

Research Article

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Resilience in the Wake of Destruction: The Sociological Impact of the Marawi Siege

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Abstract

This study examines the sociological impact of the Marawi siege on the internally displaced *Mëranao* population, focusing on the psychophysiological challenges faced by 70 mid-to-late adult IDPs in evacuation centers in Iligan City. Using a descriptive research approach, the study explores how environmental conditions, such as inadequate ventilation and sanitation, have adversely affected the health and well-being of these individuals—primarily women aged 36-55. Respondents reported physical symptoms, including joint pain, stiffness, and psychological symptoms like depression, anxiety, and trauma, all worsened by financial hardship and disrupted living environments. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires to gain insights into the respondents' lived experiences. The findings highlight the urgent need for sustained support from government and Non-governmental Organizations or NGOs, particularly in health services, financial aid, and psycho-social interventions, to help Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) overcome trauma and restore stability. This research provides critical insights into the socio-economic and psychological needs of the displaced *Mëranao* community and calls for targeted programs in health, education, and economic stability to support their resilience and recovery.

Keywords: Marawi siege, *Meranao*, Internally displaced persons, Psychophysiological impact, Sociological effects, Trauma, Health services, Financial assistance, Psycho-social support, Resilience

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Introduction

Marawi City, commonly known as the “Islamic City of the Philippines,” is a vital center of commerce, culture, education, and religion for the *Méranao* people of Lanao del Sur. Spanning 87.55 square kilometers and comprising 96 barangays, Marawi has long flourished through agriculture, crafts, and trade, sustaining a predominantly Muslim population. However, in 2017, the city faced an unprecedented crisis as conflict erupted, disrupting the lives, infrastructure, and social fabric of its communities.

The Marawi Siege, from May 23 to October 18, 2017, marked a period of intense fighting between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and ISIS-affiliated militants, particularly the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups. This extended urban conflict—the longest of its kind in recent Philippine history—left large sections of the city in ruins, forcing thousands of families to flee and seek refuge in evacuation centers. For the *Méranao* who were displaced, the siege meant not only physical loss but also enduring socio-economic and psychological hardships, further intensified by the challenging conditions of temporary shelter.

This study investigates the psychophysiological impact of the Marawi siege on internally displaced *Méranao* individuals (IDPs) residing in evacuation centers in Iligan City. Data collected from 70 respondents—primarily married women aged 36-55—reveals critical concerns with poor ventilation, inadequate sanitation, and financial instability, which have contributed to a range of health issues, including joint pain, anxiety, trauma, and disrupted sleep. These findings highlight an urgent need for ongoing support from the government and NGOs to address IDPs’ health, financial, and psychological well-being.

By examining these complex challenges, this research aims to inform more effective and sustainable strategies to support the displaced *Méranao* community in health, education, and economic recovery. The study explores the socio-economic issues, psychological trauma, educational needs of children, and adaptation challenges faced by IDPs, offering guidance for future policies and support programs tailored to their needs.

Review of Literature

The Marawi City siege, which began on May 23, 2017, serves as a stark reminder of the profound and lasting effects that terrorism and armed conflict can have on communities. This conflict, primarily involving local terrorist groups aligned with the Islamic State, resulted in widespread displacement, forcing thousands of *Méranao* families to flee their homes. Research indicates that the consequences of such conflicts extend far beyond immediate physical damage, particularly in areas such as insufficient income, psychological trauma, disrupted education, and challenges in adjusting to new environments.

International studies have shed light on the long-term effects of terrorism and armed conflict on affected residents. Bratti et al. (2015), in their study *“Hard to Forget: The Long-Lasting Impact of War on Mental Health,”* explored the profound mental health repercussions experienced by individuals exposed to war trauma. The study found that even six years after the conflict, individuals who had experienced war trauma exhibited significantly worse mental health outcomes. These effects were not primarily linked to physical health problems, but rather to the emotional and psychological strain of recalling painful wartime experiences. This suggests that while economic recovery policies may provide some relief, they may not be sufficient to address the enduring psychological toll of war. Thus, targeted mental health programs are essential to help affected individuals recover from the trauma caused by conflict.

The disruption of children's education is another critical consequence of conflict, as seen in the Marawi siege, which forced many students out of school for extended periods. This interruption has long-term impacts on their academic and social development. Economic hardships further exacerbate the situation, as displaced families struggle to meet basic needs, leaving little room for educational investments. Psychological trauma also impedes children's ability to concentrate and engage with their studies, as highlighted in numerous humanitarian reports on post-conflict recovery.

The adjustment to new environments for displaced families presents additional challenges. The inability to return to their homes, coupled with the lack of resources in evacuation centers or temporary shelters, forces individuals to adapt to unfamiliar and often under-resourced settings. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2017), providing safe and supportive environments is crucial for the successful reintegration of displaced persons into society. The psychological toll of adjusting to these new living conditions—often without adequate housing, security, or access to basic services—further intensifies the difficulties faced by displaced populations.

Further studies, such as those by Thomas Koruth Samuel (2016), have explored the broader security implications of terrorism and radicalization, specifically in Southeast Asia. His research highlights how Daesh's narrative serves as a catalyst for radicalization, particularly in the Philippines, and emphasizes the need for counter-narratives to address the root causes of extremism. Samuel's proposed '4-Step Counter-Narrative Developmental Model' provides a framework for countering terrorist ideologies and addressing the social and psychological factors contributing to radicalization.

Jo Beall (2007) examined the vulnerabilities of cities in the Global South to the devastating effects of terrorism, noting that impoverished cities are especially susceptible to both immediate and long-term consequences. Unlike cities in more economically advanced countries, those in the Global South face higher frequencies of terrorist acts and more severe consequences. Beall's study underscores the need for tailored counterterrorism strategies that consider the unique challenges faced by cities in developing regions, where the impacts of terrorism extend beyond physical destruction to include significant social and psychological effects.

The studies by Bratti et al. (2015), Koruth Samuel (2016), and Beall (2007) provide valuable insights into the far-reaching consequences of terrorism and armed conflict. These works highlight the interconnectedness of insufficient income, psychological trauma, disrupted education, and the difficulties of adjusting to new environments, issues that are particularly relevant to the residents of Marawi, who continue to cope with the aftereffects of the siege.

Additionally, the importance of targeted psychological support for both adults and children in post-conflict environments cannot be overstated. Programs addressing mental health, as suggested by Fabe (2017), are crucial for mitigating the long-term effects of the siege and facilitating the recovery of displaced individuals. Fabe's study emphasizes the need not only to meet basic needs but also to provide psychosocial support to address the emotional and psychological impacts of conflict. Aminola (2018) further emphasizes that displaced seniors, in particular, experience heightened emotional distress, such as anger, grief, and feelings of abandonment, which can delay their healing process.

Finally, the literature on the impacts of terrorism and armed conflict highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by residents in post-conflict zones like Marawi. The combination of insufficient income, psychological trauma, disrupted education, and challenges in adjusting to new environments creates a long-lasting legacy of suffering. While economic recovery and humanitarian aid are crucial, addressing the mental health needs of affected individuals through targeted psychosocial interventions is vital for ensuring a more comprehensive and lasting recovery. The findings from international studies and the case of Marawi underscore the need for holistic recovery approaches that prioritize both physical and psychological well-being.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study will employ a descriptive survey research design to examine the socio-demographic profile and the various effects of the Marawi Siege on displaced residents currently living in Iligan City. Specifically, the research will focus on the impacts of the siege on insufficient income, psychological trauma, children's education, and the adjustment to new environments among the selected respondents. The descriptive survey method is well-suited for this type of research as it allows for the systematic collection of data from a specific population to uncover the existing conditions and experiences of individuals affected by the conflict. Through this approach, the study will gain valuable insights into the long-term repercussions of the siege on the lives of displaced families, shedding light on their socio-economic challenges, mental health issues, educational disruptions, and difficulties adapting to their new living conditions. By assessing these factors, the study will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impacts of the Marawi Siege on the displaced population in Iligan City.

Participants

The study will involve 70 selected evacuees from various evacuation centers in Iligan City, specifically from Barangays Buru-un, Maria Cristina, Tibanga, Maria Cristina-Fuentes, and Santa Elena. The respondents were purposively chosen based on their direct experience with the Marawi Siege and subsequent displacement. The sample size was calculated to ensure a representative group, allowing the study to assess the effects of the siege on income, psychological trauma, children's education, and adaptation to new environments.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondent According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-20 years old	3	4.3
21-25 years old	11	15.7
26-30 years old	6	8.6
31 years old and above	50	71.4
Total	70	100.0

Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents. Of the 70 respondents, 3 (4.3%) were aged 18–29, 6 (8.6%) were aged 26–30, and 11 (15.7%) were aged 21–25. The majority, 50 respondents (71.4%), were aged 31 and above. This indicates

that older respondents were more significantly affected by the sociological impacts of the Marawi siege, possibly facing greater challenges in adjusting to the trauma and accessing support.

Research Instrument

To gather relevant data, a modified survey questionnaire will be used. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section collects socio-demographic information, including age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, and occupation. The second section includes questions focused on the effects of the Marawi Siege, specifically addressing its impact on mental and physical health due to the traumatic events and their aftermath. This survey method is commonly employed for its efficiency in collecting data for studies of this nature.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the survey will be analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and means, will be used to summarize the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their responses to the effects of the Marawi Siege. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests or t-tests, may be applied to examine the relationships between different variables (e.g., socio-demographic factors and the reported impacts on income, health, and education). The analysis will help identify patterns, trends, and significant associations, providing insights into the impact of the Marawi Siege on displaced residents from the Most Affected Areas in Marawi City who are currently residing in Iligan City.

Findings

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
According to Gender	Female	21	30
	Male	49	70
	Total	70	100
Civil Status	Single	5	7.1
	Married	56	80
	Separated	3	4.3
	Widow	6	8.6
	Total	70	100
Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	12	17.1
	Secondary Level	30	42.9
	College Level	26	37.1
	None of the above	2	2.9
	Total	70	100
Monthly Income	1,000-1,500	28	40
	2,000-3,000	27	38.6

	4,000- 5,000	11	15.7
	5,500-6,000	4	5.7
	Total	70	100
Number of Children	0-2	24	34.3
	03-Jun	28	40
	07-Sep	12	17.1
	10 and above	6	8.6
	Total	70	100

Table 2 The table shows the frequency and percentage distributions of the respondents according to various demographic characteristics. In terms of gender, out of seventy (70) respondents, twenty-one (21) or 30.0% were male, and forty-nine (49) or 70.0% were female, indicating a higher percentage of female respondents. This suggests that women were more psychologically affected by the Marawi siege and may require prioritized psychological support.

Regarding civil status, most respondents were married, with fifty-six (56) or 80.0%, followed by single respondents (5 or 7.1%), widows (6 or 8.6%), and separated individuals (3 or 4.3%). In terms of educational attainment, thirty (30) or 42.9% had completed secondary education, followed by twenty-six (26) or 37.1% with college-level education, twelve (12) or 17.1% with elementary education, and two (2) or 2.9% with no formal education.

As for monthly income, forty (40.0%) of the respondents earned between 1,000 to 1,500 pesos, thirty-eight point six percent (38.6%) earned between 2,000 to 3,000 pesos, while fewer respondents earned between 4,000 to 5,000 pesos (15.7%) or 5,500 to 6,000 pesos (5.7%). This indicates a low-income group with many respondents likely underemployed or unemployed.

Regarding the number of children, the majority of respondents had between 0 to 2 children (34.3%), followed by 3 to 6 children (40.0%), while a smaller proportion had 7 to 9 children (17.1%) or 10 and above (8.6%). These demographic characteristics offer insight into the living conditions and challenges faced by the respondents, particularly in adjusting to post-siege life.

Respondent's Perception on the Mental and Physical Health effects of Marawi Siege

Table 3 Perception on the sociological impact to the victim of Marawi siege

Insufficient Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
1.In your family do you experience crisis during Marawi siege?	70	1.3714	.54298	Always

2. Does the relief goods from the government sustain the daily needs of your family?	70	2.0857	.53141	Sometimes
3. Does the government provide your family financial in every month?	70	3.0714	1.08108	Never
4. Do you struggle in sustaining the needs of your children?	70	1.8571	.96738	Sometimes
5. Are you member of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program "4ps"?	70	3.6377	.92309	Never

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions on insufficient income. The first statement shows a mean of 1.3714 with a standard deviation of 0.54298, indicating that most respondents often experienced financial crises during the Marawi siege. The second statement has a mean of 2.0857 and a standard deviation of 0.53141, suggesting that most respondents occasionally found that the relief goods from the government were insufficient to meet their family's daily needs. The third statement, with a mean of 3.0714 and a standard deviation of 1.08108, shows that most respondents never received monthly government financial support. The fourth statement, with a mean of 1.8572 and a standard deviation of 0.96738, indicates that respondents sometimes struggled to sustain the needs of their children. Finally, the fifth statement, with a mean of 3.6377 and a standard deviation of 0.92309, reveals that the majority of respondents were not members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

Table 4 Psychological Trauma

Psychological Trauma	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
1. Does your family member experience traumatize during Marawi siege?	70	1.8286	1.08976	Sometimes
2. Does the Marawi siege affect your sleeping pattern?	70	1.8571	.93693	Sometimes
3. Does the Marawi siege create sense of fear whenever you hear a gun or any kinds of noise?	70	1.8143	.90558	Sometimes
4. Do you feel fear whenever you see a person holding a gun?	70	1.8857	.95618	Sometimes
5. How often do you fight at home in front of your child?	70	2.4857	1.09997	Sometimes

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions of the psychological effects of the Marawi siege. The first statement (mean = 1.8286, SD = 1.08976)

shows that most respondents sometimes experienced trauma. The second statement (mean = 1.8571, SD = 0.93693) indicates occasional disruptions in sleep. The third (mean = 1.8143, SD = 0.90558) and fourth statements (mean = 1.8857, SD = 0.95618) suggest that respondents sometimes feel fear when hearing gunshots or encountering individuals with guns. The fifth statement (mean = 2.4857, SD = 1.09997) indicates that many respondents sometimes experience domestic conflicts in front of their children.

Table 5 Children’s Education

Children’s Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
1.Does the amount of academic requirements of your children affect their sleeping pattern?	70	2.1000	1.06526	Sometimes
2.Do you have a regular talk with your child regarding their academic problem?	70	2.0000	1.12932	Sometimes
3.Does the Marawi siege force your child to stop going to school?	70	2.8429	1.29252	Often
4. Do you help your child with their homework, to reduce their academic stress?	70	2.1429	1.21924	Sometimes
5. In your children did you apply any kinds of scholarship?	70	3.4143	1.02848	Never

Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions regarding their children's education. The first statement (mean = 2.1000, SD = 1.06526) indicates that most respondents sometimes experience academic requirements affecting their children's sleep. The second statement (mean = 2.0000, SD = 1.12932) shows respondents occasionally discuss academic problems with their children. The third statement (mean = 2.8429, SD = 1.29252) suggests that many respondents often felt the Marawi siege forced their children to stop school. The fourth statement (mean = 2.1429, SD = 1.21924) indicates respondents sometimes help with homework to ease academic stress. The fifth statement (mean = 3.4143, SD = 1.02848) reveals that most have never applied for scholarships for their children.

Table 6 Adjustment to the new environment

Adjustment to the new environment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
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1. Does the laughing of your neighbours affect your mindset?	70	2.6571	1.10185	Often
2. Do you have any problems in the environment that you are living now?	70	2.4143	1.08338	Sometimes
3. Does your new environment creates a new routine in your life?	70	1.8286	.88418	Sometimes
4. The new environment affected your daily life?	70	1.5714	.73369	Always
5. Do you have trust with your neighbours?	70	1.8571	.76681	Sometimes

Table 6 The table presents respondents' perceptions of adjusting to their new environment. The first statement (mean = 2.6571, SD = 1.10185) shows that most respondents often feel affected by their neighbors' laughter. The second statement (mean = 2.4143, SD = 1.08338) indicates that some respondents face problems with their living environment. The third (mean = 1.8286, SD = 0.88418) and fourth statements (mean = 1.5714, SD = 0.73369) suggest that most respondents sometimes or always experience changes in their routines and daily life due to the new environment. The fifth statement (mean = 1.857, SD = 0.76681) shows that respondents sometimes trust their new neighbors. Overall, the new environment significantly affects the respondents' daily lives.

Discussion

This study investigates the sociological impact of the Marawi siege on evacuees, focusing on residents from the Most Affected Areas (MAAs) of Marawi City who are currently residing in Iligan City. The research was conducted across several barangays in Iligan City, where evacuation centers were situated.

Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study aimed to understand the sociological consequences of the Marawi siege on the affected individuals. The trauma from the conflict caused significant stress, fear, and long-term psychological effects, particularly for those trapped in the warzone. Exposure to life-threatening situations, loss of loved ones, and witnessing violence contributed to the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among many evacuees.

Furthermore, the conflict resulted in severe shortages of basic necessities such as water, sanitation, and hygiene, continuing to affect evacuees' daily lives. The lack of clean water and sanitation led to fatalities, especially among the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions, with some dying from diarrhea caused by unsanitary conditions.

The absence of psychosocial support programs exacerbated the evacuees' psychological strain. These programs are crucial in providing an outlet for individuals to express and process their emotional trauma, aiding in their healing process. Additionally, discrimination was reported, particularly towards the children of Muslim Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in educational settings, where they faced bullying and exclusion due to their faith and circumstances.

Survey findings indicated that many respondents experienced PTSD symptoms, such as anxiety, fear, and panic, directly linked to their traumatic experiences. While there was uncertainty regarding the direct effects on physical health, respondents generally agreed that emotional distress indirectly impacted their physical well-being.

The respondents' perceptions of the sociological impact were categorized into four key themes: Insufficient Income, Psychological Trauma, Children's Education, and Adjustment to the Environment. These themes were further explored through survey statements that highlighted the challenges faced by the victims:

- *Insufficient Income.* Many respondents faced ongoing financial difficulties, with limited government support and no regular financial assistance. The lack of sufficient relief goods and absence of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) worsened their economic situation.
- *Psychological Trauma.* Respondents experienced significant psychological distress, including trauma, disrupted sleep, heightened fear from loud noises, and anxiety when encountering armed individuals. These symptoms contributed to the ongoing mental health struggles of the evacuees.
- *Children's Education.* The siege had a profound impact on children's education, with respondents noting disruptions to academic routines and increased stress. Some children were forced to stop attending school, while others struggled with academic demands. Many respondents also reported a lack of access to scholarships for their children.
- *Adjustment to the Environment.* Adapting to new living conditions was challenging for many respondents. The behavior of neighbors, environmental challenges, and the need to establish new routines caused stress. While some were able to build trust with their new neighbors, others struggled with the transition.

Finally, this study emphasizes the severe sociological consequences of the Marawi siege on evacuees, highlighting the need for continued support in addressing the economic, psychological, and social challenges they face.

Further Research and Recommendation

This study identifies key issues such as insufficient income, psychological trauma, children's education, and adjustment to new environments among Marawi siege evacuees. Further research is needed to explore the long-term psychological effects, particularly PTSD, and the effectiveness of existing psychosocial programs. Additionally, investigating the economic resilience of evacuees and the role of government and NGO support systems could provide insights into improving financial stability. Research on the educational outcomes of displaced children and alternative learning models is also crucial. Finally, exploring the social integration of evacuees into new communities will offer valuable information on easing their transition.

In terms of recommendations, psychosocial support programs must be strengthened to address the trauma and mental health challenges faced by evacuees. The government should enhance economic assistance, offering sustainable programs that foster financial stability. Educational opportunities for children must be prioritized, with initiatives like scholarships and tutoring to mitigate academic setbacks. Lastly, programs that promote social integration and reduce stigma will help foster trust and cooperation between evacuees and

their new communities. Continued research and targeted interventions are essential to supporting the long-term recovery and well-being of those affected by the Marawi siege.

Conclusion

The Marawi siege has had a profound psychological impact on the displaced residents. A significant number of respondents reported experiencing trauma, heightened fears, and persistent anxiety. These psychological challenges were further exacerbated by disruptions in their children's education and the severe strain on their families' livelihoods. Moreover, the displacement to evacuation shelters revealed the difficulties families faced in adjusting to new living environments. The transition was particularly challenging as many residents struggled with unfamiliar surroundings while attempting to rebuild their lives. This tragic event underscores the urgent need for continued support to address both the immediate and long-term effects on the displaced individuals and families.

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