



## Explorations in the Crafting of Government's Authority and Power Using Institutional Ethnography: The Case of the 2013 Zamboanga Crisis

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### ABSTRACT

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Crisis response is a clear illustration of what Migdal (2004) posits in his State-in-society approach: the iterative relationship between State authority and social actors' everyday practices. As the rise in recent natural and human-made disasters call for proficiencies in crisis response, it becomes essential to observe how the variabilities in State-in-society responses unfold through institutionally coordinated everyday social relations. The situation reveals the need to theorize these relationships on the grounds of the dynamic co-constitution of State-in-society. This study employed institutional ethnography (Devault & McCoy, 2002; Smith, 2005); observing the interplay of various actors' interests and strategies within institutional processes after the massive internal displacement that resulted from the 2013 Zamboanga siege. Whereas the Philippines is often portrayed as a weak State with a resilient population, this study suggests the Philippine State's fluid crafting, as illustrated in how various social actors reinterpret, negotiate, and appropriate State, specifically the dispersed government's power and authority during crises. The processes of assisting IDP provided opportunities for local and national actors to redefine their positions against one another and influence the crisis response process's outcomes.

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## I. Understanding Crisis Response Through Institutional Ethnography and the State-in-Society Approach

This study inquires into the process of crafting crisis response through institutionally coordinated everyday social relations that, in effect, reinterpret, negotiate, and appropriate State legitimacy, specifically government power. Thus, it begins with the premise that there is a fundamental iterative relationship between the State's representatives and the social actors of everyday life, and that the acknowledgment of this relationship clarifies the nature and role of the State beyond its reification as only a centralized seat of power.

**State-in-Society.** This study argues that the 2013 Zamboanga siege's crisis response can be understood using Migdal's State-in-society approach. For Migdal (2001), the State is "a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which represents the people bounded by that territory" (pp. 15-16). Simultaneously, the State is also shaped by "the actual practices of its multiple parts" (Migdal, 2001, p. 16). This definition of the State allows us to disaggregate State and society and recognize the many intermediary institutions' critical role across these entities that facilitate the State's image and co-constitute it with variegated practices (Watts, 2013).

As the various social actors within and outside major socio-political institutions interact with one another, they align and realign to further their specific goals. Their interaction also shapes the groupings and the rules and goals that they are pursuing. The everyday struggles of various contesting groups and actors result in policy implementation and program outcomes that are different from those indicated initially in the government's blueprint. Thus, the image and practices within the State-in-society can be overlapping, reinforcing, contradictory, or mutually destructive. A reified model of dominant State masks the real everyday practices where State authority is fragmented and contested by various society actors, which puts into question the notion of its legitimacy.

For Alagappa (1995), a complex and variegated understanding of legitimacy should recognize the degree to which legitimacy is wielded, rather than as a simple dichotomy between legitimacy and illegitimacy. Further, the degrees of legitimacy requires four key elements: shared norms and values, conformity with established rules for acquiring power, proper and effective use of power, and the consent of the governed. As opposed to Migdal (2001), Alagappa (1995) finds the State too abstract as an analytical unit to explore legitimization. Instead, he proposed to disaggregate legitimization through the following: 1) nation-state's legitimacy; 2) type of regime, and 3) the actual control and exercise of State power by the government. This study will primarily focus on the last one.

Nevertheless, while Migdal (2001) focused on State construction and Alagappa (1995) on the government's legitimacy building, both authors emphasized the dynamic processes involving the corresponding negotiations and contestations and involving multiple groups various amounts of political power. Both authors acknowledged that power could reside in multiple locations and are continuously contested and negotiated to establish the State and its corresponding legitimacy among its constituents.

Taking off from Migdal's State-in-society approach and Alagappa's notion of legitimization, this study explores the fluid construction of the government's control and exercise of power during crisis response following the 2013 Zamboanga Siege. It focuses on national and local government units' actual control and activity in managing this specific crisis. However, it also recognizes multiple power sites emanating from various actors of society who continuously negotiate, contest, and contradict the national and local government's efforts in crisis response.

**Institutional Ethnography.** To unveil how everyday social relations reshape government power, we must begin our inquiry at the day-to-day level where various social actors understand and participate in institutionally coordinated mechanisms that feedback into the State's image and practices. Institutional ethnography requires a methodology that recognizes the dynamism of how the State is put together in local and daily life — an institutional

ethnography (Devault & McCoy, 2002). It begins with social actors' standpoint and explores their understanding, experience, and participation (Smith, 2005), which are often invisible and taken for granted as constitutive of institutional life. This inquiry model helps us understand how social actors' knowledge, experiences, and practices are organized with other social actors and are institutionally coordinated. Institutional ethnography can thus clearly illustrate how the State becomes, as Amin-Kahn (2012) calls it, a "dispersed ensemble of institutional practices" (p. 4).

Thus, the object of study and analysis in institutional ethnography is the "relations of governance or social coordination" (SSSP, 2020). This approach sets it apart from institutional analysis, whose object of study is structural (actors, causes, and effects within institutional processes), and from ethnography, whose objective of the study is contextual (environment, history, social systems, cultural beliefs, and practices). Institutional ethnography combines both concerns for the structures and everyday life practices by focusing on the dynamic interactions in between. By starting from people's knowledge and experience as they participate in institutional life, institutional ethnography is immediately a mode of inquiry and an analytical tool for discovering material relations without reifying both actors and institutions.

The extent of crisis following the 2013 Zamboanga siege — the magnitude of destruction, the resulting displacement, and the necessary rehabilitation — required the institutional coordination between State representatives such as national, regional and local government units, and actors that were involved in crisis response. The latter includes the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), internally displaced people (IDPs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and humanitarian organizations. This study observed these social actors' everyday concerns and perspectives from their different positions in these institutions; they went through conflict resolution and crisis response (emergency, recovery, and rehabilitation).

The methods used emphasized the discovery and exploration of everyday activities and the actors' positioning within them. Institutional ethnography investigates the "widespread discursive processes," and the "coordination of activities in multiple sites," thereby revealing

"translocal relations, discourses and institutional work processes that shape the informants' everyday work" (Devault & McCoy 2002, p. 753). Thus, interviews were conducted with government representatives (from national and local agencies in housing, agriculture, social welfare, various offices of the Zamboanga City Government) and actors belonging and coordinating with multiple institutions (IDPs, CSOs such as Higher Education Institutions or HEI, the Church, and humanitarian groups). Questions were directed towards tracing the connections among individuals located in different parts of institutional complexes of activity (Devault & McCoy, 2002). Fieldwork was also conducted intermittently between 2013 and 2014 to observe the coordination among actors within everyday life's institutionalized contexts. Onsite visits were conducted for a sensory experience and to witness the extent of the crisis. This was done through a series of permitted visits with city officials to ground zero (Barangays<sup>3</sup> Mariki and Rio Hondo) and the evacuation centers and transitory sites (JFEMSC and Taluksangay).

Additional research strategies to complement the interviews included archival research on available local records, monitoring reports, official government documents, City Government updates, and focus group discussions (FGDs) of IDPs in strategic evacuation centers and transitory sites in Zamboanga City.

**Limitations.** Interviews were conducted based on the availability of various actors. This strategy was adopted to ensure that data gathering did not hamper crisis response activities. However, the researchers ensured that each major group was represented – State agencies, HEI, the diocesan Church, CSO, humanitarian groups, and IDPs. However, this study does not claim to cover all the institutional processes nor all the actors involved during crisis response. The researchers also ensured that data gathering did not harm or exacerbate actors' conditions during crisis response. The identities and specific positions of research participants are not revealed in this article to preserve the confidentiality of the study and privacy of the participants.

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<sup>3</sup> The barangay is the smallest political unit in the Philippines.

## II. The Socio-Political Context of Armed Conflict in Mindanao and the Case of the Zamboanga Crisis 2013

While armed conflict is more characteristic of central Mindanao, the 2013 Zamboanga siege happened in the light of the dynamics between the MNLF and the Philippine government. Thus, the conflict must be understood in the context of the longstanding history of Muslim marginalization and armed conflict in Mindanao.

In the early 1900s, the US colonial government's land policies resulted in systematic displacements of Muslims and various indigenous groups. This move led to various forms of disenfranchisement and negligible access to essential services for these groups. The resulting marginalization contributed to the Muslims' push for autonomy, secession, and partly explains the protracted armed conflict in Mindanao (Rivera, 2008). These hostilities resulted in large-scale death and internal displacements, loss of residential and agricultural land, enormous economic losses for the island group, and the vicious cycle of violence in Mindanao. This dominant narrative was questioned by Abinales (2018); he argued that conflict is the exception rather than the rule in Mindanao. The history of the island reveals prolonged collaboration and mutual accommodation with outsiders as illustrated by the way Muslim elites engaged with Spain and the United States (p. 46).

**The Resurgence of Militant Nationalism.** From the 1960s to 1970s, a group of university students, intellectuals, and many Muslim leaders led a revival of militant nationalism in the Philippines. Three events quickly radicalized their efforts: 1) the 1968 Jabidah Massacre where 180 mostly Muslim personnel were secretly trained by the Marcos administration to invade and occupy Sabah then summarily executed when the plan leaked out; 2) the founding of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) by then Governor of Cotabato province, Datu Udtog Matalam, and 3) the mass killings of Muslims between 1970 and 1971 stemming from escalating economic, political and ethnic tensions between Christian and Muslim communities in Central Mindanao (Rivera, 2008).

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), founded in 1969 by Nur Misuari, a former political science professor from the University of the Philippines, initially dominated the armed struggle for Muslim rights in the Philippines. However, irreconcilable differences created a schism within the organization leading to the creation of the breakaway group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), in 1977 headed by Hashim Salamat until his death in 2003. It officially declared its separation from MNLF in 1984. A resurgence of Muslim extremism in Southeast Asia happened in the 1990s, with the Abu Sayyaf Group<sup>4</sup> (ASG) presenting itself as a militant organization seeking to create a separate Islamic State for Muslims in the Philippines. ASG has been involved in bombings, abductions, assassinations, kidnappings, extortions, and has established links with Al Qaeda and Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah (Caringal, 2011).

Throughout the years, there were numerous attempts to forge a lasting peace in Mindanao. For Abinales (2018), these efforts did not prosper because the separatist problem was wrongly defined as primarily driven by religious intolerance and economic domination. To a large extent, the inability to craft a lasting peace and development plan for Mindanao is due to many Muslim elites' actions. With their long history and social embedded-ness, many elite Muslim families are enabled to make political adjustments to outwit the State and outlast the separatist groups (p. 48). Thus, the State's governmental authority emanating from Manila is mediated through local power.

Majul (2010) pointed out how many Muslim leaders' prestige has eroded over the years. Many young Muslims see these elites as only working to preserve their political power instead of working for their general welfare. Rightly or wrongly, these Muslim leaders are to be blamed for many of the social ills (p. 62). As Lara (2014) argued succinctly, many traditional Muslim leaders adapted well to the modern government apparatus. Without giving up their traditional roles, they expanded their power and authority by having themselves elected into

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<sup>4</sup> Additionally, two radical Muslim groups have been on the radar of the government security forces lately. First is the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a breakaway MILF group in 2008 composed mostly of Maguindanaoans and operating mainly in Maguindanao and North Cotabato. Second is the Maute Group of Lanao del Sur was established in 2012 and headed by brothers Abdullah and Omar. The group is composed mostly of Maranaos and has known links with ISIS and MILF. They figured prominently in the 2017 siege of Marawi (International Crisis Group, 2019).

national and local political positions. However, many of these leaders capitalize on their elected positions to further their familial and clan interests. The next section summarizes the national government's negotiation efforts with various secessionist groups in Mindanao.

**Negotiations with the Philippine State.** Cycles of armed struggle, international diplomacy, mediation, and peace negotiations continue to occur with no definitive closure reached. The Government and the MNLF signed the Tripoli agreement in 1976 to establish autonomy rather than an independent Bangsamoro in 13 provinces in the southern Philippines. However, Marcos unilaterally implemented the agreement by creating only two regional autonomous provinces comprising three of the 13 provinces. Both the MNLF and the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) protested the move. No formal negotiations between the State and the MNLF until 1986 after Marcos was removed from office. To address the Muslim struggle in Mindanao, the Aquino administration created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) through an Organic Act (Republic Act 6734) approved by Congress in August 1989. However, only four out of the 13 provinces identified (Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao) voted to join the ARMM in the plebiscite that followed. In a later plebiscite in 2001, under the amended Organic Act, Basilan province and Marawi City joined the ARMM.

Initially, the MNLF boycotted all electoral exercises associated with the ARMM and demanded the Tripoli Agreement's implementation, mandating the creation of an autonomous region in 13 provinces of Mindanao. Eventually, Misuari and MNLF yielded to intense pressures from OIC and the Government of Indonesia and accepted the ARMM autonomy framework in 1996. Initially elected as ARMM Governor, Misuari lacked the necessary management skills and faced huge budgetary constraints that resulted in his dismal performance as ARMM governor. In 2001, he severed his relations with the government to lead an abortive uprising. For this act, he was incarcerated for several years on charges of treason and rebellion.

In 2008, the government and the MILF came very close to signing the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) that was supposed to provide substantial

recognition of Bangsamoro's historical claims on their ancestral domain. The law was to be complemented by creating a new Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) that would provide MILF with radical powers and authority. However, the scheduled signing of the MOA-AD in Malaysia was stopped by a temporary restraining order granted by the Supreme Court in response to petitions filed by parties opposed to the agreement.

Another effort to find a lasting solution to the Mindanao problem, a new agreement — the Framework Agreement — was signed in Malaysia in 2012; its accompanying attachments were completed in 2014<sup>5</sup>. The Framework resulted from a long peace negotiations process that started in 1997 and continued in 2001 through the Malaysian government's facilitation. As far as the MNLF was concerned, the agreement was primarily between the Philippine Government and the MILF. Feeling excluded from the picture, the MNLF decided to call attention to its causes; in September 2013, some of its members decided to march into Zamboanga City.

The recurrence of armed conflict and internal displacement in Mindanao is also an opportunity to revisit our view of IDPs as merely powerless individuals forced to leave their war-torn villages. As Canuday (2009) pointed out, the evacuees are also empowered human agents capable of finding meaning in their disrupted everyday lives. Referred to as *bakwits*, the IDPs, in partnership with various civil society organizations, can assert and come up with their understanding of security. For Jansen and Löfving (2009), it is necessary to understand the relevance of context, specifically concerning the concepts of violence and place. Individuals exposed to various forms of conflict, violence, and places can develop their own understanding of belonging, personhood, and citizenship. This understanding informs their decisions to either move or to stay put in a given location. Home is imagined by these men and women refugees as a place free of remembered or anticipated violence.

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<sup>5</sup> Negotiations between the State and various Mindanao armed groups continue to this day. The most recent round of peace talks culminated in establishing the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in January 2019, replacing ARMM. Like the ASG, BIFF, and Maute Group, some armed groups still feel that the government failed to heed their demands.

### III. Crafting Government Power and Authority in Defining a Crisis Situation

**Constructing the Zamboanga Crisis.** As early as September 8, 2013, elements of the Philippine Navy spotted boats near the coast of Rio Hondo, Zamboanga City, carrying identified MNLF elements led by Commander Habier Malik. As shared by various key informants of this research, the group was composed of young Yakan soldiers from the nearby island of Basilan. Also with the group was Malik's daughter. Although various State actors described the action as an attack on the city, the MNLF elements countered that their main objective was to march into Zamboanga City and hoist a Bangsamoro Republik flag in front of the City Hall.

A gun battle with government forces ensued that resulted in casualties. In the early morning of the following day, the armed battle intensified in Sitio Bugoc, Barangay Sta. Catalina, affecting the nearby areas of Sta. Barbara, Mampang, Mariki, and Rio Hondo (Office of Civil Defense[OCD], 2013). MNLF eventually occupied the barangays of Rio Hondo, Mariki, Sta. Barbara and Sta. Catalina (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018). By that time, they already had some 300 hostages (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2013a).

Meanwhile, the AFP and PNP started surrounding these areas. During the first two days of armed conflict, they retreated to neighboring barangays and sought refuge in evacuation centers. By September 10, just two days after the initial firefight, there were already 8,314 IDPs from 10 affected barangays (IOM, 2013a).

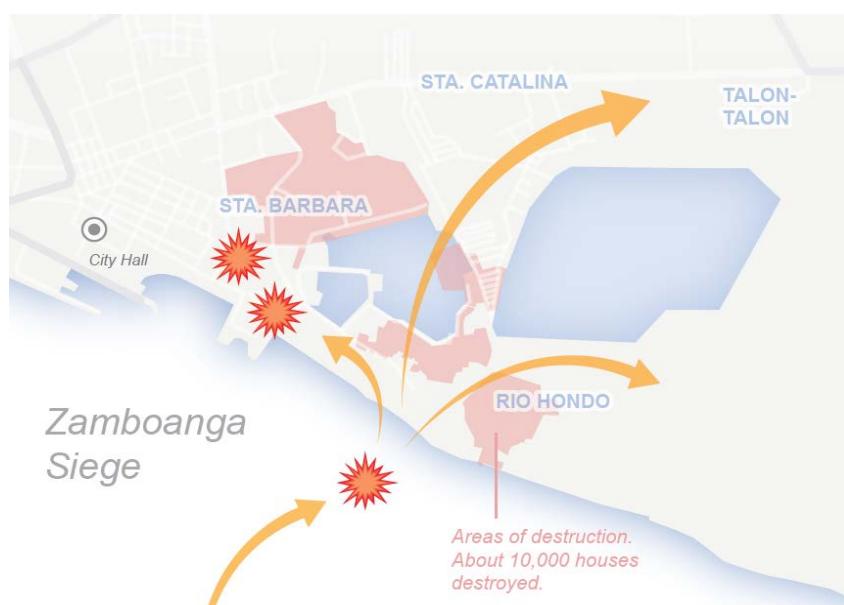
From the beginning of the conflict, representatives from civil society groups and the city government attempted informal negotiations with the MNLF to release hostages and prevent further escalating the conflict. These Zamboanga-based organizations were aware that a city-wide military offensive would create massive population displacement requiring the city's long-term rehabilitation process. Although many Zamboanga civil society groups were skilled in doing culturally-sensitive peace negotiations, their suggestions were not given enough weight by the national government. As one member lamented, *"There was never anything to strategize negotiation; there was no duly constituted negotiation team ... The*

whole situation was packaged as an internal security issue with manifestations of criminality. This was a peace process issue."

The peace negotiation was abandoned when the President of the Philippines and the DILG Secretary decided to reclassify the situation as a national security problem rather than a side issue connected to the ongoing peace process with the MILF. After the reclassification, the government ordered the AFP to engage the MNLF rebels fully.

Thus, on September 13, the Zamboanga City Government ordered a forced evacuation for at least six of the most affected barangays: Rio Hondo, Sta. Barbara, Sta. Catalina, Talon-Talon, Mampang, and Bungan. By this time, the IDPs in 22 evacuation centers ballooned to 67,316 (IOM, 2013b). The clarity of whether such an order was given, however, was questioned by some residents. In an interview at one of the evacuation sites, a resident said that a "no evacuation order" was given by the local government authorities. They decided to flee when gunfire sounded louder and closer to their homes.

The armed conflict further escalated after the forced evacuation. A massive fire broke out and destroyed most of the structures in Mariki. Overall, the mortars exchanged, and the massive fire destroyed more than 10,000 houses (IOM, 2013c). The IDPs lost many of their documents, savings, and family memorabilia in the process.



**Figure 1.** Map of areas in Zamboanga City where the armed conflict took place (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, (UNOCHA, 2015)

From the very beginning, the IDPs illustrate their agency in crafting their relationship with representatives of both national and local governments. Many evacuees relied on their agency and decided to evacuate instead of waiting for the City Government's order. Meanwhile, civil society organizations' representatives questioned the national government's decision to wage an armed battle instead of exploring a more protracted negotiation process. While these are not direct challenges to the government's legitimacy, many local actors, by their actions at the onset of the Zamboanga crisis, illustrate that the government is only one of several sources of authority on site.

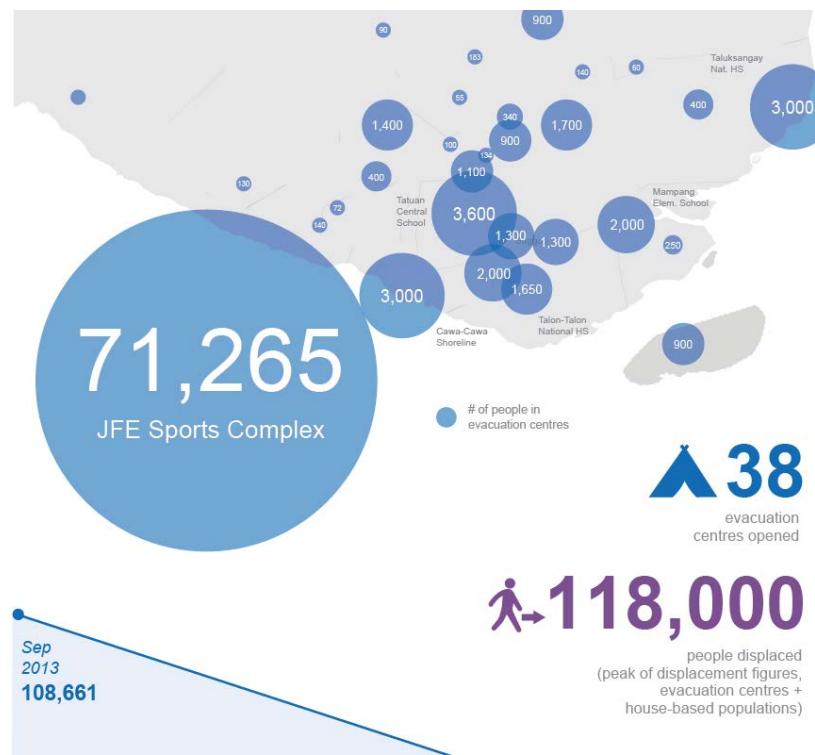
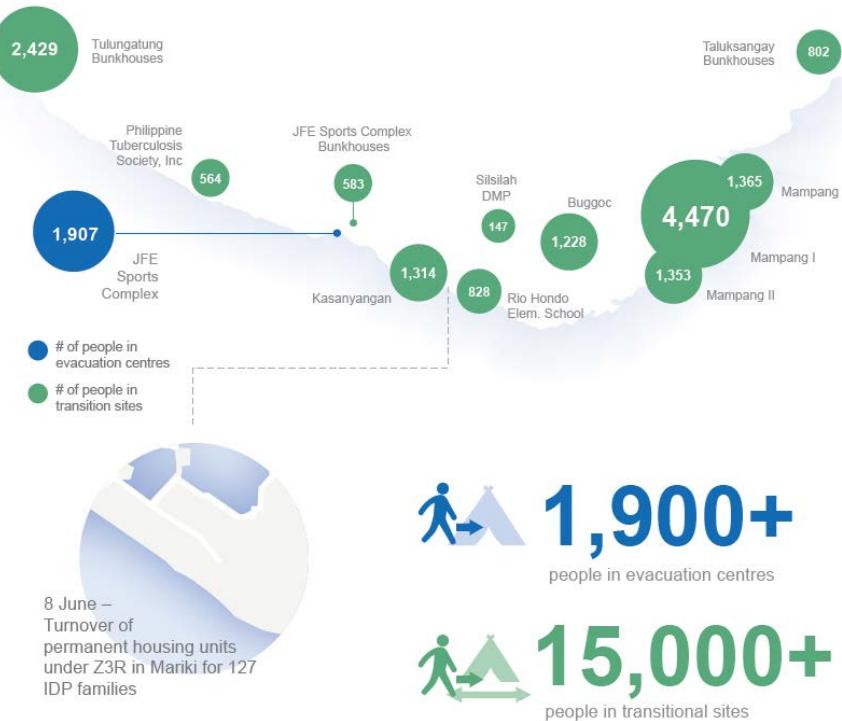


Figure 2. Map of evacuation centers and the number of IDPs in 2013 (UNOCHA, 2015)

Armed conflict ended by September 28, a total of 119,714 individuals from 23,794 families had been displaced. Of these, 28,976 individuals from 5,881 families were classified as *home-based IDPs* temporarily sheltered by their relatives. Meanwhile, 90,738 individuals from 17,913 families took refuge in several evacuation centers all over the City (UNHCR, 2018).



**Figure 3.** Map of IDPs still in transitory sites by June 2015

**Conflict Resolution: National Security or Peace Process.** The Zamboanga Crisis is the culmination of a series of missteps committed by the national government. One civil-society group representative faulted the government for misreading intelligence reports about the concentration of MNLF members in some parts of Mindanao and the framing of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Peace Process (OPAPP) of the MNLF. For him, one of the more significant mistakes that contributed to the Zamboanga crisis was: "the government had this framing of MNLF as a non-entity, it's a spent force, Nur Misuari is sick, and therefore you do not worry about the MNLF."

A university professor from the city, notes that Manila-based analysts were too quick to dismiss Nur Misuari's MNLF as a spent force. While history proved that their assessment of the situation is precise, their voices were not given much weight in the government's overall framing of the Zamboanga crisis. The MNLF played a vital role at the onset of the Zamboanga Crisis. Its march into Zamboanga City was a way to get the State's attention after their perceived exclusion in the government's peace negotiations with MILF.

By attempting to hoist a Bangsamoro flag, the MNLF was symbolically challenging the State's legitimacy and, at the same time, asserting its autonomy in Zamboanga City. However, the action was viewed negatively by many Zamboanga City Chavacano residents as they clearly remembered Misuari's takeover of Barangay Cabatangan, also in Zamboanga City, in 2001. These residents did not want a repeat of the armed conflict between the MNLF and AFP elements. They viewed the MNLF's march to Zamboanga City with much caution and antagonism with their buzzword "no to Cabatangan."

Meanwhile, for some Muslim evacuees, "the purpose of the MNLF who marched into the city was not to wage war but to have a parade" (IDP, Zone B). The national government did not give this alternate view much weight. The Department of Interior and Local Government's Secretary Mar Roxas, who flew to Zamboanga City to oversee the situation, classified the event as an internal security problem. This decision undermined the local government as significant decision making was taken over by the national government, including whether to negotiate or not with the MNLF elements.

Conscious of the massive destruction that can result, the City Government initially opted for a peaceful approach to deal with MNLF. Through established CSO networks of peacebuilding and interfaith dialogue in Zamboanga City, they explored avenues for negotiation. Actively involved was the Catholic Peace-Building Network (CPBN), whose members include the Silsilah Dialogue Movement, Peace Advocates Zamboanga Foundation, Inc. (PAZ), Mindanao Peaceweavers and CFSI. PAZ also had links with other local peacebuilding groups like the Zamboanga Basilan Integrated Development Alliance (ZABIDA), Re Unidos — Zamboanga Civil Society Organizations Coordinating Council, and Western Mindanao State University (WMSU). Meanwhile, members of the CBPN were connected with other HEI like Ateneo de Zamboanga University (AdZU). The latter initiated a Quick Response Team through the Mindanao Emergency Response Network (MERN).

With the help of an HEI representative, and through Muslim students with familial links with the MNLF, a high city official was able to speak with MNLF leaders, Ustadz Habier Malik and Nur Misuari, while the Zamboanga siege was still unfolding. The negotiators worked for

the release of hostages in exchange for food and getaway vehicles for MNLF elements. However, discussions between the President, the DILG Secretary, and the City Government led to the siege's reclassification as a national security problem. Consequently, a military solution was implemented rather than exploring further avenues for peaceful negotiations.

The subsequent military operations caused massive destruction, population displacements, and trauma. Aside from the deaths and injuries, the MNLF took hostages among some locals and forced other residents to cook meals for the MNLF. The pictures of damages and the realization of what they had lost during the siege are burdens that the displaced population will be carrying for a long time. Some government employees recall the enormous injuries sustained by both the MNLF and the AFP during the conflict. The smell and pallor of death were still very palpable when the researchers visited ground zero of the conflict, Barangays Rio Hondo and Mariki, in 2013. Residents of nearby barangays were also reluctant to return to their undestroyed houses. The trauma and sense of insecurity were intense, as there was a nagging feeling that the MNLF could return anytime.

These were precisely the scenarios that local peacebuilding groups wanted to avoid. Representatives of civil society groups felt that the City Government should have been more assertive in pushing for peaceful negotiation. In their assessment, the City Government was capable of a peaceful solution given its extensive network of CSOs that are well-trained in interfaith dialogue, peace processes, and a deep understanding of local cultural dynamics. However, a key informant from AdZU qualified that the negotiations could have worked if only the peacebuilding advocates and CSOs could work closely with the City Government during the first few days of the crisis. The refusal of some CSOs to work together severely limited the negotiation options available to the State actors.

For this research participant, "there is a unique way of understanding and responding to the Zamboanga Crisis. It should follow the expectations and demands of local groups." This insight was a critique of how the National Government pursued armed conflict in a highly urbanized area and with a historically divided population. A member of PAZ noted the irony of Zamboanga's motto "No te vayas de Zamboanga" (Do not leave Zamboanga) when he felt

that many are leaving due to the historical divisions in Zamboanga City.

Another prominent member of a peacebuilding CSO from WMSU contends that "there were various discourses and interpretations on what triggered the Zamboanga Crisis, which led to both the understanding and misunderstanding of the event." To her, the City Government's decision not to negotiate with the MNLF was the primary reason for the crisis's violent outcome. The rebels took hostages only after the AFP attacked them.

The many stakeholders with variable institutional locations vis-à-vis the national government all contributed to the character of institutional arrangements that were set in motion during the Zamboanga crisis. The voices of the national government and the Christian Chavacano populace of the city were more dominant in defining the situation as a security problem. They include business owners and typical residents of Zamboanga City. Meanwhile, the civil-society groups pushing for negotiation, and the Muslim population, who saw nothing wrong with the marching of MNLF to the city, were excluded from the decision-making.

#### **IV. Crafting Authority and Power During Crisis Response and Management**

The demand for relief pulled together various actors of society - the City Government, humanitarian agencies, the Catholic Diocese of Zamboanga, several HEI, and other civil society actors in Zamboanga City. On September 18, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) conducted a joint inter-agency rapid needs assessment of five evacuation centers. The United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (UN RC/HC) also declared that UN agencies were ready to provide humanitarian assistance and proceeded to identify and address IDP needs using the UN's cluster approach. Shortly after, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Corazon Soliman declared the situation as "a humanitarian crisis" (Agence-France Presse, 2013).

These led to a rapid influx of humanitarian assistance to Zamboanga City. Aside from food and water, other forms of assistance included: cooking utensils, hygiene kits, first aid kits, beddings, shelters, portable toilets, and livelihood support. There were also provisions for children's continued education, protection of women and children, and psychosocial healing.

In the hope of receiving IDP benefits, other low-income but non-IDP groups flocked to evacuation centers. The huge demand for assistance necessitated a census to identify the IDPs from the conflict-affected areas.

The dynamic crafting of the national and local government's authority and power was further illustrated through acts of negations, contestations, and negotiations with other stakeholders in the ensuing response and rehabilitation of Zamboanga City. The fluid crafting of authority and power was not limited to the relations between national and local government offices; it was also a feature of their relationships with national and international CSOs, the IDPs, the MNLF, and other city residents. The complex character of these relations is discussed in the following sections.

**Emergency Response: Providing and Receiving Relief.** The IDPs, who stayed in JFEMSC (Joaquin F. Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex), the main evacuation center during the crisis, recalled being surprised by the armed conflict. They left their houses without bringing with them any essential provisions. Afraid, uncertain, and confused, they walked 45 minutes from Rio Hondo and Mariki to Sta. Catalina before reaching JFEMSC, where they found other IDPs. Initially, they tried to get by with help from friends and relatives. As the fighting continued, several thousands more IDPs flocked to JFEMSC. A representative from a CSO questioned the decision to use the grandstand as the primary evacuation site: "Why the grandstand, why not the schools? If most of these IDPs are Christians and non-Muslims, the local government would have directed them to schools instead of the grandstand."

The churches and schools provided the first set of relief operations ahead of the City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) and before activating the city's emergency response. A key informant from the Social Action Center (SAC) of the Archdiocese of Zamboanga explained that "it was easy for the SAC to respond quickly through its existing parishes network." Starting their assistance on September 9, 2013, the SAC was one of the first to respond in smaller evacuation centers, helping 11 out of 55 evacuation centers. With the banks closed on the first day of the siege and with only PHP5,000 cash on hand, individual

contributions poured in from local and international sources through their partners in neighboring sites. The neighboring Diocese of Pagadian also responded to their call for assistance.

Ateneo de Zamboanga University responded through its formation center, Social Awareness and Community Service Involvement (SACSI), and its research and advocacy arm for peace, the Ateneo Peace and Culture Institute (APCI). During the emergency phase, SACSI coordinated the collection and distribution of relief goods from students and the Zuellig Family Foundation. SACSI also deployed volunteer students to assist the CSWD in coordinating relief services at two evacuation sites, JFEMSC and Pilar Elementary School.

As per the narration of some IDPs and some CSO representatives, the first few days were marred with episodes of government lapses. One Muslim IDP lamented the poor treatment that they got when they first arrived in the grandstand. "*Ang sama ng pagkain na ibinigay sa amin, parang kaning baboy. Trinato kaming parang hayop.*" [The food given to us was of very poor quality, just like pig's food. We were treated like animals.]

The volume of IDPs and non-IDPs who took refuge in JFEMSC resulted in several health concerns such as dehydration, heat exposure, inhalation of volatile compounds released by polyurethane matting used in the sports complex, and the disposal of food and human waste. Though the evacuation site was divided into four zones, the insufficient number of volunteers made the management of camps very difficult. Only later on, when IDP leaders were appointed to assist in camp management, did the situation improve. One CSO representative shared: "*The situation in the grandstand was chaotic. The City Social Welfare Office does not know what it is doing. Things only improved when representatives from the regional and national DSWD arrived.*"

Weeks after the gun battle conditions in JFEMSC remained intolerable for all. In particular, the Badjao refused to stay inside the JFEMSC to avoid the Tausug IDPs. Aside from their longstanding ethnic tension with the Tausugs, the Badjao, as one of the last remaining sea gypsies in the world, wanted to continue their unique cultural practices. Not wanting to part with their boats, they created a makeshift evacuation site near the waters across Cawa-

Cawa Boulevard. Living by the roadside posed additional hazards for them and vehicles plying the boulevard. Badjao's unique diet led them to sell or exchange the rice, noodles, and canned goods in their relief packs for cassava and fresh fish, their staple diet. Humanitarian agencies eventually recognized the importance of culturally guided decisions in crafting standards for humanitarian assistance.

Issues of food shortage and lack of livelihood were foremost concerns among IDPs in JFEMSC. To augment their income, some IDPs put up small retail stores onsite to augment their income, relied on remittances from overseas kin, and resumed work such as selling fish. Sadly, some IDPs used illegal strategies such as prostitution, drugs, and petty theft, which further exacerbated the situation at JFEMSC. Unsure of how long they had to stay in JFEMSC, IDPs expressed a strong desire to move out as soon as possible. They asserted that they would not need as much assistance if they could return home and pursue their previous livelihood without dealing with the health and social issues in JFEMSC. “*Kulang na kulang po talaga yung tulong na ibinibigay sa amin. Kung makakabalik na kami sa aming bahay kahit papaano ay makakahanap kami ng pagkakakitaan.*” [The assistance provided to us is so inadequate. If only we can return to our homes we can find some form of livelihood].

Intentional or not, some IDPs felt that the crisis further highlighted their marginalized social location. The decision to house them in the grandstand instead of public schools and the poor treatment they received is a testament to their minority position in the institutional processes of crisis management. Due to the difficult situation, the IDPs were encouraged to find ways to make their lives more manageable within the national and local government's limited crisis response capability. The Badjaos illustrated these survival strategies. They moved across Cawa-Cawa Boulevard to manage their tenuous relationship with the Tausug and the barter mechanism they adopted to access the food items that they want.

**Recovery Phase: Transitioning to Rehabilitation.** With the prolonged stay of IDPs in evacuation centers, new needs emerged, such as improved health and sanitation, sustainable livelihood, sturdier wooden housing with designated cooking areas, child-friendly spaces,

continued youth education, psychosocial services, protection of women and children. International humanitarian standards set the tone for needs identification, while cluster coordination organized State and non-State actors into specific partnerships. More than 16 humanitarian agencies<sup>6</sup> poured aid into both the emergency and recovery phases.

Humanitarian groups also assisted in the logistical coordination and communication by keeping inter-agency communication constant, regularly updated, and publicized to keep various actors in the loop. UNOCHA took charge of coordinating and identifying specific government units as lead actors. Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies, CSOs, and IDP leaders were designated as co-lead actors. The lead and co-lead agencies were organized into 11 clusters (Table 1 in Appendix).

The weekly and biweekly cluster meetings became spaces for discussion among the various State actors on their courses of action, including the actual mix of assistance to be provided to IDPs. According to the UNOCHA representative, "the application of the cluster approach was unique in the Philippines, as it was adopted as policy by the national government." He further asserted the importance of the government's role as lead so that regional departments could eventually turn things over to local government departments while keeping humanitarian systems intact and operational. Thus, many of the cluster heads were from national government agencies. The same representative admitted though that "the participation of civil society organizations was not as high due to some political dynamics. However, as UN representatives, they do not delve into these political matters."

However, other actors from humanitarian agencies claimed that even with cluster coordination, the recovery process still took too long. A UNICEF officer noted the "slow delivery of provisions by the government." For example, the City Government took months to

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<sup>6</sup> These are Community and Family Services International (CFSI), Fit for School, Habitat for Humanity, International Committee of the Red Cross / Philippine Red Cross (ICRC/PRC), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Save the Children UK, Action Against Hunger (ACF International), United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), among others. The Australian Government, European Union, and USAID also extended multilateral funding to the local government, civil society, and humanitarian organizations.

complete the census of legitimate IDPs. A WFP officer attributed such delays to the "inadequate political will of the government." To overcome inter-agency coordination hurdles, a key informant from Habitat for Humanity described how, despite guidelines in cluster coordination, they resolved to communicate directly with concerned government agencies, otherwise "small things got lost in the way." Given that Zamboanga had never experienced a crisis of this magnitude and institutional relations were evolving in the course of rehabilitation, another UNICEF officer lamented that "waiting for institutional maturity to happen came at the cost of IDP welfare."

Indeed, some evacuees commented that while they "serve as volunteers in these clusters, we are not as active because our needs are not reported, we want to do our own organizing." This lukewarm attitude on volunteering in the different cluster illustrates that the straightforward adoption of systems such as the "UN Cluster Approach" may feel disempowering to some groups involved in the daily processes of crisis management and rehabilitation.

For a UNHCR officer, the lag in coordination was a challenge in adherence to international humanitarian standards. Thus, to push for the improvement of IDP assistance, some humanitarian groups threatened to withhold some of their aid to the city. In one instance, they called out the City Government when the latter started decongesting JFEMSC by relocating some IDPs to a transitory site in Masepla, Mampang. This site was quite far from sources of IDP livelihood and schooling and inaccessible for the efficient conveyance of humanitarian assistance and services such as food, water, and volunteer teachers. As these humanitarian groups controlled many of the crucial resources, this put them in a position to influence the institutional processes. The Zamboanga city's rehabilitation process indicates how authority emanates from multiple sites that are not limited to national and local government units.

Even with regular consultations and cluster coordination in Zamboanga City, representatives of humanitarian agencies also recognized their limitations in negotiating with the local government. Save the Children had difficulty pushing for child protection or

education during the recovery response phase as the need for food, water, and shelter remained urgent. For this research participant, "it is difficult to transmit the importance of child protection when there are even more urgent needs like food." Thus, not all humanitarian agencies' requests to improve IDP's living standards could be accommodated by the lead government agencies, especially when these required immediate resource mobilization.

Despite intervention efforts made by humanitarian agencies, the Masepla transitory site's living conditions remained wanting. The researchers' actual visit to the site revealed muddy roads, a non-working water system, and children with no regular educational activities. To get by, Masepla IDPs started planting easy-to-grow vegetables like Malabar spinach, okra, and eggplant - crops that were incentivized by the government. Others also put up small retail stores.

The slow pace of rehabilitation did not sit very well with some members of the IDP community. As one evacuee asserted, "we always join rallies so that the government, especially Mayor Beng Climaco, would listen to us. If we do not like the location of the transitory sites that they have selected for us, we will openly refuse it." While the City Government was barely able to keep up with the demands of rehabilitation, this illustrates that there were spaces within its structures to accommodate some of the IDP demands.

Some local government units, like Barangay Taluksangay, proved more effective in managing the situation. The IDPs in Taluksangay received more organized assistance attributed to the local leaders' extensive political networks and strong political will. There was an overall sense of order and equality in the distribution of goods and services. Barangay leaders deployed local teachers as camp coordinators to document the IDPs coming in and to facilitate the distribution of goods.

The local teachers' familiarity with the community made them excellent camp coordinators. Services were also better in Taluksangay. Unlike Masepla, where electricity was regulated by the City Government to cut costs, but the barangay leaders in Taluksangay allowed the use of electric fans because bunkhouses in transitory sites were hot. An IDP in Taluksangay shares that, "*Mas maayos dito. Tahimik. Safe dito ang IDP.*" [It is more likable

here. Peaceful. IDPs are safe here.]

For one of their local leaders, the better conditions in Taluksangay are due to the difference in leadership. She asserted that "we are willing to accept them here, but they should follow our rules." More importantly, however, is the stronger cultural affinity of those relocated with the leaders of Taluksangay. The barangay leaders and many of the IDPs who relocated there are from the *Sama Bangingi* ethnolinguistic group. The local leadership treated these IDPs as part of their own, provided that they adhered to established local rules and regulations. Taluksangay's treatment of IDPs did not go unnoticed. As a representative from Save the Children says, their district leader has become more visible due to their favorable comparison with other sites.

Meanwhile, although around 40 of the 70 CSOs in Zamboanga City attended the cluster approach orientation, they did not become active cluster partners. A key informant from the Save the Children UK felt that CSOs acted "more intuitively rather than strictly adhering to international humanitarian standards." Even before the crisis, CSOs in the City already had extensive networks and programs. The Catholic Church also had its networks of parishes and programs for parishioners affected by the crisis. They were operating on the ground with programs aligned with humanitarian principles. Though not actively part of the cluster approach, their initiatives proved essential in the institutional recovery processes.

The head of SAC shared that education and violence against women and children (VAWC) were significant problems in evacuation centers and transitory sites. In partnership with CFSI, they set up child-friendly and women-friendly spaces in evacuation centers. They did storytelling activities, play therapy, and family therapy using the Caring Healing Teaching approach to promote psychosocial well-being. The SAC found it challenging to continue with the program because of limited resources.

Based on the training provided by Save the Children UK, SAC and the Education Department of AdZU developed education modules for emergencies and psychosocial programs for IDPs. Through performing arts, the Education Department also staged puppet storytelling in Tausug language to make the hygiene and health messages cuter. They also

temporarily "adopted" public elementary classrooms while public teachers were still going through debriefing by the Department of Education. The APCI of AdZU also developed holistic programs and activities that promoted intragroup healing to mend relationships and increase trust between Muslims and Christians. PCI used this design with children in evacuation centers. For a key informant from PCI, community healing was an urgent matter arising from the crisis response.

As the needs of the IDPs became more complex during the recovery phase, authority emanated from multiple sites given the plethora of actors who were coordinating with each other to address these IDP needs. The crisis also revealed the limited coping power of the local government to manage the situation. Many of the IDP's assistance and services were done by the CSOs and the HEI in Zamboanga City. Through their existing network, they contributed significantly during the crisis's emergency and recovery phases.

However, the situation revealed the fragility of the local government's power and authority in the institutional processes of crisis management. The importance of resources provided by the humanitarian agencies provided them with leverage to pressure the government to follow the international humanitarian standards in transitory sites. Even outside the ambit of the cluster approach adopted by the national and local governments, these CSOs could implement their humanitarian operations using international protocols.

Remarkable also was the ability of IDPs and local communities to tap resources to manage the situation better. Such was the case of Barangay Taluksangay that banked on the common ethno-linguistic affiliations of the Sama Banngingi or the everyday practices of ordinary IDPs in Masepla to find creative ways to tap additional food sources by growing their vegetables.

**Rehabilitation Phase: The Return of IDPs.** The final leg - the rehabilitation phase - was the most arduous one. Over time, the attendance of local IDPs and CSOs became infrequent, leaving the local government representatives and the major international humanitarian agencies to take the lead in cluster meetings. Later on, humanitarian aid was significantly

reduced, and tasks were turned over entirely to the City Government and other government actors. Gradually from 2015 to 2016, coordination shifted to the Local Inter-Agency Committee or LIAC, with humanitarian partners as invited observers (UNHCR, 2018). Meanwhile, the clamor for IDPs to return to their previous life was as strong as ever.

The national government poured Php 5 Billion for the rehabilitation of affected sites. The main government actors for this project were the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), DILG, DSWD, National Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC), and the National Housing Administration (NHA). The UP Planning and Development Research Foundation, Inc. (UP PLANADES) drafted the rehabilitation master plan. Based on interviews with various State actors, the National Government decided for the City Government and selected the UP PLANADES as the urban planner for the city's rehabilitation master plan. The City Government already had an urban planner in mind and already had meetings with various CSO to ensure that all stakeholders were consulted to draft the plan. Some key informants from the City Government and CSOs found the selection of UP PLANADES controversial, citing the group's connections with a national government representative.

One of the most crucial points in the rehabilitation process was creating a master plan for the city. The plan called the Zamboanga City Roadmap to Recovery and Reconstruction, or Z3R, had an overall theme of Build Back Better Zamboanga. It included the rebuilding of standard houses for IDPs and road and sewage construction following proper zoning procedures. Central to Zamboanga's rehabilitation planning and design was the series of consultation between IDP community leaders, and the City Government. The Z3R also incorporated new risk assessments and implementation of existing laws on protected areas for the ancestral domain and mangroves formerly occupied by IDPs. In March 2014, the City Government declared Layag-Layag, Leha-Leha, Sumariki, and Sumatra as "no return, no build" zones (Department of Public Works and Highways [DPWH], 2014) to uphold existing cultural and environmental protection laws. Instead of allowing former IDPs to return to these areas, the IDPs were resettled in other parts of the city.

Some areas that were damaged extensively, Barangays Rio Hondo and Mariki, were

early communities that experienced population shifts through the years. These shifts, however, were not reflected in existing government records. Before the rehabilitation of these areas could proceed, the residents' conflicting land claims had to be settled - this required cross-validating IDP claims with legitimate government records on land titles and registrations. The series of consultations between IDP community leaders and the City Government was central to Zamboanga's rehabilitation planning and design. The city mayor recognized the longer process needed in the consultations with IDPs is a much-needed confidence-building initiative. The stakeholders acknowledged that failure to resolve existing disagreements could result in clan wars later on.

The cross-validation of land titles led to the discovery of overlapping land proclamations in areas previously occupied by IDPs also caused delays for the rehabilitation. Proclamations 169, 286, and 1458, signed by both Presidents Diosdado Macapagal and Ferdinand Marcos, reserved parts of the affected barangays as Muslim settlements. Meanwhile, proclamations 392 and 559 reserved portions of the same areas for the Philippine Institute of Fisheries and Technology (PIFT) and the Southern Mindanao School of Fisheries (SMSF). Because IDPs previously residing in these zones were banned from returning, their relocation also meant dislocation from their usual seaweed farming livelihood. Some IDPs found the "no-return, no-build zones" order unacceptable. They went back to resume seaweed farming putting their own lives and security at risk.

Another setback in the rehabilitation process was the extended delays in releasing the PhP5 billion rehabilitation budget committed by the National Government to the City Government. In the meantime, it was through the continued efforts of some CSOs and humanitarian agencies that the City Government could meet IDP needs. For example, SAC helped rebuild more than 20 houses for its Basic Ecclesiastical Community (BEC) from Martha Drive and Sta. Catalina, including some indigenous people. There were serious doubts from various actors whether the resources promised by the State would reach the intended beneficiaries.

Many IDPs with damaged houses noted the government provided substandard

materials — thin hollow blocks and low quality galvanized iron sheets. They expressed their preference for receiving financial assistance to buy better quality construction materials for themselves. The City Government eventually adopted this strategy. A lingering doubt, however, remained in the minds of these "home-based" IDPs. With their bullet-riddled houses and burned down yards, they had an equally difficult time going back to their everyday lives. However, they felt "less important" compared to IDPs in evacuation centers and transitory sites because of the limited help that they received from the government.

There were also kinks in the consultations and dialogues with various IDPs to ensure that the master plan was culturally sensitive to the various groups' needs, especially the marginalized ones. These consultations led to Badjao houses' design on stilts with windows facing the sea to allow the winds to go unencumbered through the house. There was also a provision for boat docking areas below the houses.

Through consultations, the land zoning to assign parcels of Barangay Rio Hondo also considered the existence of feuding clans within the village. The initial master plan lumped together members of different feuding clans within the same area, which was unacceptable as it increased the risk of actual fighting between feuding clans. Heeding the IDP suggestions, the City Government assigned each clan to separate sides with the barangay road between them.

Housing designs by NHA were also an issue. The size and model of houses were standard regardless of household size. With a minimal budget, the NHA designs were adjusted to cover the thousands of IDPs that required housing. The IDP was given very little to no choice in the design of the houses. The "loftable"<sup>7</sup> housing design with provisions for a mezzanine floor was inadequate for large families. However, for the government, what was more important was the rehabilitation of damaged areas and the construction of enough housing units for the IDPs can.

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<sup>7</sup> "Loftable" is used by the National Housing Authority as a term for those house designs where owners have the option to build a loft.

By August 2014, the NHA finished building some permanent shelters and extended home material assistance to 1,661 families through the City Government. Meanwhile, around 1,607 one-story loftable duplex units in nine projects, 613 two-story eight-unit buildings, and 4,500 houses on stilts for the Badjao were still being built in 2014. When this study ended in 2015, 6,720 housing units were still to be completed. Issues in construction, such as a shortage of building materials, also plagued the City Government. Additional issues included the stalled housing completion in 2017 and the collapse of permanent houses in one of the resettlement sites in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). Until 2019, the City Government was still to complete the Z3R.

Although the affected families are Zamboanga City's constituents, major decisions such as the design of the houses and the choice of urban planner to oversee the design were taken out of the City Government's hands. As the budget came from the national government, they also made significant decisions for the Z3R, with the Secretary of DPWH playing a significant role. In a country with a supposedly substantial local government autonomy, the national government expertly carved out some of the local government's powers and authority in managing the rehabilitation of Zamboanga City.

Simultaneously, the crisis also revealed the ineptitude of the national government in land management, as illustrated by the conflicting and overlapping land titles of the affected barangays. Consequently, many residents were barred from returning after the crisis. This situation vividly exemplifies how the government's texts and documentation could have long-term negative consequences on ordinary citizens' lives.

At the same time, there were also some institutional spaces that other stakeholders, including the IDPs, used to push for specific objectives. The IDPs displayed some power to push for the inclusion of house design on stilts, the separation of areas allocated for feuding clans, and their participation in rallies to air their grievances. Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies pressured the local government to adhere to international standards by withholding much-needed aid. Overall, the Zamboanga City's rehabilitation results from the push and pull of various stakeholders following their institutional locations within the whole rehabilitation process.

#### **IV. Summary and Conclusion**

The turn of events and the engagements of various State and non-State actors in Zamboanga City's crisis response was simultaneous acts of crafting and re-crafting the State's legitimacy as was reflected in the power and authority wielded by the national and local governments in managing the Zamboanga City crisis. The processes of assisting IDPs provided opportunities for local and national actors to redefine their positions against one another and influence the crisis response process's outcomes. State, meaning the national and local government units, and society's interactions during the phases of crisis response provided opportunities for the recalibration of the State's vested authority to respond to various needs and demands of the various humanitarian groups and the IDPs.

The contradictory views shared by representatives of City Government and CSOs regarding the adoption of military solutions cast doubts on the national government's legitimacy in managing the crisis. This contradiction illustrates the inconsistency of the State apparatus at various levels of governance. As prescribed by existing government mechanisms, consultations between local and national stakeholders were done at the crisis's onset. The analysis of everyday institutional processes indicates that the peacebuilding potential of civil society groups was not maximized. Of interest is the national government's military solution despite its known long-term adverse effects on the people of Zamboanga City. The lingering feeling of insecurity reflects the State's weak ability to keep peace and order and handle future armed conflicts.

In the emergency phase of the Zamboanga crisis, the institutional processes presented a complex web of various actors configuring and reconfiguring their relationships with one another. The Church, HEI, and humanitarian agencies successfully affirmed their roles as community outreach institutions providing immediate relief to IDP's suffering by mobilizing their resources and networks of actors already deployed on the ground. Meanwhile, the situation also revealed the local government's inadequacy in assisting the IDPs affected by the armed conflict. The IDPs themselves also proved capable of coming up with their survival strategies despite massive displacement challenges. For example, the Badjao negotiated with

State actors for more culturally sensitive humanitarian standards regarding food, evacuation, and housing facilities.

During the recovery phase, the most pressing problems were tenure and livelihood due to prolonged displacement, the varying needs of different IDP groups, and the slow and complicated rehabilitation process involving numerous agencies. Humanitarian groups pressured the State, specifically the local government, to deliver IDP needs despite government bureaucracies' inertia. One barangay proved more successful in providing a haven for IDPs. This leader strengthened her legitimacy as a traditional leader and an elected local official by helping IDPs from a related ethno-linguistic group. Lara (2014) pointed out that the most successful leaders in Mindanao are traditional leaders elected as local government officials as they consolidate their political legitimacy through their creative use of the available apparatus of democratic institutions. The IDP's everyday experiences illustrate a variation on how rules were implemented in evacuation and transitory sites. This inconsistency reflects once again how the government's institutional rules and processes in managing the crisis were subject to negotiations and constructively redefined by various groups and actors involved in the recovery phase of the Zamboanga crisis.

The institutional rehabilitation process provided additional challenges with dwindling participation from non-government actors and delays in the release of money from the national government. These challenges resulted in further setbacks in the resettlement of many IDPs in their permanent homes. All the while, the IDPs once again proved capable of renegotiating their position with government agencies. Examples of the State's accommodation were the adjusted design of the Badjaо house and the zoning of Barangay Rio Hondo to separate feuding clans. The ability of IDPs to adjust to their extraordinary circumstances illustrates community resilience in circumventing and creatively dealing with State apparatus (Scott, 1998). As a bureaucracy, however, the State was constrained to provide standardized mass housing to the IDPs. According to De Charentenay's (2014) hybrid politics, the State's rational plan of building a better city was made more palatable with the infusion of elements of indigenous IDP culture.

Through the use of institutional ethnography, this research was able to understand the fluid everyday relations of State-in-society in Zamboanga City's crisis. New forms of partnerships and associations emerged from the desire to provide essential services to the people most affected by the situation. The local and national government units were primarily responsible for significant decisions. However, the crisis's magnitude opened spaces for other non-government actors to take a more central role in the emergency and rehabilitation process. It is a sign of institutional vulnerability for some, but can also be taken as the State's capacity to accommodate, forge partnerships with different groups, and refashion itself following the dictates of the situation; a situation that is illustrative of Alagappa's (1995) State-in-society approach.

The Zamboanga City crisis illustrated how local and national government authorities were perceived in various ways by the major actors involved in the rehabilitation process. These allowed for further opportunities to rethink existing ruling relations dominated by the government actors. The lingering doubts on the State's capacity to provide long-term peace and push forward with the city's rehabilitation, mostly coming from non-government actors and the IDPs, revealed the still shaky political legitimacy of the State (Migdal, 2004).

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## Appendix

**Table 1.** Clusters partnerships during the Zamboanga Crisis (UNOCHA, 2014)

Cluster	Zamboanga City Government Cluster Lead	Regional Government Cluster Lead	Humanitarian Agency Co-Lead
Inter-cluster Coordination	City Mayor's Office, City Health Office, Office of the City Administrator, City Planning & Development Office	Office of Civil Defense Region IX	UN OCHA UNDP
Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)	City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWD)	-	IOM
Shelter	Office of the City Administrator	Department of Social Welfare and Development Region IX	IOM
Health	City Health Office	Department of Health	WHO UNFPA
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	City Health Office	Department of Health	UNICEF
Protection - Child Protection (CP) Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	CSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development Region IX	UNHCR UNICEF UNFPA
Education	Department of Education Division Superintendent	Department of Education	UNICEF Save the Children
Food Security and Livelihood	CSWD Office of the City	Department of Social Welfare and	WFP ILO

	Administrator OCV	Development Region IX	
Nutrition	City Health Office	Department of Health	UNICEF
Logistics	City Engineering Office	Office of Civil Defense	WFP
Data Management Working Group	Public Information Office	-	UN OCHA
Communications Working Group	Public Information Office	PIA	IOM
Healing and Confidence Building Working Group	City Mayor's Office	-	UNDP

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