa.⁸³ Soliman Santos provided a concise summary of the Bangsamoro problem in Mindanao where the ASG and other Islamic terrorist groups found their roots:

This problem is the historical and systematic marginalization of the Islamized ethno-linguistic groups, collectively called Moros, in their homeland in Mindanao islands, first by colonial power Spain from the 16th to the 19th Century, and more recently by successor Philippine governments dominated by an elite with a Christian-Western orientation since formal independence in 1946. This marked full-fledged Filipino nation statehood but ironically Philippine independence also sealed the loss of Moro independence because Moro was incorporated (Moro nationalists would say annexed) into Philippine territory.⁸⁴

The Moro National Liberation Front fought with government forces until the signing of the peace accord in 1996. However, MNLF fighters who opposed the peace accord, established the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2001. The MILF fought with government forces until the GRP-MILF was established to start peace negotiations.

From these two separatist movements emerged Islamic extremist groups whose ideals stem from the aspirations of the Bangsamoro movement but its approaches are more violent. The Abu Sayaff Group under Janjalani was formed in 1989 with the intent to bridge the gap between the MNLF and the MILF. He recruited members from both Muslim separatist groups. However, his death in 1998, the ASG degenerated into a bandit group engaging in kidnapping, extortion and smuggling activities.⁸⁵In 2010, disillusioned fighters from the MILF under Umbra Kato formed the Bangsamoro Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The BIFF declared full Jihad in order to pursue an armed struggle against the Philippine Government to attain independence and freedom for the Bangsamoro people.⁸⁶

The Bangsamoro people is estimated to be around five million Filipinos, comprising 13 ethno-linguistic groups that profess Islam in Mindanao.⁸⁷ Historically, Muslim Filipinos or the Moros were never subjugated by Spanish colonizers. In the early 1960's Muslim nationalism in Mindanao sparked the creation of Muslim secessionist movements, the MNLF that would promote the aspirations of the Bangsamoro People. The Bangsamoro is composed of several ethnic groups, each with its own unique language, culture and identity but share the same faith. Here are some of the major Bangsamoro ethnic groups:

1. Maranao– they are predominantly from the provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur;
2. Maguindanao – they are people living in the Moro Gulf in a province called Maguindanao. They held a claim that Maguindanaoans came from an old Islamic Kingdom known as Sultanate of Maguindanao in the 1500s;
3. Tausug – these ethnic groups are inhabitants of the Sulu archipelago at the southern tip of the Philippines;
4. Yakans – this ethnic group mostly originated in Basilan Island;
5. Sama – they are also referred to as boat people who are mostly nomadic in nature. Badjao, one of the five sub-groups of Sama, could be seen in living stilt houses in shorelines.
6. Iranun – they inhabited the areas of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. They are known also people of the sea;
7. Sangil – this ethnic group could be found in parts of Sarangani, South Cotabato, and Davao del Sur.⁸⁸

Among the different ethnic groups in Muslim Mindanao, there are numerous tribes or clans that comprise the Bangsamoro people. Clans are defined as “an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds. Affective ties of kinship are its essence, constituting the identity and bonds of its organization. These bonds are both vertical and horizontal, linking elites and non-elites, and they reflect both actual blood ties and fictive kinship.”⁸⁹

Influential clans comprise the different power brokers in the Moro society, from politics, businesses, and the Moro secessionist movements – the MNLF and the MILF. Clans radiate from different power brokers. In several instances, violence in Mindanao was caused by warring clans in Mindanao called “rido” or blood feud.

Military

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) takes the lead role in counterinsurgency in the Philippines. The AFP have been addressing armed threats in Mindanao namely communist insurgency, the Moro secessionist movements and the Islamic terrorist groups. The AFP is supported by the Philippine National Police (PNP) in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts. The AFP is also augmented by Paramilitary forces like the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), Special CAFGU Active Auxiliary (SCAA) and the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO) that are supervised by the state.⁹⁰

The AFP have been waging a war with Moro secessionist movements in Mindanao since the 1970s. The two prominent groups were the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).⁹¹ The Philippine government have an ongoing fragile peace accord with these the MILF and MNLF to

seek a long lasting peace in southern Philippines. However, there were several splinter armed groups that emerged that wanted to continue the armed struggle like the BIFF and the MBG which was discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. The AFP has also been acting as mediator between the different warring clans in Mindanao because of rido. The rise of Islamic terrorism and the proliferation of homegrown and foreign terror groups mostly in Mindanao have made the security problems more complex.

The Western provinces of Mindanao including Lanao del Sur and Marawi city are under the Joint Operational Area of Western Mindanao Command (WESTMICOM) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The 1st Infantry Division of the Philippines, which is under the Operational Command (OPCOM) of WESTMINCOM have operational jurisdiction over Marawi City and the rest of the Lanao provinces. The Philippine National Police (PNP) is the state agency of the Philippines that handles the law enforcement and maintains peace and order. The Police Regional Office of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has jurisdiction over the Province of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City.⁹² Jurisdictions regarding internal security operations including counterinsurgency and counterterrorism falls under the AFP.

Most of the AFP's ground forces are trained for jungle warfare since they are waging an insurgency war against communist guerillas and Moro separatists for almost five decades. Most of its capabilities are well suited in the jungle environment. Despite its recent experiences with urban warfare during the Zamboanga Siege, the Marawi Siege incident have raised the bar in terms of urban operations. The Philippine National Police has its own elite force, the Special Action Force (PNP-SAF). However, they are also trained mostly in jungle warfare.

During the onset of the Marawi Siege, massive redeployment of troops from other infantry divisions was flown in to support the combat operations. Special Operations Command units such as the AFP's counterterrorist unit, the Light Reaction Regiment, AFP's counter guerilla unit, the Scout Rangers and the Special Forces were deployed to conduct operations. Air force assets helicopters, bombers and the newly acquired FA-50 strike aircrafts were also employed as Close Air Support. Naval assets such as speed boats were also deployed to secure coastal areas along the Lanao lake.

U.S. forces also provided assistance through technical support by deploying P3 Orion surveillance aircraft.⁹³ LTC Jo-ar Herrera, former spokesman of the 1st Infantry Division confirmed that US forces and the AFP were exchanging intelligence, subject matter expertise exchanges, and training exchanges.

Informational

The DIWM used information through different communication platforms extensively as a way to forward their strategic objectives. Prior to the Marawi Siege, the terror groups have relied on the internet to communicate with other groups or individuals inside and outside of the area of interest. In a report by the South East Asia newspaper The Diplomat "Marawi Behind the Headlines", it stated that it was Isnilon Hapilon himself who provided high powered ammunitions and high tech communications devices.⁹⁴ However, the networking of information is highlighted as a means of communication and collaboration within the groups who pledged allegiance to the ISIS.

The IPAC Report entitled Marawi: East Asia Wilayah and Indonesia showed an information structure which mirrored a greater network of information from and within the East Asia extremists to include Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The Marawi

operations received direct funding from ISIS central and reveal a chain of command that runs from Syria through the Philippines to Indonesia and the rest of Southeast Asia. ISIS central seems to have been represented by Khatibah Nusantara, the fighting unit led by the Indonesian named Bahrumsyah and his associate, Abu Walid. Khatibah Nusantara in turn sent funding through Dr. Mahmud Ahmad, a Malaysian who sits in the inner circle of the Marawi command structure. Dr. Mahmud controlled recruitment as well as financing and has been the contact person for any foreigner wanting to join the pro-ISIS coalition in the Philippines. Tactical decisions on the ground are being made by the Philippine ISIS commanders themselves, but the Syria-based Southeast Asians could have a say in setting strategy for region when the siege is over.⁹⁵

The article showed that one of the key persons in the communication of information is Dr. Mahmud Ahmad; a Malaysian university lecturer who was radicalized. He is one of the key players in the Marawi Siege and is called to be the second in command of Isnilon Hapilon, and served as liaison to the other jihadist groups in East Asia. He was tagged to be making strategic decisions that were connected to a bigger network of ISIS affiliated groups in East Asia.

The spread of propaganda materials was also being channeled through the internet. One of the signs that there was a collaboration between Malaysia and the Philippines was the video uploaded in May 2014 entitled “Our Muslim Brothers in the Philippines Support the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham or ‘Filipina Support for ISIS and Bay-at to Shaikh Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi (Hafidzahullah),”⁹⁶ showed Muslims in the Philippines who were part of the AnsarDawlah Fi Filibbin, posted a video showing a few men in white dress performing a Bay-ah to Baghdadi. Some spoke in the Filipino native

language Tagalog, and Arabic. While the site of the video was unknown, trademarks of an Indonesian collaboration was observable in the video. It is apparent in the video's opening and closing credits has an Indonesian stamp in it. In July 2014, another video appeared. This time the setting was in the New Bilibid Prison's Special Intensive Care Area (SICA) where high risk prisoners from ASG, Jemaah Islamiyah, MILF, MNLF and NPA's were imprisoned.⁹⁷ There was very little information that was given on how the video was produced or circulated inside the New Bilibid Prison without being detected by the police.

In June 2015, subsequent videos were produced by the ASG group declaring Isnilon Hapilon as the Amir of the ISIS in South East Asia. On January 4, 2016, an apparent coalition was made as shown in a video where the terrorists referred to themselves as Islamic State Eastern Region or DIWM. Particular to these uploaded videos is the appearance of black flags which signified their allegiance to the ISIS in Syria. Access to ISIS' online English language magazine was also a source of information among local terrorists as it can easily be downloadable online. The magazine was used for recruitment and propaganda purposes.⁹⁸ In the Dabiq issue no. 7 for example, it outlined the process by which a distant region can be officially recognized as a province of ISIS.⁹⁹

IPAC Report 38 also noted the use of the Telegram channels were used to document the ground operations in Marawi. As all traditional lines of communications such as the Radio, Television and Print were cut off during the fighting, they relied on the Telegram or an online chat channel to disseminate information particularly to the areas outside of Marawi City. The report further stated that the Telegram groups were used by

the Filipino Jihadists to communicate with other jihadists outside of the country and to create a “larger constituency”. International and local news outfits were able to cover the ground on the area of interest (AIO) with the assistance of military units.¹⁰⁰

The ISIS narrative of establishing an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia has enticed homegrown terrorists to join the Daesh Philippines terrorist networks. Even the youth were prone to be persuaded to join the movement and become fighters. Recruitment are done at universities in Mindanao and in social media.¹⁰¹ Even in Muslim schools like madrassas have been a place of recruitment for their fighters.¹⁰² ISIS propaganda and the lure of power and money have speed up the process of recruitment.

Infrastructure

According to the ARMM Regional Development Plan 2017-2022, the ARMM host several infrastructures that sustain its development and growth.¹⁰³ The Lake Lanao, the largest lake in Mindanao generates electric power from hydroelectric power plants installed in the river system generated by the lake. Lake Lanao and other smaller lakes in Mindanao also yield irrigation, fisheries and aquatic resources that provide a source of livelihood to the people of Mindanao.

The ARMM has the least contribution to GDP among the different regions in the country with a share of 0.7 of total GDP in 2015 and 2016.¹⁰⁴ This was produced from its agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, industry sector (mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, electricity, gas, and water supply), and the service sector (transport, storage, and communication; motorcycle, personal; financial intermediation; real estate, renting, and business activities; compulsory social security; and other services). Barter trading and Halal Ecosystem serve as Halal hub for local and

international market for Halal food industry and import/export trading of Moro Muslim products as well.

The ARMM also hosts different regional and sub-regional centers composed of a network of settlements performing either as regional markets and service centers, presence of urban services such as financial institutions, medical centers, universities, ports/airports, and connect to metropolitan centers and smaller and local centers. Marawi City fall under the sub-regional center category that supports large township-type real estate development, regional administrative centers for national government agencies that connect to global economy exports, and able to support national level franchises and services. Marawi City also connects to and serve as service centers of smaller provincial and local centers. Its role in the ARMM Regional Development Plan will include centers for oil and palm production, Islamic and Western Education, Tourism destination, and industrial center for marine resources.

Marawi City is the center for both Islamic and Western education in ARMM since it hosts Mindanao State University and the King Faisal Institute for Arabic Studies. It is also considered as the region's summer capital and tourism hub owing to its rich culture and tradition.

Marawi provides connectivity to neighboring regional and provincial centers through network of roads connecting Lanao del Sur-Lanao del Norte. These road networks connect the key production areas to market, tourism sites and conflict affected areas.

Urban Environment of Marawi City

Marawi City consists of special characteristics that are distinct in from urban areas in the Philippines. It consists of a complex urban environment where physical terrain, the population and infrastructure impacted how the terrorists and government forces operate either from a defensive or offensive standpoint. There is a myriad of operational variables to consider that is unique in an urban setting in order to appreciate how the terrorist were able to execute the siege and how government forces responded to the attack.

Physical Terrain

The city is composed of different natural and man-made terrain features. Marawi City is situated at the northeast portion of Lanao lake, a significant terrain feature considering that it provides maritime mobility corridors from other towns in the coastal area around the lake. The lake also feeds the Agus river which divides the City into the east zone and the west zone. There are several bridges connects north and south of Marawi City. Three of these bridges became key terrain because terrorists used these bridges as chokes points and engagement areas during the siege. Marawi City is also surrounded by mountains from the north, west and east. These mountains were considered as training grounds of terror groups as well as sanctuaries when government forces conduct offensive operations.



Figure 12. Marawi City Aerial View

Source: ABS-CBN News, “Marawi City Aerial View,” accessed February 8, 2018, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/06/08/17/exclusive-aerial-video-of-battered-marawi-baranggays>.

Marawi City is composed of several urban functional zones where government, education, medical, military, commercial, and residential buildings are located. In a YouTube video posted Special Operations Command, Philippine Army, the scenes show the urban terrain where government forces managed to operate in the designated main battle area. It showed tight concrete multi-story buildings and narrow alley, sub-surface areas such as basements and tunnels, super-surface areas such as rooftops that are used by both government forces and urban terrorists in an intense urban combat.¹⁰⁵ The city blocks are divided by two-way lanes, narrow passageways going to interior sections of the city. The city structures consist of multi-story buildings in the urban centers such as the central business districts and single or double-story residential houses that are

constructed in “buhos” or concrete walls, semi-concrete or made of light materials (wood, bamboo, etc.) that are built tightly with each other. Concrete walls are constructed to protect the members of the family against clan feuds or “rido”. Soldiers have a hard time in breaching these walls as they tried to clear the buildings.

Population

The majority of the population of Marawi City are Muslim Maranaos with other Moro ethnic groups like the Tausugs, Maguindanaons and the like compose the minority ethnic groups. The Maranao people speak the “Maranao” language that provides them a distinct cultural heritage and identity. There are a few Christian residents who live in Marawi that are mostly traders and students who study in the Mindanao State University and other colleges. Marawi City is also predominantly Muslim where several madrassas and mosques serve as the religious establishments for the Islamic faithful. Maranaos are clannish in nature where political dynasties are dominated by a few powerful clans. The Maranaos that mostly inhabited Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte have already a well-organized indigenous polity.¹⁰⁶ Maranaos are also traders by nature because of their strategic geographical location in the lake Lanao where most of the coastal towns in the lake converge in Marawi City for trade and business. Powerful clans also control most of the formal economic establishments in the city. Some of the powerful clans are also into businesses that fall under the informal and shadow economies. Based on the study, violent incidents are high in Marawi City and the rest of Lanao del Sur because it is saturated with “Rido” or clan feuds caused by politics, land disputes, maratabat, accidents and drugs. The people of Marawi are vulnerable to radical Islamic extremist due to the Maranaos’ high tolerance to violence as well as their political and socio-cultural nature.

Marawi City is one of the largest and most densely populated cities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. A fifth of the residents of Lanao provinces reside in Marawi City. People from neighboring municipalities move to Marawi City because the city offers most of the governmental, educational, medical, business, cultural establishments in the region. It also offers a more dynamic political, economic and socio-cultural interaction among the residents. This movement of people also creates rapid urbanization of Marawi City. Figure 5 shows an aerial view of Marawi City where buildings are densely packed with various types of structures that depicted the effects of rapid urbanization. Rapid urbanization also feed poverty, weak infrastructure, poor delivery of government services and shadow economies.

In Figure 12, a map from Conflict Alert 2017 shows a high density of shadow economic activity in Marawi City. This indicates there is a proliferation of shadow economies that might have provided support to the Daesh in the Marawi Siege conflict.

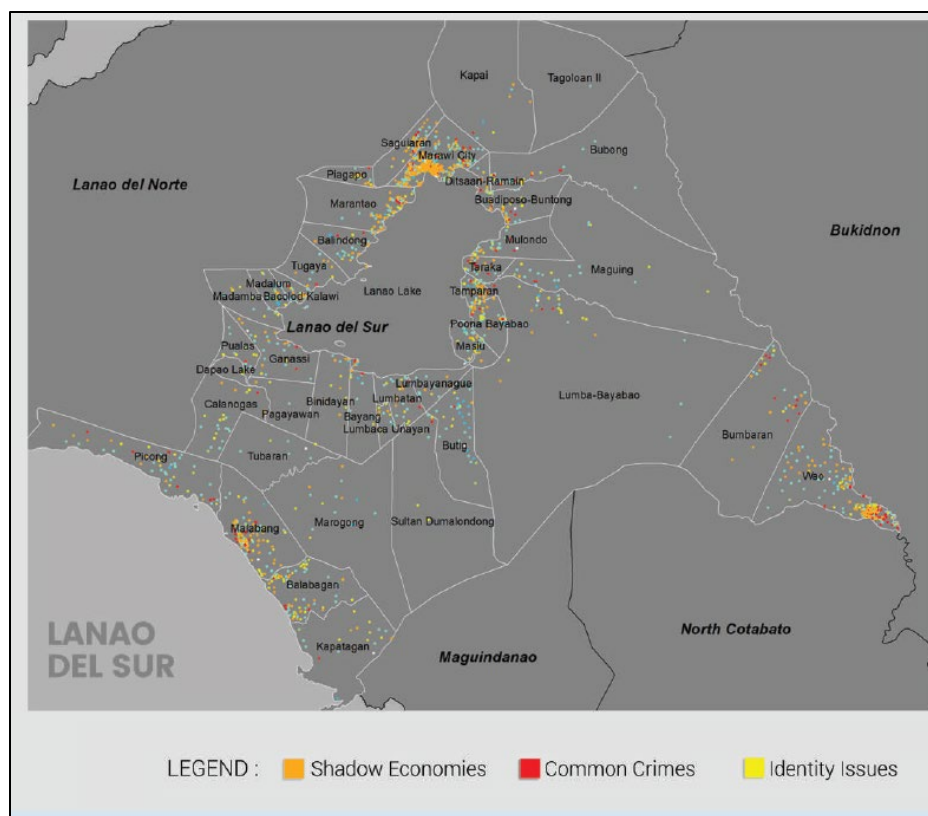


Figure 13. Conflict Map in Lanao del Sur

Source: Judy T. Gulane, Peter Paul Ocampo, Manuel Angelo Casalan, Ella Jae Ismael, Christia Riza Rabang, Genesis Adion, Khaled Magumpara, Morris Dela Pena, and Glenn Morris, *Guns, Drugs, and Extremism: Bangsamoro's New Wars*, Conflict Alert 2017, (London, UK: International Alert, 2017), 41.

According to the report, conflicts in Lanao del Sur were clustered heavily in Lanao shores and in Marawi City. Conflicts were also identified in large municipalities in the Lanao provinces namely Malabang, Wao and Balabagan.¹⁰⁷ Majority of the conflicts in these places are driven by shadow economy issues. A predominant violent conflict is rido or clan feuds caused by repercussion of shadow economies.

Infrastructure

Marawi City hosts several key political, educational, religious, economic and medical facilities and Mindanao State University (MSU).¹⁰⁸ The Lanao provincial government seat of power, the Provincial Capitol is located in Marawi City. The King Faisal Mosque, Grand Mosque, and Bato Mosque are three of several mosques situated in Marawi City. These mosques are protected from The Hague Convention Attack on Cultural Property.

Marawi City is the economic hub of Lanao del Sur. Marawi links the southern towns of Lanao del Sur Iligan City and other nearby towns. It is connected to Iligan City via the Iligan-Marawi national highway on the north. It is also connected to the different towns and at the south through the Lake Lanao Circumferential Road running from southwest and southeast of Marawi City.¹⁰⁹ The Agus River coming from Lanao Lake cuts across Marawi and flows down north towards Iligan Bay. Key bridges links the Marawi City that is separated by the Agus River: Baloi Bridge, Bayabao bridge and the Masiu bridge.¹¹⁰

The city is connected with a series of old and new tunnels and bunkers. The tunnels were used as a defensive position in earlier wars and the bunkers were used as a protection during bombings. The houses were heavily fortified with tight and multi-storied buildings that were fire resistant. This was the reason why the soldiers had difficulty penetrating the enemy positions.

Analysis of the PMESII Factors in the Marawi Siege

The PMESII-RAFT model was used to examine the factors in the operational environment that makes Marawi City susceptible to urban terrorism. The system

monitoring the presence of armed groups in the area. There was a proliferation of illegal guns where DIWM and other terror groups were able to acquire. In addition, there were private armed groups from powerful clans that should have been dismantled because they feed on violence and terrorism in Marawi City and neighboring towns and villages.

It is common that clan politics undermine local authorities and challenge democratic rule. High incidence of Rido or clan wars were happening in Marawi City and the province of Lanao del Sur. This culture of violence has fueled the proliferation of armed groups used by powerful clans to protect themselves from rival clans.

Political protection from shadow economies has paved the way to a transactional relationship between the state actors and enemies. Protection money is given as a funding for elections; at the same time these powerful enemies are deemed untouchables. President Duterte has named some powerful narco-politicians working in the area. These narco-politicians are a part of the web of shadow economies thriving in the area.

Financial institutions and money transfer companies as well as legitimate businesses were used by ISIS to funnel funds from Syria to the Philippines using liaisons among the different terrorist cells to fund these terror attacks. The businesses of the Mautes have been used as a front to fund the local terrorists. The shadow economy was used to buy high powered weapons through the black market. Farhana Maute's trading business was also used as a conduit for funds.

Ninety percent of the population of Marawi City are Muslims, this being a center for trade and education has been used as an advantage for the extremists. The predominantly Muslim population, and cultural composition allowed for the enemy to blend, including the existence of the powerful clans. The cultural aspect and the clan

culture was used an advantage as they are able to recruit family members and relatives into the armed group. The effect of urbanization in the Marawi City attracted marginalized Muslims that are easily radicalized; and funding allowed for them to be able to get a living wage out of being a terrorist.

The clannish culture of Moro Muslims encourages the culture of violence in the form of Rido or clan war. Rival clans would wage wars against each other for the sake of honor or to redeem the honor of the kin. These clans would merge by virtue of inter marriages that forms a more powerful clan. The Maute Group comprised mostly of the Maute Clan became the dominant terrorist organization among the DIWM because of its political and economic clout in Marawi and in Lanao del Sur province. They were able to recruit among its relatives and extended kin due to its extensive political and economic influence. They were able to secure weapons sourced from the shadow economies as well as their connections with the powerful MILF revolutionary movement.

The historical narrative on the marginalization of the Bangsamoro people and their quest for independence has fueled the aspirations of terrorists to join the group. While it has been proven that the political ideology has changed over time, their political aspiration to become independent has been part of their historical struggle. The delayed peace process left a lot of Muslims disgruntled. While the PMESII factors added to the vulnerability of the city, the ideological and religious factor was significant in driving terrorism.

It was also noted that at the initial stage of the Marawi Siege, there were only about 200 fighters. But this number increased within the five-month period owing it to the clannish nature of the Maranaos. According to ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman,

this phenomenon of helping a Moro Muslim brother in a battle to fight against an invader is known as ‘pintakasi’.¹¹¹ In the Marawi siege, it was alleged that the terrorists engaged in a pintakasi to “help embattled comrades from a superior military force”.¹¹²

The DIWM exploited social media to spread their propaganda and as a platform for recruitment based from the extent of recruitment and propaganda that is broadcasted in various social media platforms. However, they were not able to effectively penetrate traditional media like the TV, Radio and Print. The military and the government were able to prevent the terrorists in using these mediums by using it to convey counterpropaganda themes and messages to isolate the terrorists against the general populace while depicting the heroism done by the soldiers in liberating Marawi City.

Marawi City had the potential to establish an ISIS territory due to its established political, economic, socio-cultural, educational transportation, and power generation infrastructure that would sustain the caliphate. The Provincial Capitol and City Hall are symbols of political power. Marawi City is also the regional center for trade and industry for the ARMM. The DIWM have infiltrated prominent universities particularly in Marawi City to recruit its fighters. Mosques and Islamic schools provide the extremists venues to spread their extremist ideologies. The Agus River Dam system provide unlimited electrical power supply to the city.

The natural and man-made features of Marawi City worked to the terrorists’ advantage as a defending force in an urban warfare. According to Combined Arms Operations on Urban Terrain manual, the “urban environment provides the defender unique advantages based on the density of the buildings, infrastructure, and the three-dimensional aspect of the AO”.¹¹³The DIWM converted multi-story buildings into

fortresses. Bridges that connect the central district to the rest of the city were used as choke points to canalize the advance of government forces. Narrow alleyways were used as kill zones and ambush sites. The Lake Lanao and the surrounding mountains allowed fighters to move in and out the battle zone.

Jo Beall and H.V. Savitch were correct in describing that cities are targets of terrorists because the urban landscape maximizes the effects of violence that has a multiplier effect that can be transmitted as a propaganda by deed. The Marawi Siege has indeed become a global terrorist incident that sent a strong message to the Philippine Government that the terrorists are capable to bring down the government. They have branded themselves as a major state enemy and consider Philippine security forces as ‘occupiers’ or invaders. These have serious repercussions on the Philippine government to protect its cities from turning into terrorist territories.

The Marawi Siege incident might rekindle a sensitive issue on the creation of an independent Bangsamoro Islamic which were vigorously pursued by Moro separatists for decades that the Philippine Government has been dealing with the MNLF and the MILF. The Islamic Caliphate narrative may be a tempting proposition to the other armed groups who relate themselves as the marginalized Bangsamoro people and are disgruntled with the slow pace of the peace process between the Philippine Government and the MNLF/MILF. The Marawi siege also sent an attractive message to other jihadist terrorist groups in the region to join their cause of creating an East Asia “Wilayah” under a jihadist worldview.

The variables discussed in the previous pages are the factors which have contributed to the vulnerability of Marawi City in regards to an urban terrorist attack.

This is what was highlighted in the PIMESII-RAFT analysis. The systems perspective using the PMESII-RAFT model is an important tool for the military in order to draw out the variables that may contribute to the likelihood of an urban terrorist attack. The cause and effect pattern can predict how an action can affect the interactions within the system. Military strategists can use this to identify adversary's center of gravity (COG) through analyzing the different systems in the operational environment where the adversary draw out its critical capabilities, critical capabilities and critical vulnerabilities. These critical points in the systems may be targeted through a variety of effects in order to shape the operational environment, deter or defeat an urban terrorists attack. Marawi City is just but one of the examples how a thorough analysis of the PMESII variables would have anticipated and prevented the Marawi Siege.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

A New Form of Urban Terrorism

The urban siege conducted by an alliance of ISIS-inspired Islamic extremists in the Islamic City of Marawi revealed the emergence of a new form of urban terrorism in the Philippines. A conglomeration of domestic and foreign terror groups under the banner of ISIS inspired organization lay siege a symbolic key city that hosts the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) regional center for politics, trade, higher education, arts and culture. The terror attack was catastrophic in nature that the Philippine Government declared Martial Law in Mindanao to contain the terrorist threat. It had cost severe human suffering with several hundreds of militants, soldiers and civilians killed, thousands more were injured, and hundreds of thousands displaced. The effects of the urban attack were reverberating so that the cost of rehabilitation reached in the billions of dollars. The Marawi Siege posed a serious national and regional security concern because it would rekindle another Moro insurgency and potentially attract would would-be jihadists to make urban siege as a template to conduct similar attacks in neighboring countries in the Southeast Asia.

Urban Terrorism Model

This research concludes that the urban siege that happened in Marawi City was a result of three main factors namely: the terrorist organization, the operational

environment, and the urban environment. Figure 16 provides a conceptual model on Urban Terrorism using the different theories and concepts adopted by the author.

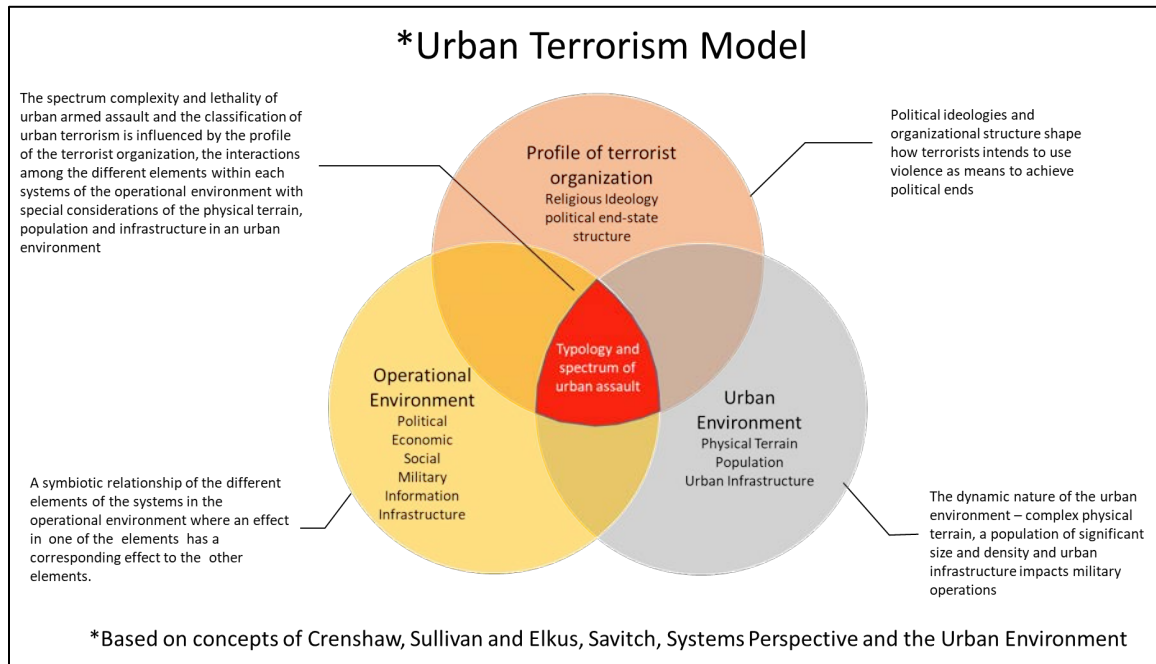


Figure 15. Urban Terrorism Model

Source: Created by author based on concepts from Crenshaw, Sullivan and Elkus, Savitch, and U.S. Joint Publications.

The Urban Terrorism Model provides a snapshot of how a certain type of terrorist attack in an urban center depends upon the terrorist organizations’ political end state, ideologies and structure; how the different actors in the operational environment interacts and the characteristic of the urban environment (physical terrain, population, and infrastructure) that would increase or decrease the likelihood of such an attack. These three intertwining concepts will give military strategists and government forces future

reference on how to do an analysis of any urban terror threat, and how urban terrorism is predicted.

The features of a terrorist organization and the type of religious ideology they espouse are two of the key indicators on the type of attack and lethality of urban terrorism they use. Tables 2 and 3 have showed the correlation between the political and religious end states as well as the typology of urban terror threat.

The PMESII-RAFT model is an important tool in order to ascertain the risk of an urban terrorist attack. This paper has showed that the environmental factors played an important tipping point on how vulnerable cities are on urban terror attacks as the case of Marawi City has displayed. The following conclusions can be summarized therein:

Profile of the Terrorist Organizations

The Urban Siege was a result of the terrorist organization's political end-state, ideology and structure that motivated them to seize Marawi City. The political end-state of the DIWM alliance is more ambitious compared to its predecessors in terms of regional and global reach. It wanted to establish an ISIS province in Southeast Asia that will potentially become a regional hub for ISIS in Southeast Asia while previous terror groups aspire only for a separate local Islamic state. The ideology was extremely radical that embraced Salafi Jihadism as the way to establish a global caliphate forcing the people to embrace Islam. It promotes violent to eliminate non-believers including "moderate" Muslims and enforce Islam in its purest form. Terrorism was used as a tool to achieve a political and religious end state. It was a departure from earlier terror groups like the BIFF and MBG that pursued an ethno-religious ideology for the establishment of a local caliphate for marginalized Bangsamoro Muslims. The extremist groups like the

ASG and the Maute Group have also pursued a Salafi Jihadist ideology but the scale of violence was limited within a small geographical location where these terror groups operate. The ISIS-inspired terror group lay siege Marawi City because they intend capture a territory they believed would provide them credibility to ISIS and declare them as its “wilayah”. The heavy casualty, significant number of civilians held hostage, and large scale destruction only gave them more credence to entice other local and foreign terror groups to join them in their quest for global jihad.

The DIWM terrorist organization has become hybrid and sophisticated structure characterized by a highly centralized leadership structure but operates into a cellular type organization comprised of different autonomous terror groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIS and claimed Isnilon Hapilon as caliph. The structure was also clannish in nature common in Muslim culture in Mindanao with the existence of family members within the structure of the organization. Previous terror groups comprised a relatively less complex structure due to its small size. The DIWM was also unique that it revealed a transnational structure involving foreign terrorist fighters working within the organization.

Typology and Spectrum of Urban Terror Attacks

The Marawi Siege was at the extreme level of complexity and lethality of armed assault. This research concluded that at the urban siege is at the extreme spectrum of urban armed assault. It was highly sophisticated and lethal from previous terror groups who used bombings, assassinations, beheadings, and small scale terror attacks as means of urban terrorism. They were very deliberate in the planning and execution of their attacks. The extent of devastation was large-scale that almost destroyed centers of

commerce, finance, culture and religion, transportation as well as residential infrastructure. It significantly disrupted the way of life of the Marawi population forcing the displacement of about two hundred thousand people. It has adopted a variety of urban warfare tactics by extensively used employing IEDs, snipers, rocket propelled grenades as well maximizing the urban terrain to their advantage by transforming concrete buildings into fortresses. Their tactics very definitely a semblance to what ISIS did in Mosul and Aleppo. This was a great departure from other terror groups that mostly operate in the rural towns and villages and in the jungles of Mindanao. The damage to property was catastrophic that this might fuel another uprising.

The Operational Environment

Marawi City was vulnerable to urban terrorist attacks because of the long-standing culture of violence and extremism. Clan feuds or “rido” have ingrained violence as part of the way of life for the Moro Muslims. Some powerful political clans have been undermining the local authorities and have been maintaining private armies to protect themselves against rival clans. This was aggravated by the non-existence of local governance that should have imposed law and order and have prevented the proliferation of such armed groups. The proliferation of shadow economies allowed powerful clans, terrorists and criminal organizations to fuel their activities from the money that come from drug trafficking, manufacture and trade of unlicensed weapons, human trafficking and other illicit activities. The state of poverty as a result of urbanization and lack of economic and educational opportunities for marginalized individuals to be most likely recruited by terror groups. The long-delayed peace process between the Philippine government and the MNLF and the MILF have allowed disgruntled members to pursue a

more violent means to achieved their political objectives. This was confounded by unchecked entry of foreign terrorists who had imported extremist ideologies as well as urban warfare tactics. The ISIS narrative of establishing an Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia was an attractive idea that lured homegrown terrorists and even the youth to join the DIWM terrorist organization. Social media and other forms of internet media have propagated extremism as well as platform for recruitment.

The Urban Environment

The complex man-made structures molded to the natural terrain in Marawi City allowed the terrorists the fight government forces on equal footing. The densely populated area and the urban infrastructure embolden the terrorists to stand their ground despite the efforts of the AFP to retake the city. Marawi City was an ideal territory that the DIWM will establish the ISIS Caliphate because the population can become the workforce of the ISIS state to enable its function or be recruited as their security forces; the infrastructure provides the financial and other resources that would maintain its operations, and the strategic location of Marawi City can be a jumping board for similar attacks in other cities in Mindanao.

The probability of future urban terrorist attacks in densely populated Muslim cities and towns by ISIS inspired terror groups is likely to happen if the factors mentioned in this study are present. It will likely to happen in highly urbanized non-Muslim cities, but the type of terror attacks may differ in the form of bombings which still result to a mega, cataclysmic and smart terror as its effects. An urban siege will be unlikely in highly urbanized areas whose political structure has a higher implementation of the rule of law. It is crucial for Philippine security forces and military planners to

assess the terrorist threat, the operational and urban environment factors in order to predict another Marawi-siege type of terrorist attack targeting another city in the Philippines.

Recommendation for Further Study

The Urban Terrorism Model presented by the author may provide researchers, military strategists, intelligence analysts and academe a framework to assess the probability of a similar Marawi Siege-type of terrorist attack by identifying the threat's end-state, ideology and structure as well as the factors in the operational and urban environment. However, this model is not conclusive and needs to be tested on different scenarios in order to validate its accuracy. Similar case studies involving urban terrorism that does not fall under the Islamic fundamentalist ideology can use this proposed Urban Terrorism Model to validate the assertions of the study.

The Urban Terrorism Model does not provide quantifiable metrics that could accurately predict the type of attack by terrorists. The possibility of another terrorist attack of this size and magnitude may depend upon a careful analysis of the threat's potential to conduct such an attack, indicators in the operational environment that feed the threat's actions, and the level of vulnerability of urban centers to prevent or deter such an attack.

This study was limited to understanding the forms of terrorism and the Operational Environment as depicted in the Urban Terrorism Model. As this is not exhaustive, a study on the military and terrorist strategies that was applied in the Marawi Siege is further recommended to be able to ascertain the effectiveness of government efforts in countering terrorism. The findings of this research may also provide significant

inputs on how government security forces may develop their military strategies on counterterrorism to prevent, deter, and dominate terrorists operating in an urban environment by using PMESII-RAFT model to determine centers of gravity, decisive points that would be used to develop into lines of operations and lines of effort.

A study on the lessons learned from those involved in the siege may also be used as a case study to improve strategies in the future. The findings of this research would also provide some important lessons learned for the Armed Forces of the Philippines to develop its capabilities in counter urban terrorism in terms of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, and leadership in combating terrorism in urban centers and urban warfare. It also requires the study and appreciation of the special considerations in operating environment where our security forces lack the knowledge and expertise. The AFP should be capable to conduct large-scale urban operations to defend against similar attacks on urban centers. Worldwide trends of terrorist attacks are shifting towards mega cities. Military capabilities should also concentrate on (discuss about improving military capabilities in urban warfare, intelligence-fusion, anti-terrorism, target hardening of vulnerable cities and urban centers and organization of Joint and Inter-Agency Task Forces to combat terrorism.

The factors in the operational environment that lead to the Marawi Siege are a wake-up for local governments to address issues of violence, Islamic radicalization, rapid urbanization, proliferation of shadow economies that breed Islamic extremism and might fuel another urban siege. Local governments and national security forces should continue to address these indicators to prevent another terrorist attack. This study can be expanded

using the PMESII-RAFT model in order to look at trends in urban cities across the country, and analyze the risks and probability of a terror attack in key cities.

Recommendations for National and Regional Policy

Finally, the Marawi Siege had strategic implications for national and regional security. The Marawi Siege highlights the need for the Philippines to develop a holistic approach by integrating the different instruments of national power to defeat, deny and prevent the resurgence and expansion of terrorism in urban centers across the Philippines. The different government agencies should be synchronized under a single direction to address the political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and informational factors that influenced the terrorist attack in Marawi City. The existence of foreign fighters and the support coming from ISIS in Syria only showed that Marawi Siege was sponsored by a transnational terrorist organization. Its effects can be felt in the southeast Asian region. As what Singapore Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen said that “if the situation in Marawi is allowed to escalate, it can prove to be a pulling ground for would-be jihadists.”¹ This should be addressed by all stakeholders in the region in order to prevent the another urban siege in other parts of Southeast Asia.

¹ Hincks, “The Battle of Marawi.”

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