

Multi-Sectoral Initiatives of Peace and Security on the Unending Crimes: The Case of Pikit in South-Central Mindanao, Philippines

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ABSTRACT: This case study investigated the dynamics of collaborative efforts among various sectors, particularly those in influential roles, in addressing the complex challenges of maintaining peace and order in Pikit, North Cotabato—a locality marked by elevated crime rates. Employing an illustrative case study approach, the qualitative research sought to comprehend the roles, initiatives, and cooperative strategies employed by different sectors in Pikit including BARMM. Utilizing purposive sampling, five key participants representing significant positions within the Police, Barangay officials, Municipal officials, BARMM officials, and LGU officials were selected. Data collection encompassed interviews, followed by coding and thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of the concerted efforts aimed at addressing the peace and security concerns in the region. The results revealed a commendable demonstration on how well these sectors in Pikit work alongside with one another to combat the escalating crimes in the area, however, the findings implied that Pikit, North Cotabato is still struggling to contain these criminal activities and still considered a dangerous place.

KEYWORDS: BARMM, Cooperation, Crimes, Initiatives, Pikit, Sectors

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the primary requirement for the prosperity and development of any society, there should peace and security of life and property. On the other side, there is a clear connection between poor leadership, unpredictability, and violent conflict (Igbuzor, 2017).

Crime is a disobedience of the moral principles as they are interpreted and stated by the law, which is a reflection of social and political authorities' ideologies, cultural norms, and opinions. Governmental penalties, social stigma, and status loss could affect those who break these regulations (Siegel, 2008).

High-income nation teams conducted a series of multi-country studies in 2018 to determine the "best practices" in MSC within the border of environmentally friendly development (Hinton, 2021). In the context of "multi-sectoral collaboration," it is the organized gathering and cooperation of many sectors and stakeholders to accomplish agreed-upon results and common goals.

According to the concept of wicked problems, the majority of studies primarily concentrate on the causes of crime and its preventions. The following needs to be examined because studies indicate that it lacks sustained focus on the problems. This was demonstrated by Head's (2013) examination of the wicked problem idea. In policy studies, the concept of "wicked problems" has got into a greater spotlight, while the consequences for government institutions have received fewer considerations. This article presents the primary organizational and cognitive factors identified in the literature on wicked situations.

Head (2013) provides a comprehensive list of current approaches to dealing with stakeholder divergence and problem complexity that are based on systems thinking literature, cooperation, and flexible leadership duties for managers and supervisors in government. Several crucial government functional areas, including organizational design, personnel management, and performance evaluation, have problems with public management. Despite the difficulties in evolving, we believe that temporary fixes can be made to governance practices to more effectively address wicked problems.

Additionally, based on the Virginia study, knowing the many activities and projects carried out by the various sectors in your community is crucial for having a major impact and having a great way to engage with the community. Additionally, it supports localities in creating flexible frameworks for collaborative community safety planning. It aids the community in reevaluating their strategies for addressing new community safety concerns (Schuiteman, 2015).

In this study, the researcher investigated the different initiatives done by the various sectors in the locality. The researcher encompassed on why such crimes are unending in the locality. The findings of this study will be highly helpful to the following individuals. The study's findings will help the political authorities better understand the local situation and combat the area's never ending crime wave. The residents of Pikit will gain from this study since it will enable them to evaluate the state of peace and

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security in their area. Researchers in the future will benefit from this study since it will provide a thorough understanding of the circumstances in Pikit, North Cotabato, and the numerous actors involved in maintaining law and order there. This study would be helpful to students since it will enable them to comprehend the many approaches and attempts taken by various sectors to reduce such crimes. The University of Southern Mindanao and other institutions would benefit from this study since it will provide them with ideas and strategies for crime prevention programs and ensure that they are familiar with the roles that schools and instructors play in such initiatives. Lastly, this study will be helpful to police officials and other peace enforcers since it will provide them with ideas and varied viewpoints on the procedures involved in preventing crime and maintaining peace.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are operationally defined in the study:

BARMM refers to Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is a Philippine autonomous territory on the island of Mindanao's Southwest coast.

Initiatives refers to a number of initiatives to combat the never – ending crimes

Multi-Sectoral refers to Intentional coordination across multiple stakeholder organizations and sectors to collaboratively produce policy outcomes in the area.

MILF refers to (Moro Islamic liberation) with a base in Mindanao wants the central government to recognize the Moro people as an autonomous entity.

Peace and Security refers to the absence of war and human rights are upheld, and operations to prevent conflict and human rights violations are strengthened.

Peace Process refers to all the conferences, agreements, and discussions that authorities and other people take part in when attempting to broker a peaceful agreement between the two sides.

Political Forces refers to any individuals or pressure organizations that have a substantial impact on the conflicts taking place in the area. Examples include the LGU, PNP, Barangay peacekeeping action teams, CAFGU, and BARMM.

Unending Crime refers to a crime that never ends that does not have any effective measures against it.

THEORETICAL LENS

This study was anchored to the functionalist theory specifically Talcot Parson's Functionalism theory or known as the organic Analogy: We should see society as a system and Emil Durkheim's Functionalist theory.

A successful society, according to functionalism, has a strong social structure in which multiple organizations perform out certain activities that support the maintenance of the whole, just like how different bodily components perform out varied functions to safeguard an individual's wellness. For example, in a rich or "healthy" society, social interaction is planned to ensure that the household socializes teenagers and fulfils their psychological requirements, learning offers us with an increased number of competencies, and work is how we serve to the economy. Functionalists frequently claim that social institutions collaborate to maintain social order and limit unsustainable criminal activity as well as criminal behavior, and that institutions serve desirable ends that benefit both individuals and society (Parsons, 2016).

According to Talcott Parson's (2016) theory, institutions in society function similarly to bodily organs, each providing certain activities that are critical to the overall health of the system. Elements of society should be viewed as a result of the things they're doing to keep the whole operating. Furthermore, for communities to thrive, a variety of 'functional requirements' have to be met. Similar to the way individuals rely on specific goods to thrive, each civilization needs a specific set of items to function successfully. A civilization, for example, must create and distribute resources such as shelter and nourishment, as well as some type of organization to handle disputes and educate young people.

As noted by Parsons, for a society to be sustainable, there are some conditions that must be considered: adaptability, objective attainment, integration, and delay. However, the author stated that most people in American society got along well together, therefore sustaining the status quo (avoidance of conflict or revolution) was vital. These requirements are met in a contemporary industrial society by specialized subsystems. Additionally, it was asserted that groups promoting Value Consensus agreement on shared values rather than the use of force was the main method for establishing social order. The basis of social order, in Parsons' view, is adherence to shared ideals (Parsons, 2016).

On the other hand, for the concept of functionalism given out by Durkheim. The pieces of a puzzle cannot be assembled in a random fashion. Each component needs to be put in its right location in order for the puzzle to be finished. According to Durkheim's division of labor theory, not every person in a society with a division of work does the same task. This idea is concerned with how individuals live and work in a society. As will be discussed in more detail in the following section, this division of labor caused the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity. Collective consciousness is negatively impacted by these two changes as well. In societies with mechanical unity, where everyone adheres to the same standards and regulations, social behavior becomes easier to control.

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The collective consciousness has been reduced as a result of the plurality of competing ideas regarding values, lifestyles, and points of view. When people break societal standards, the effects are likely to get worse (Allen, 2022).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Historical Pattern of the Happenings in Pikit

The battle between the MILF and the government at the time over the

Moros of Mindanao's claim to independence left Pikit, one of the North Cotabato towns, in ruins. In Pikit, there were severe wars in 1997, 2000, 2001, and 2003 between the government and MILF forces, which drove 10,000 residents from their homes. The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was reached in 2014 by the two sides after 17 years of peace negotiations (Mindanews, 2022).

Additionally, early in 2003, there was the so-called Pikit War between Muslim separatists and the Philippine army. At least 40 individuals have been killed in this town since last year, yet not a single case has yet been resolved (Fernandez, 2023). Family disputes, known as *rido*, and crimes committed by the lawless Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters are the most frequent causes of crimes in the community (Duerme, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Ebrahim as cited in Sarmiento (2023), the recent deaths in Pikit, North Cotabato, did not occur as a result of "religious conflict" between Muslims and Christians. The town that had been in disarray was given more security officers, and the LGU (local government unit) was offered a reward for details leading to the detention of the criminals. This influenced how the incident unfolded. Ebrahim disputed reports that Christians and Muslims are conducting a retaliatory war in Pikit, an elite municipality having an estimated population of roughly 165,000 (As of the 2020 census).

The Paradigm of Crime Prevention

Despite the fact that criminal data indicate an overall drop in the past ten years (Tonry, 2013), there remain a variety of offenses that constitute and/or are viewed as a severe and persistent risk to individuals and society as a whole. To reduce crime, local crime prevention initiatives or techniques target improvements within the local infrastructure, society, or the external area. Local surveillance, community security, urban or physical planning, including holistic or collaborative efforts are examples of approaches. These techniques may attempt to involve individuals, non-profit and faith-based groups, and governmental authorities in addressing the causes that contribute to criminal activity, criminal behavior, and disturbance in the neighborhood.

In addition, communities, lawmakers, and leaders are all concerned about reducing gun violence. Several initiatives have been implemented to minimize gun violence, incorporating security tactics, firearms laws, firearm exchange initiatives, as well as safety measures. The method has been deemed effective in terms of lowering violent firearms offenses. A criminal activity control technique aimed at boosting street illumination in order to minimize crime by modifying and enhancing environmental practices. The approach is deemed promising in terms of decreasing criminality and economic violations, but it has little effect on violent offenses (Perry & Fenelly, 2018).

Moreover, the situational crime prevention (SCP) is a criminological idea that advocates for crime-reduction initiatives that reach well beyond the realm of law enforcement. SCP views criminal law in a more limited view as merely one component of governance's anticrime effort. This requires an in-depth investigation of certain kinds of crimes (or challenges) with the goal to determine the underlying factors that helps their commission. The linked situational components are subsequently altered using methods of intervention. In concept, such an approach minimizes violation through rendering it difficult to conduct the crime in spite of the aim or goal of the offender, preventing the offender against performing the crime in the first place, or several indicators that increase an individual's intention for committing criminality at particular situations. SCP has given rise to a number of strategies that have lately been identified to reduce crime in the area, national, and even global levels. SCP varies from different theories in criminology because it tries to limit crime possibilities rather than penalizing or rehabilitating offenders (Freilich & Newman, 2017). One strategy also develops on the previous one by analyzing the level and/or kind of crime before and after intervention. a few, for instance, Hsu and Apel (2015), conducted time-series analyses to explore the effect of particular initiatives and discovered evidence backing SCP's claims. A variety of research, called "cliff edge" research (Perry et al., 2016), found that a successful measure may result in a significant decrease in criminality. Standard experimental designs are frequently unsuitable or unnecessary, particularly if such studies take place in a situation context, wherein legal and moral dilemmas may arise when distributing organizations between test or control groups.

On the other hand, Carroll (2019) stated that for crime prevention to be successful, individuals, neighborhoods, organizations, and every sector of authority must collaborate to create and carry out efficient initiatives that address the root causes of crime. Initiatives to reduce criminality in the community also require adequate and appropriate funding. A strategic funding strategy with specific rules can help ensure the success of the program. Resources should be arranged in accordance with secondary principles, which dictate those resources, and at the lowest level of governance, tasks should be delegated and assigned. Financing

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is consistent with and capable of attaining the federal government's strategic goal. Utilizing local expertise through collaborating with local communities that are supported by both the government and the community is one of the agreement's advantages.

Moreover, the practical application of studies and their findings in the creation and execution of crime-reduction programs is an essential component of contemporary reduction of crime strategies. Therefore, evaluation is a crucial component of successful crime prevention. If a program has been implemented as intended (and if not, why not), an in-depth assessment will reveal what outcomes were successfully achieved, if the initiative's intended objectives have been achieved, including the explanations for why the initiative succeeded or failed. It can be useful while deciding if to keep running the course of action and how to make it better. It additionally assists by giving authorities a strong data base and practitioners may use to determine exactly (Morgan, 2013).

Furthermore, the idea that crime can be managed and prevented emerges naturally from the awareness that the environment establishes crime. This idea is comparable to the concepts of immunology and public health. A better lifestyle is the primary defense's goal in order to lessen the impacts of illness or damage. And refraining from unsuitable actions and community. In addition, prevention of crime seeks to minimize the consequences of an accident or illness, whereas tertiary crime prevention seeks to treat the consequences of an accident or illness as soon as possible through rehabilitation and assist in making a living. The primary goal of preventing crime, from a criminological standpoint, aims to avoid crimes from arising by creating and upholding safe environments. The additional objective of crime prevention is to eliminate crime (Matsukawa 2013 et al.).

Local and International cooperation for crime prevention

Primarily, the Philippine National Police stated that preventing crime is the primary objective in order to ensure public safety. The local area must actively participate and work together to ensure security and safety. Action should be made to safeguard community safety by notifying the PNP about complaints and volunteer opportunities, and residents are urged to report any unusual person movements or patterns of behavior in their neighborhood and cooperation among stakeholders is the key aspect (Patoza, 2018).

Throughout 2021-25, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)'s governing plan of action made up three main emphasis areas: tackling the global drug problem; combating organized crime, notably through assisting with the execution of the UN convention against transnational organized crime. The UNODC assists member countries in implementing drug use prevention programs (particularly via the Global Youth Network against Drug Abuse & its Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse) as well as in providing drug addiction treatment and care services. The UNODC provides support to meetings of the policy-making Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Through association with the UN interregional crime and justice research center, the UNODC encourages research and conducts studies on novel ways of crime prevention. Humanitarian initiatives or peacekeeping operations of the United Nations operate on the ground to prevent and settle disputes, as well as to promote sustainable peace in post-conflict nations. The office that handles political and peace operations (DPPA) that was founded on January 1, 2019, assists them. The DPPA's mediation assistance unit strengthens regional organizations' mediation competence, offers logistical, advising, and monetary support to peace processes, and compiles policy and best practices knowledge (Canton, 2021).

Additionally, several aspects should be taken into consideration, according to Dasayon (2013), as a crime prevention approach in his analysis of residents' perceptions of crime prevention. Long-term planning and proactive crime prevention techniques should be encouraged. Additionally, there is a need to improve the coordination of national and local initiatives to reduce crime. Criminal justice and law enforcement should promote security and protection of people and property, consideration for and understanding of victims' needs, and on-going evaluation of initiatives for crime prevention consist of trustworthy data, evaluation, and free communication among everyone involved.

On the other hand, the UN Secretariat, in collaboration with its members, established a global community to recognize the importance of local and international collaboration aligned with various legal objectives. The organization was created to facilitate enhanced intercultural cooperation in criminal justice and crime prevention at international, regional, and sub-regional levels. The network provides services such as knowledge sharing, research, education, and training, with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as various institutes and specialized centers globally, participating in the UN Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention Program Network since its inception in Tokyo, Japan, in 1962. The network, responsible for organizing collaborative events like the Crime Congress, has seen increased involvement from the Program Network Institute (PNI) in arranging UN quinquennial crime congresses. Thirteen workshops have been scheduled in the past twenty years, demonstrating the PNI's growing role. The Program Network also collaborates with other organizations to host seminars and events that support the Committee on Prevention of Crime and Administrative Justice work during its annual conferences. These activities align with the Commission's directive for Institutes to assist Member States with technical program-related concerns, including participation in crime and justice survey operations and collecting information on the implementation of UN standards and regulations in joint initiatives related to the UN crime program (UNICRI, 2023).

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BARMM Participation on Peace and Security

On July 26, 2018, the Organic Legislation governing Bangsamoro Autonomous Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was signed into Philippine law. Philippines Organic Act establishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was replaced by this law. It's not a flawless law, and the provisions are frequently modified by non-Muslim legislators. It does not fully execute all of the major aspects of the Tripoli Agreement. To deal with several among the present concerns left through the ARMM, the BARMM must have a better awareness of present problems such as poverty, illness, and crime impacting the regions and towns under its control. According to the article, BOL is only one of the instruments for fostering justice and tranquility in Mindanao. It is not the end of the government's quest for long-term peace. As a result, it concludes with some suggestions for fresh fields of study on longterm peace and security (Tagoranao, 2020).

Moreover, the preceding administration attempted to engage in negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to address the Mindanao conflict. However, both proposed ceasefire agreements faced obstacles due to a variety of factors and complex motivations involving non-Muslim peacekeepers and lawmakers in the House of Representatives. An illustration of this is the creation of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), a pact outlining the establishment of a Bangsamoro Juridical Entity with its own governance, military, and judiciary (Marcelo, 2014). Through numerous rounds of peace talks between the government and the MILF in recent years, certain government negotiators, with considerable experience, have at times extended or undermined the peace process for personal reasons. The MILF panel's exceptional skills and patience have, however, allowed them to navigate challenges and demonstrate a commitment to enduring obstacles for the sake of peaceful negotiations. Drawing on their Islamic faith, the MILF panel's resilience reflects the Qur'anic principle of being a people of a "middle way" (*ummatan wasatan*), advocating patience, evolution, and a positive attitude for discipline. The Qur'an encourages Muslims to maintain mutual understanding (*ta'aruf*) over differences in various groups and governments, envisioning Muslims as promoters of stability (Kamali, 2016). Recent efforts for lasting peace in the southern Philippines led to the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA). The BTA has initiated two-track peace negotiations and the region's first elections. Despite centuries of challenges, including underdevelopment, violence, poverty, and instability, the Authority faces significant hardships in its current phase. Furthermore, given that the BARMM was just established in 2019 and everything else they had to deal with, the BTA has performed incredibly well. The transfer of financing and the transfer of power both took longer than expected because it was created in 2019. The deadlines for completing the requirements listed in the peace agreement were unquestionably overly optimistic. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic can then be observed from the start of 2020 till the present. The BTA's response to the pandemic has received plaudits in many communities, helping to increase public confidence in the transitional government and, more importantly, in its bureaucracy and institutions (Ingram, 2022).

Relevance of Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

Stakeholders in law enforcement have to work together alongside those from other sectors to deal with the fundamental causes of disputes, prevent acts of violence, disputes, and breaches of the rule of law. In terms of crime and violence, this implies shifting from harsh support for conflict reduction strategies centered on research, especially those which target women, children, and populations at risk. It additionally means that industries that deal with criminals and casualties, like social workers, prosecutor's offices and defense lawyers, ought to be engaged with the execution of preventive measures to make certain that recommendations of specific situations to suitable service providers go easily and satisfy the needs of the parties concerned (UNODC, 2023). Multi-sectoral alliances move all the way to 1992, when the agenda 21 program was endorsed at the Earth Summit. It was expressly suggested that a worldwide cooperation for equitable growth be formed. Cross-sectoral collaboration was underlined as one of the important strategies for achieving long-term development at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, and more recently in the United States the 2030 Agenda of Nations (Pesqueira et al., 2020). It was stressed on the fact that there are effective MSPs for sustainable development between businesses, governments, and community organizations (MacDonald, 2019). Collaboration and partnership tend to be interchanged. A relationship of partnership is a form of cooperation that utilizes resources which are divided, skills, and talents to accomplish shared objectives. In terms of their structural and legal dimensions, it's also known as "a delicate type of organizations" (Meuleman & Niestroy, 2015). Cooperation, on the other hand, is defined as "a brief interpersonal system whereby a number of different agents cooperate to achieve a particular shared goal that requires the change of supplies, concepts, as well as interpersonal relationships" (Roberts & Bradley 1991). An organization's momentum must accept and promote MSPs for long-term success, according to current research (Austin et al., 2000). Additionally, previous research suggests that cross-sector social partnerships include a variety of characteristics, mixing management, political, and sociological theories with those of global development studies (Bendell et al., 2010).

METHODOLOGY

Within this chapter, the methods and procedures regarding the study's implementation are described, including the research design, the researcher's role, the research subjects and materials, data collection, data analysis, validity, and ethical considerations.

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RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative approach and case study technique was used in this study in which the case study strategy allowed the researcher to undertake an in-depth inquiry into a person, a group of people, or an entire group with the goal of generalizing over a number of units (Heale, 2017). Specifically, the illustrative case study, a descriptive case study that illustrates one or more aspects of an incident in order to clarify the circumstance. A circumstance or event, together with what is happening with it and why, are described using this kind of case study (Webber, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researchers were to formulate and analyze the data needed for the study and provided an accurate result. All of these was made possible in the form of interview questions and the different methods. The researcher also ensured the validity of the data collected and also considered the ethical considerations.

Research Participants and Materials

Purposive sampling was used to pick respondents for this investigation. This is a collection of sampling with no probability strategies whereby pieces were selected based on the traits that you require in your sample. In this case, units were "on purpose" chosen. When finding and selecting individuals, cases, or events that can provide the greatest information to meet the study's objectives, this sampling approach relies on the researcher's judgment (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

In this study, the participants were from the various sectors in Pikit, specifically, those who are in the higher positions. The participants were specifically the ones who contributed to the peace and security in Pikit and who has gained enough knowledge in regards to the purpose of the study. The targeted participants were from the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Pikit, Citizen Local Government Unit in Pikit (LGU), Barangay Official, Municipal official, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) official).

DATA COLLECTION

In the data collection, the researcher made a consent to conduct the study. The researcher made a letter to the Department head (Barangay and Municipality) to ask for permission to allow the researcher to conduct the study and to have the needed information about the peace and security initiatives done in the locality. The researcher did also choose participants and asking permission to seek the approval of the participant in the said interview. There was an informed consent for them to be aware about the study and the possibilities. The next step was by operating an interview, the researcher administered the interview guide questions with the recordings to gather the needed information. Lastly, was the coding of data. The researcher coded the data with thematic analysis through themes and verified the results and came up with an extracted result.

DATA ANALYSIS

After gathering the data, the researcher presented and analyzed the data through narrative accounts. This encompassed the different approaches of the locality about the peace and security in the area and also constitutes the narratives of the participants. This study analyzed the data by using thematic analysis to create coded words and a result in formulating a theme.

Lastly, a concept map that develops themes is called a thematic network, it demonstrates the connections between them by breaking them down onto three levels: basic theme, organizing theme, and global theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Akinyode & Khan, 2018).

Table 1. Thematic Analysis Matrix (Cresswell &Cresswell 2018)

Research Questions	Textual Data	Codes	Categories	Theme	Description

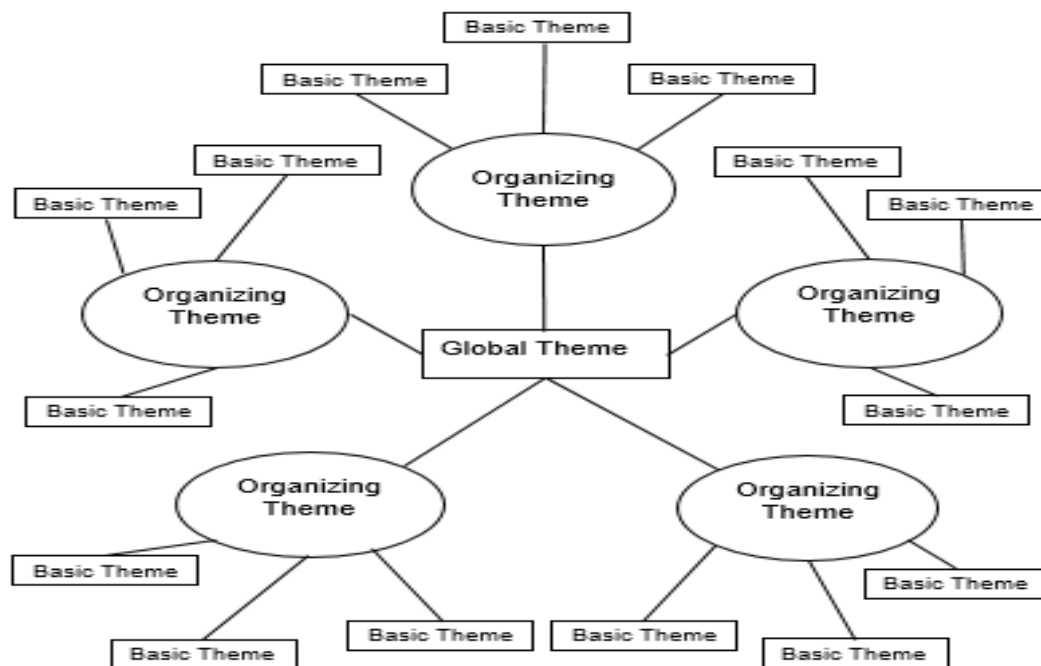


Figure 1. Structure of a Thematic Network

VALIDITY

The result of this study was thoroughly examined and analyzed by the researcher to ensure whether the data gathered is genuine and accurate, with no biases, the results was be based on the participants personal experiences and insights.

Credibility was also followed so that the results presented will be plausible. Transferability also came to the extent of this study, to ensure that it could be applicable to other contexts. Next one is the confirmability; the results were consulted by an expert in the field of research specifically qualitative research and reviewed the results, to ensure the consistence and assurance of the findings were established despite any changes.

In addition, thematic analysis method was used in examining the qualitative data. It is frequently used in reference to a collection of texts, such as transcripts or interviews. In finding recurring themes, subjects, concepts, and patterns of significance in the data, the searcher attentively studied it.

The method of doing a thematic analysis can be done in a number of ways, however the approach that is most prevalent involves six steps: familiarization, coding, generating themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up (Caulfield, 2022).

The researcher's initial move was to familiarize themselves with the information at hand. Whenever we begin evaluating specific items, it's critical to acquire an in-depth understanding of all the information we gathered. This could entail listening to some recording and translating it, reviewing the content and making some preliminary points out, as well as browsing over the information in order to become proficient in it.

Secondly, the researcher coded the information as the following phase. Coding is the process of underlining specific text passages, typically words or phrases, and creating abbreviations or "codes" to indicate what such passages are about.

In generating themes, the researcher then reviewed the codes that were developed, spot any discrepancies, and began formulating themes. The researcher ensured in generating themes whether the main concepts were precise and appropriate summaries of the information being analyzed. The researcher got back and evaluate the patterns to the information that was set.

Furthermore, followed by defining and naming themes, the researcher identified and characterized every concept that the researcher obtained a complete list of themes. The process of establishing concepts entails articulating precisely what we mean by every concept and determining how it aids in our comprehension of the facts. The process of identifying themes involves providing each subject a succinct and comprehensible name.

Lastly, writing up the evaluation of the findings was done by the researcher. Drafting up an analysis of themes involves a beginning that lays out our study topic, goals, and strategy, just like any other academic document.

Each theme was discussed individually in the outcome or results section. The researcher discussed the themes' frequency of occurrence and their significance, providing examples from the data to support our claims. The conclusion that follows summarizes the key findings and demonstrates whether the study addressed the research topic.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Informed Consent: This study accommodated participants who were qualified for the criteria of respondents, there was no forcing of participants. The researcher also established a formal consent in order for the participants to have an overview about the study.

Confidentiality: And most of all, confidentiality was guaranteed to protect the privacy of the participants, this is by ensuring that their personal information and data are kept confidential. The results were coded or anonymized to remove identifying details when presenting or publishing the results.

Right to withdraw any time: This study also ensured that participation in the research is entirely voluntary, which means that participants have the right to withdraw at any time.

Safety: Minimization of any harm was also observed.

Data Management: The researcher also maintained clear and open communication with participants throughout the study. And provided the much-needed data in accordance with the clarity of the aimed result.

Risk and Benefits: Lastly, the respondents were also informed about the risk especially about the data collection and were enlightened about the benefits that they can get about the study.

Plagiarism. The researcher rejected plagiarism or fabrication during every stage of the research. The researcher made sure the accuracy of every information gathered. Furthermore, the report has no instances of plagiarism. Additionally, the researcher did see to it that every one of the references are carefully mentioned.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presented the findings of the study based on the data gathered from the interviews amongst the informants. The results of the study were presented in three sections: Initiatives on peace and security done by the various sectors in Pikit; BARMM governments participation on the escalating crimes in Pikit; and Actions, policy alternatives, and programs done by the various sectors.

This study investigated the insightful experiences and perspectives shared by a diverse group of participants from the various sectors in Pikit, North Cotabato. This study centers around individuals holding their esteemed positions in their respective fields, making a positive impact on the overall landscape of Pikit. In this study, the researcher engaged with a total of 5 participants, each of whom has gained a wide range of knowledge and experiences spanning 2-5 years in their respective roles. As we all know, interviews with expert key informants requires substantial preparation by the researchers (Harvey, 2011). Understanding the informants' background and expertise is essential to both gaining access to the expert and obtaining useful information (Mikeez, 2012). This study allowed the researcher to draw upon their valuable insights and experiences, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and challenges in the municipality.

In this study, the researcher discovered the initiatives and the role of the various sectors in the Municipality of Pikit, the cooperation, the effectiveness, and the challenges in the face of the escalating crimes. Furthermore, this study mainly focused on the initiatives, BARMM cooperation, policy and its effectiveness.

Table 2. Initiatives on peace and security done by the various sectors in Pikit

Concept Probed	Core ideas	Global themes
Initiatives on peace and security done by the various sectors in Pikit	Promoting peace and security, ensuring public safety and collaborating with one another Efforts on maintaining and sustaining peace	Program initiatives of sectors in maintaining peace and security and being accountable

Promoting peace and security, ensuring public safety and collaborating with one another

Primarily, in terms of preventing crime, it's not just up to the courts and government agencies the role of Municipalities in urban management is also crucial. A study by Modaberi (2015) suggests that when municipalities organize city areas and plan for prevention, it helps stop criminals from gathering and prevents potential criminals from showing their individual capabilities influenced by the social environment. As presented in the results of this study, one of the initiatives created by the municipality of Pikit, North Cotabato is that they served as the one who organized different councils and promulgate plans to ensure public safety and other programs. As shown in the narrative of the informants below, drawn from 5 participants, 2 of them stated a similar response. Participant 1 stated as follows:

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“The Local Chief Executive as the Chairman of the Municipal Peace and Order Council had properly organized said council by virtue of the power vested in him by law”.

On the other hand, one of the results also showed that one of the initiatives by these sectors is to prioritize these people and to work alongside with the other sectors, to be able to provide their needs is their top priority. This was supported through the statement of participant 2:

“My top priority here are the people, especially the other sectors, to provide and listen to them, and to be able support their needs”.

However, as widely known, Pikit, a first-class municipality with a population of 154,000 according to the 2015 census, has experienced a series of shooting incidents in recent months, primarily stemming from family disputes. Fernandez (2019) commended the village defenders and local officials of Pikit for actively supporting the peace initiatives and programs of the provincial government. Examining the challenges encountered by various sectors in their collective efforts to uphold peace and order requires careful consideration and investigation. Key issues that prominently surfaced in this study include negligence of the law and a persistently high crime rate. It is noteworthy that despite these challenges, the involved sectors maintain an optimistic outlook in the face of adversity.

Maxim Peralta, the chief of police in Pikit, contested the characterization of the municipality as it was considered a ghost town. Peralta acknowledged the insufficient manpower of the local police force to fully secure the town. Additionally, a vlogger shared images of deserted streets with the statement:

“The Municipality of Pikit, North Cotabato is like this now. There are no more people because of the daily killings. Hopefully, this conflict will be resolved soon.”

While Sultan acknowledged peace and order issues in the town, including killings, he emphasized that the local government is actively addressing these concerns. However, he clarified that the killings did not occur on a daily basis. In August, authorities attributed at least eight separate killings in the locality to *rido* or clan war (Mindanews, 2022). This only shows how hard it is for these sectors to contain the situation in Pikit, as shown in the narratives of the informants below, drawn from 5 participants, 4 participants stated a similar response that the most challenging thing they are facing in the municipality are the riding in tandems. Participant 1 stated:

“The most prevalent is the riding in Tandem killers which perpetuate in area where check points of law enforcer in a distance. “

On the other hand, one of the participants also believed that these crimes are a result of negligence and disobedience. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 5:

“There are lot of challenges here because most people don’t follow the rules from our Municipality, some also doesn’t really care about the things that they are doing.”

Moreover, the Municipal Police Station (MPS) plays a crucial role as one of the security forces in Pikit, tasked with regulating and preserving peace and order, a pivotal element for public safety. A study by NEDA (2022) yielded comparable results, highlighting the importance of increasing police presence to uphold peace and order. Consequently, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is committed to meeting the standard police-to-population ratio to significantly enhance public safety. Additionally, the government aims to build more police stations in each community to reinforce and broaden their presence, thereby enhancing various programs and activities. This was supported through the statement of participant 3:

“The PNP shall enforce the law, prevent and control crimes, maintain peace and order, and ensure public safety and internal security with the active support of the community Police typically are responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities. These functions are known as policing. Police are often also entrusted with various licensing and regulatory activities.”

Nevertheless, as indicated in the findings of Bacongo (2023), police officers and other authorities acknowledged that preserving peace and order in Pikit poses inherent difficulties due to its geographical location. This shows that making their initiatives effective and maintaining peace and order in Pikit is a lot of work and a challenging task. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 3:

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“Securing a strong leadership pipeline equipped not only to face these challenges but also to strengthen policing effectiveness and over-all security sector reforms is crucial”

On the other hand, despite the collective efforts of these security forces, the findings also indicate that Pikit has gained a reputation as an area with elevated crime rates and safety concerns. As reported by Bacongco (2023) in the Manila Bulletin, the Cotabato Provincial Police Office has reassured the public that the situation in Pikit, North Cotabato, is still under control despite a series of shooting incidents resulting in the death of two minors and the injury of three others within a two-day period. In response to these incidents, Police Col. Harold Ramos, the CPPO director, mentioned that combined police and military forces have enhanced their security measures in the municipality. Ramos further stated that they have increased police checkpoints at all entry and exit points of Pikit. In contrast to this study, it is evident here that they are doing everything they can to contain these crimes, but Pikit is still Pikit. Drawn from the narratives of the 5 participants, 1 participant supported this by saying:

“There are a lot of challenges here, because we are in Pikit”

Furthermore, this research highlights the active involvement of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in collaboration with various sectors to play a crucial role in maintaining peace and security in Pikit. As reported by the NBCB (2021), two members of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao parliament, namely Dr. Kadil Sinolinding, Jr. and Datu Jambo Matalam, have taken steps to solidify consensus and increase their support for peaceful initiatives addressing persistent security issues in Pikit. Since 2020, Pikit has been in the spotlight due to widespread killings and violent clashes among feuding clans in the municipality, which is part of the Bangsamoro Special Geographic Area (SGA) along with 41 other barangays in nearby Cotabato towns. Both Sinolinding and Matalam, with family ties in Pikit, have agreed to initiate backchannel dialogues with local stakeholders to contribute to the sustainability of joint peace efforts involving BARMM leadership, the Cotabato provincial government, the police, the military, and Pikit. This was supported through the statement of participant 4:

“First of all, BARMM is already an established government. The main goal of BARMM government here is to attain peace and order specifically in the geographical area of BARMM. And us here in BARMM, we are assigned on the Political Structure of Moro Islamic Liberation Law.”

On the other hand, the findings of this study also indicate that achieving peace in Pikit presents a formidable challenge, particularly in the relations between Christians and Muslims, who were previously considered like brothers and sisters. According to Sarmiento (2023), the recent surge of killings in Pikit, North Cotabato, is not attributed to a "religious conflict" between Muslims and Christians, as clarified by Bangsamoro Interim Chief Minister Ahod "Al Haj Murad" Ebrahim. Ebrahim refuted the notion of a retaliatory war between Christians and Muslims in Pikit, a first-class municipality with a population of approximately 165,000 (2020 census). He recalled the violence in the 1960s, specifically the Manili Massacre, where about 70 Muslim Moros, including women and children, were killed inside a mosque in Carmen, North Cotabato, by Christian militiamen. Although acknowledging the conflict between Muslims and Christians in the 1960s remains ingrained in public memory, Ebrahim asserted that it was not a religious war. This was supported by one of the 5 participants drawn by the narrative below. This was affirmed by the statement of Participant 4:

“We are also working hard to bring back Muslim and Christian’s relationship just like before, that’s why we are working hard to make that happen again”.

Moreover, the findings indicate that apprehending these wrongdoers poses a challenge for the security forces in Pikit. Despite the presence of CCTV cameras, they still struggle to curb criminal activities effectively. The town comprises 42 barangays, with 22 of them now included in the Special Geographic Area (SGA) of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Pikit shares its borders with Datu Montawal and Pagalungan in Maguindanao Del Sur, as well as Aleosan and Carmen towns in North Cotabato. Moreover, Pikit serves as one of the gateways to the 220,000-hectare Ligawasan Marsh, historically known as a refuge for lawless elements operating in Central Mindanao (Bacongco, 2023).

Efforts on maintaining and sustaining peace

Significantly, effective collaboration spans various levels of government—local, national, and regional—playing a crucial role in establishing a harmonious and just society. Government officials shoulder a profound responsibility, with the primary task of earning the trust of their constituents. At the forefront of governance, local officials navigate the challenges unique to their communities and diverse needs. Simultaneously, they must cultivate smooth coordination with their counterparts at the national level, recognizing that their local context distinguishes them from regional and national counterparts. This study presents a comprehensive overview

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of results, highlighting the intricate coordination among sectors within local government and with counterparts at national and regional levels. The findings emphasize the critical role of local governance in state-society relations. For citizens, local governments serve as the most accessible level of public authority, providing opportunities to engage with decision-makers who shape their day-to-day lives.

In connection with this study, according to DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2019-143, Series of 2019, Peace and Order Councils (POCs) at the regional, provincial, city, and municipal levels are mandated to oversee the effective and efficient implementation of programs, projects, and activities aimed at addressing anti-criminality, anti-insurgency, and anti-illegal drugs to ensure peace and order, as well as public safety. The POC performance audit aims to assess the functionality of Regional, Provincial, City, and Municipal POCs, recognize the innovations introduced by the POCs and their Secretariats, improve POC strategies and interventions, and provide a platform to highlight the best practices of the POCs (DILG, 2022). In contrast to this, this study shows that the various sectors in Pikit, North Cotabato are struggling to make their security efforts and initiatives effective in spite of this memorandum agreement. This was supported by the statement of participant 3:

“Establishing and implementing sound policing and procedure is a continuing challenge for the organization especially for our police officers who take full responsibility to keenly observe all operational guidelines while building trust and confidence in the communities.”

However, despite of the struggles that they are facing, the results also showed that these sectors in Pikit play an active role in terms of maintaining peace and order which they are also can be considered as a competitive administration. This was supported by the statement of participant 2:

“Pikit is one of the contenders for our Municipal level or what we call LTIA. Back in 2021, we are first runner up at the National level, in 2022 at the ravage level we are awarded as champions, and currently in 2023, we are first runner up again”.

Additionally, Pikit, North Cotabato stands to gain from the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028, which emphasizes a whole-of-government approach and cross-cutting strategies to ensure peace and security. The plan asserts that economic justice is a crucial element for a robust and thriving economy, requiring a sector-specific approach with robust coordination among justice sector institutions, agencies, and actors to foster public engagement and trust in the justice system. While the signing and execution of peace agreements, coupled with sustained law enforcement efforts, have brought stability to geographically isolated and conflict-affected (GICA) communities and stimulated economic activities, challenges persist in implementing these agreements, and groups engaging in criminal and terrorist activities still pose a threat. Simultaneously, dealing with natural disasters and protecting territorial and national interests continue to be formidable challenges (PDP, 2023). This shows that the national, regional, and the local government are working together to create and maintain a stabilize community. This was supported by the statement of participant 4:

“Our national level is also doing its job. So, what we are actually doing here is that we have a close coordination between local government and different sectors”.

Furthermore, taking a broader perspective, placing excessive reliance on cooperation from the National and Regional levels proves challenging due to the distinct roles played by various sectors at the local, national, and regional levels. The disparities in situations encountered at these governance levels form a critical aspect of the intricacy and variety inherent in a nation. These distinctions are primarily grounded in the distinctive characteristics, requirements, and hurdles confronted by different geographic and demographic segments of the population. Grasping these distinctions becomes vital for formulating effective policies and governance strategies. It's noteworthy, however, that Pikit does receive continuous support from the regional and national levels. This was supported through the statement of participant 5:

“If we compare our regional, national, and local unit. We have different roles here because each area has different problems or different situations. We have a lot of problems here, and if we will not take actions to a micro level problem, then it will become worse. So, if we compare national and local, it's really different”.

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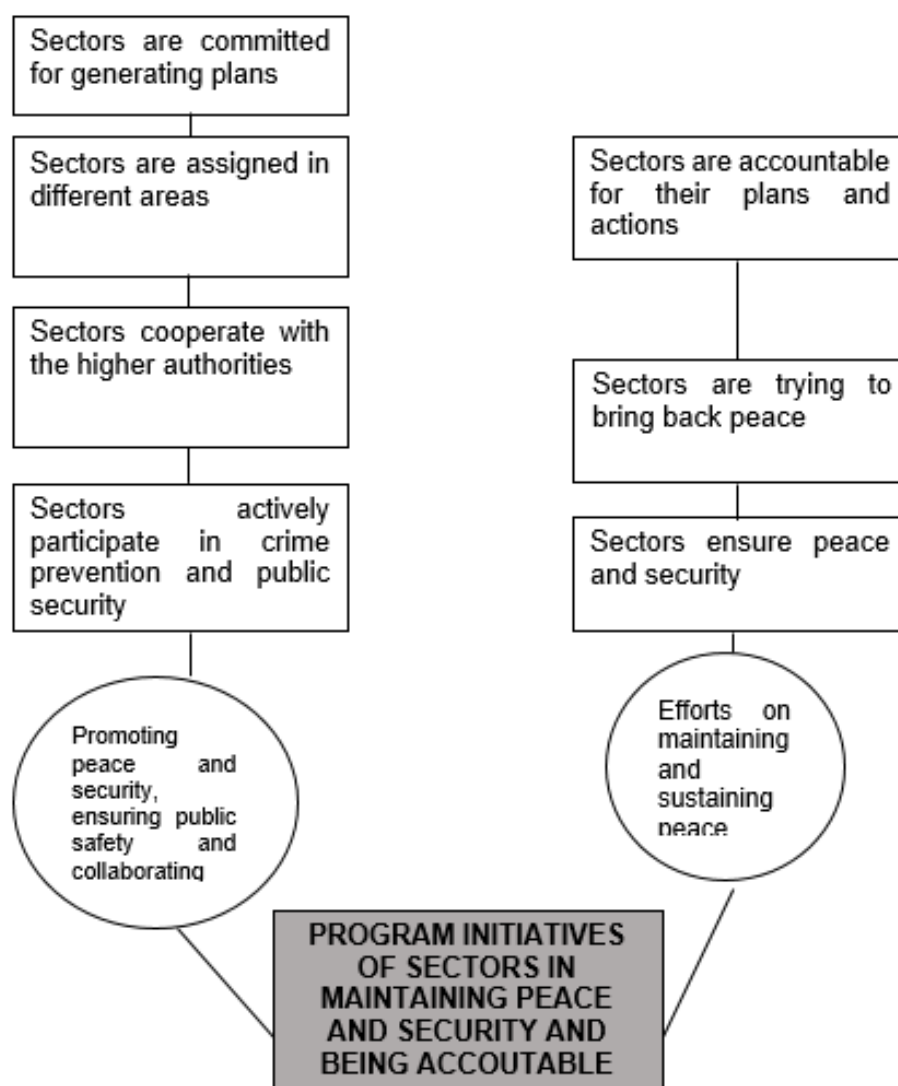


Figure 2. Thematic Network of Initiatives on Peace and Security Done by the Various Sectors in Pikit

Table 3. BARMM Governments Participation on the Escalating Crimes in Pikit

Concept Probed	Core ideas	Global themes
BARMM governments participation in the condition of Pikit	<p>Providing additional security forces with an established jurisdiction</p> <p>Collaborating in matters related to peace and order through discussions with a vision to improve public safety</p> <p>Exerting efforts to restore trust and harmony between Muslim and Christians</p>	BARMM provides additional security measures and policy alternatives

Providing additional security forces with an established jurisdiction

The findings of this research indicate a substantial acknowledgment of the crucial contribution of the BARMM government in maintaining peace and order in Pikit, North Cotabato. The BARMM government actively collaborates in implementing public safety measures and protecting their designated areas. Additionally, they deploy extra security forces to enhance overall safety. Shown in the narratives of the participants below: drawn from 5 participants, all of them stated similar responses:

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“BARMM Government through its MILB had taken cognizance of the incidents that transpired within their areas of jurisdiction by additional PNP stationed in different strategic areas within the SGA barangays.”

In addition, it is important to highlight that although BARMM enjoys a level of self-rule, particularly in Pikit, it independently manages certain initiative programs, displaying a measure of autonomy. However, it's crucial to emphasize that BARMM operates within the sovereignty of the Republic of the Philippines. This autonomy represents the government's commitment to addressing the historical marginalization of Muslim communities and promoting self-governance within the framework of the Philippine constitution. While BARMM exercises specific powers in self-governance, such as legislative, executive, and fiscal autonomy, it remains an integral part of the Philippines. The collaborative approach to peace and security entails the involvement of various stakeholders, including the national government, local authorities, community leaders, and international partners. Drawn from the 5 participants, 2 of them have stated similar response:

“Actually, BARMM has their own ways, when they have some activities, they are always open and cooperates with us”.

On the other hand, when assessing the effectiveness of the joint initiatives between BARMM and other government sectors in Pikit, it's crucial to recognize the unique administrative context of Pikit. Although located in the Cotabato province under region 12, certain component-barangays of Pikit became part of BARMM after residents voted for their inclusion during a 2019 plebiscite. Data from October 8, 2022, reveals a concerning trend, with over 30 individuals killed in successive gun attacks over the past 24 months, along with two men injured in a grenade blast in the town proper (Unson, 2022).

In 2023, a parallel security arrangement was implemented in 2018, wherein police officers served as escorts for teachers in Pikit due to threats of violence. In the preceding year, the police documented more than 30 incidents of gun attacks in the town, resulting in casualties among both students and teachers. Notably, on May 26, assailants on a motorcycle shot at two teachers, resulting in the death of Joel Reformado, a 37-year-old head teacher at Damalasak Elementary School in Pikit. Subsequent incidents included the shooting of another minor and another killing on the same day (Rebollido, 2023).

In contrast to the findings of this study, it suggests that the collaboration between BARMM and other government sectors has somewhat mitigated the ongoing killings in Pikit, North Cotabato. However, it's essential to acknowledge that Pikit is still considered a dangerous area despite these collaborative efforts. But according to one participant, BARMM is still continuing its support despite the struggle to contain the criminal activities, and somehow, it made an impact in the locality. This was affirmed through the statement of participant 1:

“So far with its initiative and collaborative efforts shooting incidents had subside from the whole areas of SGA and Non BARMM.”

This was also supported by another participant saying:

“Actually, it is effective but not totally that we can say that they controlled or they can control it”.

However, despite the challenging circumstances in Pikit, the collaborative endeavors of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) have received widespread acclaim, consistently earning high praise for their excellence and effectiveness in contributing to peace and security. This positive evaluation highlights the region's steadfast commitment to creating a safe and harmonious environment. The BARMM government's dedication to collaboration, both internally and with national and international partners, has been instrumental in attaining this favourable rating. Through a focus on open communication, joint initiatives, and inclusive strategies, BARMM has not only showcased its capability to address security challenges but has also established an admirable benchmark for collaborative governance in the pursuit of enduring peace. This was affirmed by participant 3:

“The essence of empowerment efforts been fostering in community engagement between BARMM and other government sectors in terms of peace and security calls for integrated approaches that harness the respective strengths from multiple different sectors to deliberately contribute to peace.”

Collaborating in matters related to peace and order through discussions with a vision to improve public safety

In the southern part of the Philippines, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) emerges as a source of optimism, making significant progress in promoting peace and order through collaborative efforts within its government. The establishment of BARMM marks a historic achievement for the nation, driven by a commitment to address longstanding conflicts and promote harmonious coexistence among its diverse communities.

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Notably, the BARMM-READ collaboration in Pikit has provided assistance to 780 affected families in Barangays Calawag and Ginatilan. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) distributed aid to 2,093 affected families in Barangays Balong, Panicupan, and Macabual of Pikit Cluster 2, SGA. To coordinate response actions and ensure the safety of the population during relief distributions, a series of meetings involving Bangsamoro READi, MSSD, Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS), Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MILG), and relevant local government units were conducted.

The displacement of civilians began on October 5 due to an incident reported in Barangay Calawag, lasting half an hour and de-escalating with government intervention. Subsequent days saw continued tensions, leading to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Office, B.I, 2022). This initiative program illustrates BARMM's intervention in addressing the challenges faced by Pikit comprehensively, showcasing their readiness in diverse difficulties within the area. Shown in the narratives below, drawn from the 5 participants, all of them have stated similar response. This was supported by the statement of participant 5:

“BARMM Government actively collaborates with the LGU by conducting the people of SGA and Non Barmm barangays of Pikit by dissecting the root cause of the problem in order to employ concrete solution to the problem.”

Another participant also supported by saying:

“The collaboration that we have is that we have a strong communication between the leaders of the Christian and Muslims, specifically our Barangay Captains, these Barangay Captains are the ones spearheading our situation here in Pikit.”

Additionally, the Bangsamoro government has taken proactive measures to acknowledge challenges to peace and development, including local armed conflicts, disputes, and *rido*. It has implemented strategies and established policies and mechanisms to reinforce programs related to peace, security, and conflict resolution. These collective interventions are deemed crucial for addressing, resolving, and preventing *rido* or disputes effectively. Ultimately, beyond government initiatives, the Moro people play a pivotal role in achieving a comprehensive approach involving the entire society to overcome challenges to peace and development. While optimism persists, it is the implementation of actions and unwavering commitment that will secure the Bangsamoro's optimal chances for peace and progress (Nagamura, 2022). In simpler terms, BARMM is actively engaged in various ways to contribute to the fight against crimes in Pikit, North Cotabato. This was supported through the statement of participant 2:

“For our BARMM, they have this what they call UTGP. They are likely the ones who acts as the one controlling our peace and order, and to our BPAT, they are very consistent, so there is cooperation between BARMM and other sectors.”

Exerting efforts to restore trust and harmony between Muslim and Christians

Remarkably, BARMM's collaborative endeavours to promote peace and security go beyond religious distinctions in Pikit, showcasing a dedication to inclusiveness and unity. In a region historically characterized by religious diversity, the BARMM government actively encourages cooperation, ensuring that religious differences do not impede shared objectives. This approach recognizes the significance of viewing diversity as a source of strength rather than division. Through fostering collaboration that restores trust irrespective of religious lines, BARMM seeks to cultivate a robust and harmonious society that appreciates the contributions of all its members, regardless of their religious affiliations. This was supported by participant 4:

“We have a strong communication between the leaders of the Christian and Muslim.”

In addition, according to MindaNews (2022), reflecting on Pikit's history reveals it as one of the North Cotabato towns deeply affected by the conflict initiated by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) against the government, advocating for the Moros' right to self-determination in Mindanao. Significant armed conflicts between government and MILF forces occurred in Pikit in 1997, 2000, 2001, and 2003, leading to the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. After 17 years of peace negotiations, the two parties eventually signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2014. This research also indicates that BARMM is actively working towards restoring peace, particularly between Christians and Muslims. Additionally, the study highlights the involvement of the MILF in current peace and security initiatives in Pikit, North Cotabato, stemming from historical disputes. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 4:

“Recently, we had a meeting between our government and the BARMM, the meeting was held at Carmen. Their main agenda is to improve our peace and order here in Pikit. Governor Lala was present, including Mayor, and the general from the 2nd brigade. We

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also had our meeting here with our sectors to strengthen their plans. Because our main goal is to bring back the trust between Muslim and Christians, that's why we have consultations on the ground."

On the other hand, examining the first year of BARMM's existence reveals significant achievements, including the establishment of a transitional government, the formulation of a regional budget, and the oversight of the decommissioning of numerous fighters. Despite these accomplishments, the BARMM confronts several challenges that pose potential threats to the overall peace process. One such challenge is the complex task of building coalitions within the regional government, complicated by intra-Moro competition among rival groups. Additionally, the presence of militant Moro groups associated with the Islamic State, though relatively small and dispersed, poses a tangible threat to BARMM citizens and could potentially disrupt the peace process. While BARMM has made commendable strides, these gains are not immune to reversal. In this critical juncture, external assistance, if appropriately tailored to support the peace process, could be invaluable. The United States, in particular, has an opportunity to enhance the institutional capacity of BARMM through the provision of guidance, training, oversight, and financial aid (Lishchin, 2021). In contrast to the findings of this study, the results indicate that despite the collaborative efforts by the BARMM government, they also encountered numerous challenges within their community and administration. This was affirmed through the statement of participant number 5:

"It's like the same even with the cooperation between BARMM and NON BARMM because as we all know, there are also a lot of things happening in BARMM right now compared to NON BARMM. First of all, BARMM community is a majority of muslim people unlike Non BARMM areas, that's why we have different situations here."

Another participant also stated that the challenges they are facing with BARMM before up to the present is causing a barrier in attaining peace and order, and somehow, the effectiveness of their security programs are not really visible, but it's not stopping them from trying to find ways and solutions to the escalating problems in the locality. This was affirmed by participant 4:

"If we look at our current situation, isolated cases are inevitable, but our leaders are doing their best to resolve these problems so that it will not escalate."

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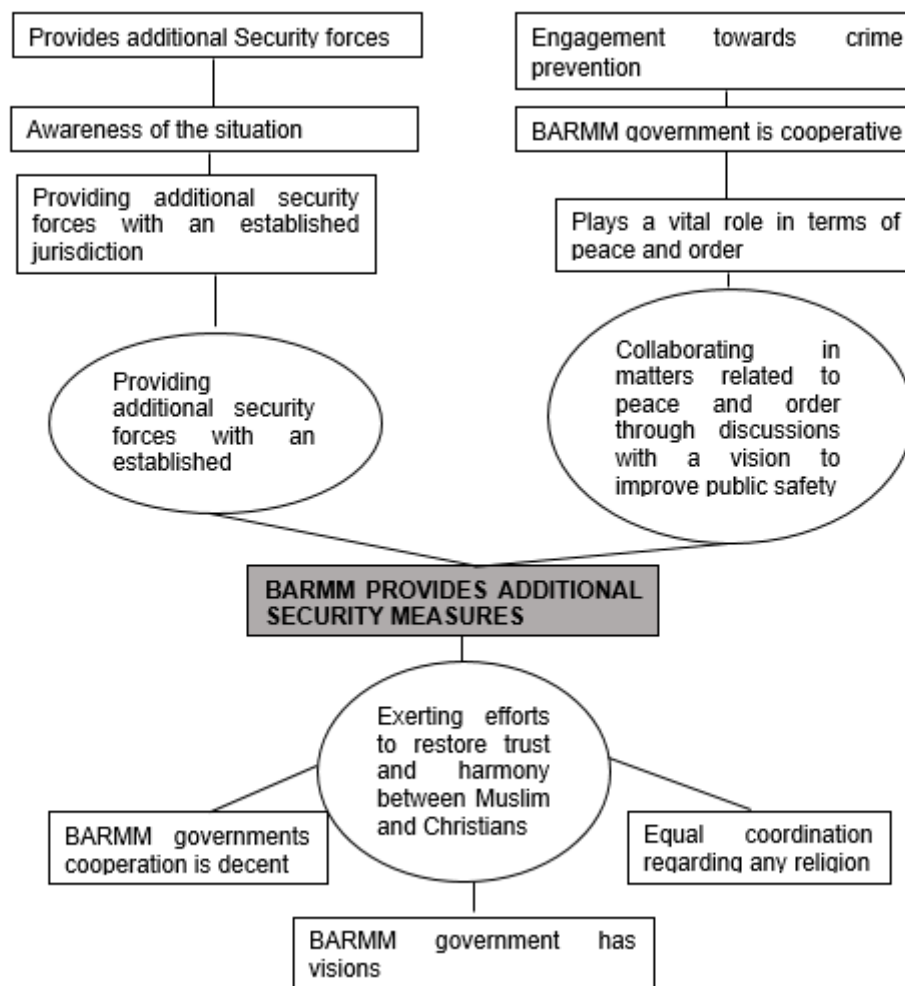


Figure 3. Thematic Network of BARMM Governments Participation in the Escalating Crimes of Pikit

Table 4. Actions, Policy Alternatives, and Programs Done by the Various Sectors

Concept Probed	Core ideas	Global theme
Actions, policy alternatives, and programs done by the various sectors	<p>Military and Police forces work alongside with one another through joint operations</p> <p>Sectors active contribution and collaboration in maintaining peace and order</p> <p>Enhanced communication services through cooperation and committees</p>	Security forces and other government sectors work alongside each other through joint operations

Military and Police forces work alongside with one another through joint operations

Primarily, the results presented in table 3 highlight the close collaboration among various sectors, particularly the military and police forces, especially in diverse operations. The coordination observed underscores their dedication and responsibilities to work alongside fellow law enforcement officials. The success and effectiveness of their collaboration have been evident in managing incidents effectively.

A comparable incident in Pikit, as reported by JournalOnline (2022), involved the intervention of an Army contingent from the 90th Infantry (Bigkis-Lahi) Battalion in pacifying a "*rido*" or clan war between two conflicting Moro groups in Sitio Galigayanan, part of Macabual village in Pikit, Cotabato. The Commanding Officer of 90IB, in conjunction with local police, officials from the Pikit local government unit, members of the municipal peace and order council, and Moro elders, worked on negotiations to resolve the conflict and prevent further clashes between the warring groups. Major General Roy M Galido,

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Commander of the 6th Infantry (Kampilan) Division and Joint Task Force Central, promptly instructed personnel to collaborate with local police and other security forces to activate mechanisms aimed at peacefully addressing the conflict causing disturbances in the localities. This instance underscores the significance of collaboration between these law enforcement entities, highlighting their essential role as first responders and to various incidents affecting peace and order in localities. This was affirmed in the statement of participant 1:

“Law enforcers and AFP jointly conduct random checkpoints in different areas of Pikit to include SGA barangays.”

Regarding the BARMM's collaboration with the military and police forces, their support and cooperation were extended on a broader scale in 2022. Local executives, the security sector, and Presidential Peace Adviser Carlito Galvez, Jr. joined forces to collectively address persistent security issues in Bangsamoro barangays in Cotabato province. Galvez, speaking at Camp Siongco in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao del Norte, shared that their dialogue at the Cotabato provincial capitol in Kidapawan City was productive, fueled by the strong commitment of participants to support endeavors aimed at maintaining law and order in troubled barangays in Pikit and Aleosan.

The forum, conducted at the Cotabato provincial capitol in Kidapawan City, was collaboratively facilitated by Galvez, Mendoza, and the government of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao through its Ministry of the Interior and Local Government. Galvez expressed gratitude to Mendoza and Sinarimbo for their continuous support of peace and security programs for municipal executives, the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade, and the police in "security-challenged" barangays in Pikit and Aleosan, collectively designated as BARMM's Special Geographic Area, or SGA (Unson, 2022). In contrast to this study, one of the results of this study shows the strengthened collaboration between BARMM and other security forces because of this initiative programs done by the BARMM officials. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 4:

“These different sectors specifically the barangay captains, we have different baryo chairman at different barangays. We have a lot of connections to our military forces and police so that in case of emergencies, we have an immediate response.”

In addition, the police and military forces each bring distinct capabilities to the forefront, exemplified by their roles in Pikit. The police, dedicated to upholding law and order within civilian communities, handle daily policing activities, investigations, and community interactions. On the other hand, the military is equipped to address larger-scale security threats, offering expertise in areas such as border security, counter-terrorism, and response to major crises. Their collaboration ensures a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to a range of security challenges. The coordination between police and military forces is of utmost importance. The military's logistical capabilities, rapid deployment, and disaster response proficiency complement the police's local knowledge and community engagement. This cooperative effort ensures a prompt and effective response to emergencies, minimizing harm and aiding in recovery.

A parallel incident occurred in 2019 through a joint operation conducted by security forces in Pikit, where six suspected criminals were apprehended in a collaborative military and police operation in Pikit town, North Cotabato. The suspects were implicated in activities such as gun-for-hire, vehicle theft, and extortion in the town and neighboring areas. Confiscated items included two M16 rifles, an M1 Garand rifle, a homemade caliber .30 rifle, two M19 pistols, a hand grenade, a bolo knife, assorted magazines, and various ammunition. Joint Task Force Central Commander Maj. Gen. Diosdado Carreon emphasized the significance of the arrest in ongoing investigations related to the increasing number of shooting incidents and other criminal activities in Pikit. The operation, led by Joint Task Force Central's 7th Infantry Battalion and North Cotabato Provincial Field Unit of Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG)-12, underscores the active involvement of these security forces in addressing persistent security challenges in Pikit. Their collaboration and commitment to their respective duties demonstrate their concerted efforts to serve and maintain public safety (ABS-CBN, 2019). This was affirmed by the statement of participant 2:

“Actually, our MPS here in Pikit is active. Our province also has their police that they assigned here, we also have our SAFF from national SAFF, and also the 90ib.

Furthermore, when it comes to intensifying focus on a specific locality, a participant highlighted that security measures, particularly in the Poblacion area, are more stringent than in other areas. This heightened vigilance is attributed to the fact that most crime incidents occur in that area, prompting increased attention to public safety in Poblacion. Notably, in a recent operation in Pikit, Cotabato, the collaborative efforts of 111SAC, 112SAC, 11SAB, 1203rd Mobile Company, Regional Mobile Force Battalion 12, and Mindanao Area Police Intelligence Office led to the successful apprehension of an individual involved in the heinous crime of Multiple Murder on August 31, 2023, at the Comelec Building in Brgy. Poblacion, Pikit, Cotabato (PNP, 2023). This was affirmed by the statement of participant 5:

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“When we look at Poblacion, we are very alert here because most of the crimes are happening here. So, we have our Police to monitor. And we have our Barangay who’s also extending their efforts to lessen the crimes. In other words, we are doing our best to solve these problems.”

Sectors active contribution and collaboration in maintaining peace and order

Based on the results of this study, drawn from narratives of the participants, out of 5 of the participants, all of them have stated that these sectors work alongside with one another when it comes to peace and security in the area. The collaborative synergy among these various sectors working hand in hand towards crime prevention is a testament to the multifaceted approach required to ensure community safety and security. Law enforcement agencies, community organizations, are among the diverse sectors that play pivotal roles in this collective effort. The response from one of the participants of the above-mentioned similar responses:

“Several sectors contribute to crime prevention by serving as witnesses, intervening in attempted offenses, taking precautions to prevent the theft of one’s property, and establishing and enforcing guidelines for the behavior of one’s children.”

Moreover, one participant also stated that the collaboration between LGU, Police and Military forces play a significant role as one of the collaborative efforts in Pikit, North Cotabato. This was supported by participant 1:

“BLGU use as force multiplier with PNP and AFP.”

In addition, this study also found out the roles of the Barangay captains and BARMM government when it comes to the coordination on the incidents in the locality, one participant mentioned that the barangay captains are mostly the one who initiates action and they are actively in close coordination with one another with the presence of the leaders in BARMM, for them to discuss the problems and the alternatives. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 4:

“As we all know, our barangay captains are very aggressive where in fact sometimes, they are being called out by our high-ranking officials here in BARMM to inform them and keep them updated about the things that they should do and to have a good cooperation between BARMM and Local sectors”.

However, this study found out that despite all these collaborative efforts by these sectors to act in times of emergencies, one of the participants has stated that all these actions are still not enough to capture and solve these problems, which in fact is true, because Pikit is still considered a dangerous place given that these problems is happening and still happening for a long time, where it created a narrative to everyone as a locality with an unending crimes. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 5:

“We have different committees here, committee for peace and order specifically. But we can’t really say that we can solve these problems immediately. We also have our CCTV, but we can’t really identify these perpetrators, and sometimes, we can identify them but they are nowhere to be found.”

Enhanced communication services through cooperation and committees

Based on the findings of this study, a majority of participants expressed a shared response that different sectors have established distinct committees to act in times of emergencies, a crucial necessity in the locality, particularly in Pikit. In the context of emergency preparedness, an adaptable and cooperative approach is deemed essential for an effective response and recovery. Recognizing the distinctive challenges each sector may encounter during crises, various sectors have proactively formed specialized committees. These committees, designed to address the specific needs of their respective sectors, operate as active entities, collaborating to enhance resilience and ensure prompt and organized responses during emergency situations. This was affirmed by the statement of respondent 2:

“Here in Barangay, we have a team assigned for emergency purposes so that they can respond immediately, I have committee in charge.”

On the other hand, on the side of the BARMM government, they also have their own committee in charge when it comes to emergency actions in order for them to cooperate to any needed operations on their designated areas. This was affirmed by participant 4:

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“Here in MILF, we have designated personalities, this is what we call the technical working group, and we formed this group for them to be informed about the leaders from the different sectors. It creates consultation about their needs, after the time frame, we consolidate and validate these results from our technical working group to make this as our guideline to resolve the different problems.”

Moreover, one of the participants also discussed that these law enforcers are easy to reach out when it comes to requesting for security assistance and any important meetings. This was affirmed by the statement of participant 2:

“Actually, when we have any activities here, we always do request our Police, SAFF, and our 90ib’s for security.”

Another participant also supported by saying:

“Our Municipality has these what we call the Municipal Peace and Order Council, it’s an activity to gather different sectors like Police, Military, Barangay, and different Commanders. The goal is to talk about the situations that we have here. So, it’s our mayor is the one in charge here in order to create solutions.”

Additionally, the study's results highlight the crucial role of Policemen as the primary line of defense and initial responders in addressing various criminal activities. This underscores their unwavering commitment to their responsibilities in the locality of Pikit. In a related study conducted in March 2023, incidents involving policemen in Pikit were examined. Authorities in the area are actively pursuing lawless elements who engaged in a confrontation with policemen over the weekend, resulting in the death of three gunmen and the injury of a police officer. Lt. Col. John Miridel Calinga, the town police chief, mentioned their collaboration with peacekeeping teams in all 42 barangays of the town to apprehend members of the group who managed to evade arrest.

“Our barangay peacekeeping action teams are on high alert, establishing checkpoints at all possible exit points of the town,”

He stated in an interview (Tabugoc, 2023). This was also affirmed by the statement of participant 3:

“On top of the PNP’s mandate to enforce the law is the duty to perform public safety operations to save lives during emergencies. In the event of natural calamity and disaster, the PNP shall act as the first responder in the affected area in order to provide area security and support in the conduct of search, rescue and retrieval operations.”

Furthermore, the findings underscore the active involvement of the Local Government Unit (LGU) in emergency response actions within Pikit, North Cotabato. In a similar study focused on LGUs conducted by ReliefWeb (2014), named after the late DILG secretary Jesse Robredo, the Jesse Robredo Institute of Governance (JMRIG) takes the lead in managing the project's capacity-building activities for beneficiaries. This includes the installation and roll-out of a monitoring system among local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to assess LGU performance. This is achieved by enhancing the capacities of both LGUs and civil society organizations to collaborate effectively in development planning, project implementation, and policymaking. In contrast with this study to the results in table 3, we can conclude that the LGU is doing its job as one of the sectors in Pikit, North Cotabato. Being able to provide and step up to their respective role is what the community expects them to be, given the situation in Pikit, North Cotabato. This was supported by the statement of participant 1:

“LGU provided communication and additional patrol cars, an ambulance to respond to any call for an emergency.”

Lastly, the results underscore the crucial role of community engagement in achieving effective outcomes. In a comparable study by Ball (2015), it is emphasized that governments should actively involve civil society as a full partner in the process of democratizing security sector governance. Creating a safe and secure environment for individuals, communities, and states is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable economic, political, and social development, as well as conflict mitigation. In the absence of democratic checks and balances, security forces tasked with protecting citizens and the state may suffer from mismanagement, ineffectiveness, and potential misuse for partisan political motives. Insufficient governance of the security sector can erode the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Civil society worldwide has made significant strides in influencing governments more broadly. In contrary to this, one of the participants emphasized the significance of community engagement in maintaining peace and order in a specific area. This was the statement of participant 3:

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“Strong relationships of mutual trust between police agencies and the communities they serve are critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing. Police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy.”

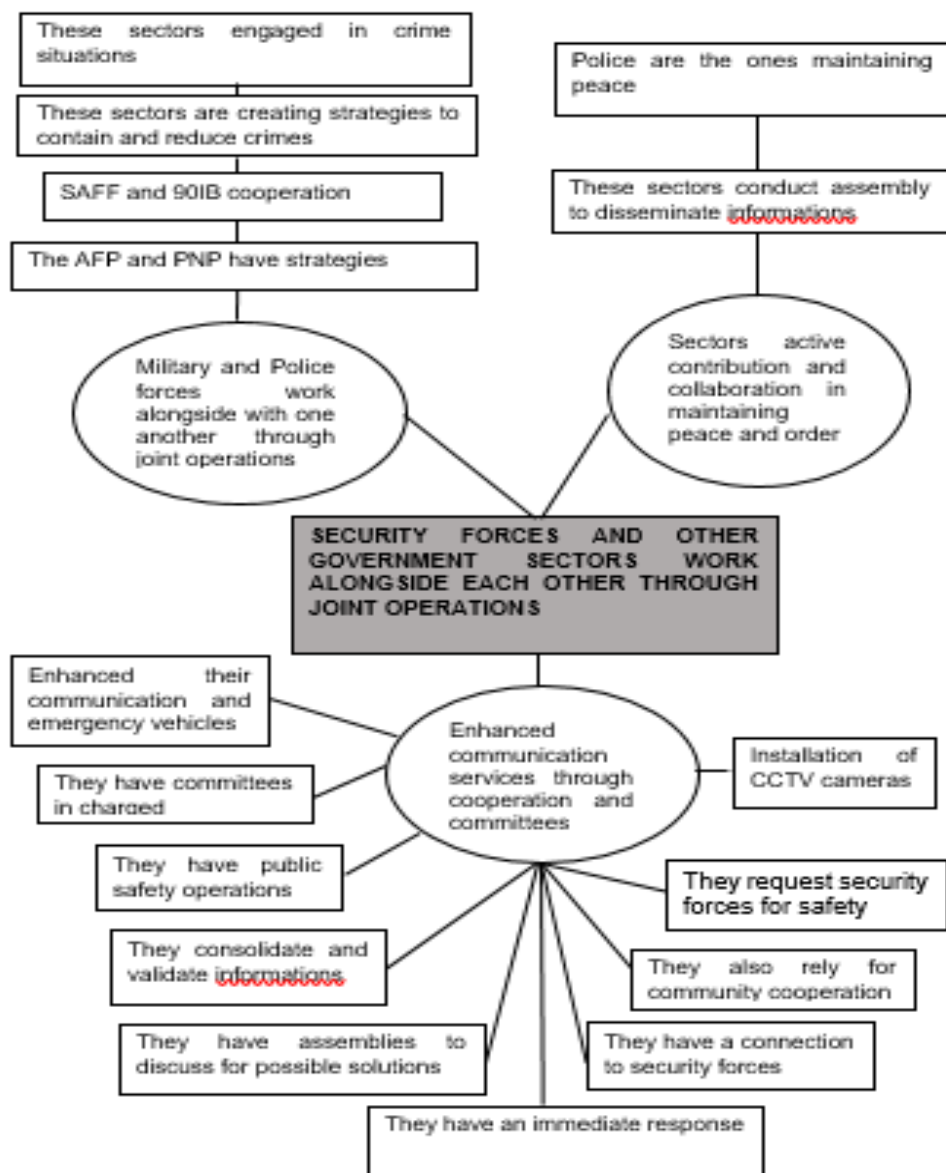


Figure 4. Thematic Network of Actions, Policy Alternatives, and Programs Done by the Various Sectors

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMENDATION

This chapter exhibits the summary and the findings of the study, conclusions drawn from the data and the recommendations for further studies related to this topic.

The case study focused on Pikit, North Cotabato, presenting a compelling finding on how various sectors, particularly those in high-ranking positions, collaborate closely to address the challenges of maintaining peace and order in a locality marked by a high crime rate. Employing the illustrative case study method, this qualitative research aims to understand the roles, initiatives, and cooperation among different sectors in Pikit. Purposive sampling was used to select five participants, each occupying significant positions within their respective sectors, including Police, Barangay officials, Municipal officials, BARMM officials, and LGU officials. Data collection involved interviews, with subsequent coding and thematic analysis applied to derive meaningful insights.

The primary goal of this study was to comprehensively examine the initiatives of various sectors in Pikit and their collaborative efforts in response to the high crime rate. Additionally, the research evaluated the involvement of the Bangsamoro Autonomous

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Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government in addressing the challenges faced by Pikit. Importantly, the study addresses a crucial gap by exclusively gathering information from high-ranking officials in diverse sectors, ensuring the acquisition of valid and authoritative data.

By shedding light on the initiatives, responsibilities, and collaborative endeavors of key stakeholders in Pikit, this study enhances our understanding of the dynamics shaping the municipality's development. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the initiatives and cooperation among these sectors, providing valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers interested in promoting effective multi-sectoral collaboration for community development.

The study's findings demonstrate a notable exhibition of collaboration and shared responsibility among leaders in various sectors. It highlights that these sectors have acknowledged the urgency of the situation, forming a closely-knit network of cooperation in response. Additionally, the study reveals the multifaceted challenges faced by these sectors, with high crime rates being just one concern among several others encountered in their mission to ensure public safety.

Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the different sectors in Pikit, North Cotabato, the study uncovers their diverse commitments and responsibilities. Participants emphasize that their foremost priority is the well-being of the people, emphasizing public service and peace maintenance. They view community needs not as an obligation but as a responsibility entrusted to them in their respective positions. The study also underscores the proactive nature of these sectors in crafting plans tailored to their specific areas of focus. Despite escalating crimes, the study emphasizes that the BARMM government remains dedicated to its goals and missions.

Furthermore, the study reveals that these sectors are aware of Pikit's narrative as a place of persistent crimes. The findings highlight a coordinated approach to public safety and emergency response, particularly through joint operations involving the AFP, PNP, and law enforcement forces of BARMM. The study commends the establishment of committees across sectors, specifically designed for crime prevention and rapid emergency response. These committees serve as dynamic forums where stakeholders collaboratively plan and strategize for a synchronized and immediate response to potential threats.

The research unveils a model of multi-sectoral collaboration, showcasing how joint operations and well-organized committees contribute to a robust local security infrastructure. However, on a less fortunate note, the study reveals that these sectors face challenges in making their security programs effective, with Pikit still being considered a "dangerous" locality. Additionally, the struggle to engage communities, earn trust, and ensure cooperation persists. Despite efforts from different sectors, the study acknowledges that Pikit continues to grapple with capturing and controlling perpetrators, posing an ongoing challenge even with committees, initiative programs, and CCTV cameras.

On the other hand, this study represents an initial exploration into crime prevention, particularly in Pikit, North Cotabato, with a focus on multi-sectoral collaboration across various issues. Given the persisting danger in Pikit, the findings underscore the need to prioritize and enhance community engagement. The study suggests a call for transparent and inclusive communication among community officials and different sectors, acknowledging ongoing efforts to improve community engagement. The emphasis lies in establishing regular feedback channels and actively seeking public opinions to cultivate trust and partnerships between the community and security forces. By integrating local insights, concerns, and perceptions into the planning and execution of initiatives, a more thorough understanding of the ground-level situation can be attained. Furthermore, encouraging citizens to be proactive involves promoting awareness and community engagement through activities like neighborhood watch programs and safety workshops, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Modern crime prevention utilizes technology, informants, and community engagement for information gathering, incorporating surveillance systems and anonymous tip lines to build trust between the community and law enforcement. Increasing police visibility through regular patrols serves as a deterrent, reassuring the community and allowing officers to engage, gather information, and build positive relationships, contributing to a comprehensive strategy for creating safer neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the study highlights a critical need for increased collaboration in security initiatives and the deployment of additional security forces, emphasizing various levels of cooperation with the National Government, Regional Government, BARMM, and the local government of Pikit. To address identified gaps, it is essential to enhance the connection between the Province of North Cotabato and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Pikit.

The study strongly advocates for improved efforts from both the province and the LGU of Pikit to create a cohesive response to the challenges posed by high crime rates. Enhancing collaboration between the two entities will facilitate the development of a coordinated and effective security strategy, potentially involving additional resources, improved communication, and joint planning aligned with community needs.

A reinforced partnership between the province and the LGU of Pikit will contribute to a seamless integration of security forces and resources, ensuring a more efficient and responsive security apparatus. The study underscores the importance of mutual support and coordination to maximize the impact of security measures, creating a safer environment.

On a broader scale, given the prolonged danger and ongoing challenges in Pikit, the findings implied for a need to strengthen national government involvement in the area to address the urgent issue of escalating crimes. Drawing a parallel to a comparable situation

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in Brazil in 2015, characterized by police strikes, violent protests, street crime, and armed conflict, which resulted in a high number of deaths, the Brazilian government responded by deploying its national security forces. The government employed assertive, sometimes lethal tactics to counter the increasing levels of instability and violence (Chavy, 2017). Furthermore, since this study mainly focus on the various sectors who are in the higher positions, future researchers can also include public opinion to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives mentioned by these sectors and to have a better look at the ground level perspective of the community, by using a different type of approach or tool to fit the aimed result.

In conclusion, the study recommends a proactive approach to strengthen the connection and cooperation between the Province, National Government and the LGU of Pikit, focusing on security initiatives and the deployment of security forces. This collaborative effort is crucial for addressing multifaceted challenges and ensuring a comprehensive response to prevailing security concerns in the region.

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