



Framing the Bangsamoro Construct of Participatory Governance: The Youth in its Governance Framework

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Abstract

Bangsamoro moral governance is a novel concept and there are no studies yet situating the youth in its governance framework. This research is an initial attempt to analyze where participatory mechanisms have been enshrined in law to ensure meaningful participation by the youth in governance. To establish this, the researcher reviewed one-hundred and twenty-two (122) resolutions passed by the BTA-Parliament within a given period and juxtaposed them with the foundational principles enshrined in the Philippine Constitution. Data analysis is primarily textual, guided by social constructivism and governance theory as frameworks of analysis. An inductive-qualitative method was used as part of discursive deconstruction, which supports the objective of an interpretive (textual) analysis of each resolution considered in the conduct of research by allowing the researcher to establish the construction of meaning in light of Bangsamoro culture, context, and time. Key findings reveal that first, the Bangsamoro construct of participatory governance is inflexibly framed from four identified sources, which entails a very restrictive leeway to encourage participation. Second, the foundational principles of moral governance must be reexamined, as they are indicative of how moral governance is to be achieved. A reexamination may entail a re-interpretation to a more progressive stance on youth participation, especially in crafting legislations. Third, the Bangsamoro youth fit the governance framework by being encouraged to be able to freely participate in the political process, with an assured seat for sectoral representation. However, this poses a challenge on the quality of representation of the youth sector as matter of policy.

Keywords: Participatory governance, Moral governance, Bangsamoro government

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1. Introduction

The passage of Republic Act (RA) 11054 on July 24, 2018 provided for the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) supplanting the previously existing Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Bangsamoro governance (*moral* governance, framed from Islamic holy sources) is the Bangsamoro's overarching policy guideline in the implementation of all proposed infrastructure programs, activities, projects, and services (PAPs). It serves as a paradigm and a mindset of all Bangsamoro government stakeholders, free from all forms of corruption

and improved service delivery (Bangsamoro Development Plan, henceforth, the BDP) anchored on the following: (1) cognizance of God, (2) moral and ethical values, (3) vicegerency and upholding trust, and (4) striving for excellence. However, although among its dozen pillars of moral governance are consultation and inclusivity, the BDP is vague on *where* and *how* its citizens may participate within the processes of governance in the region.

Citizen participation, particularly the youth, in governance structures is essential as they are active political actors in peace and conflict (Huesca, Jr., 2019) especially in Mindanao. We recognize the fact that the youth

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(specifically, youth organizations) contribute to peacebuilding at the grassroots level (Berowa, 2024), as they are also active recipients of peace and civic education in the BARMM (Berowa, 2024). The youth have also been active agents in supporting the causes of the MILF long before the establishment of the BARMM, due to two factors: first is proximity to the MILF camps and ancillary communities, and second, kinship ties (Podder, 2012). Being active agents, the youth are being molded to take a lead role in the future of Bangsamoro whereby their participation in governance is not just essential but, even more so, critical to the process of governance. However, this is not made explicit anywhere even in the Bangsamoro Local Governance Code of 2020. Instead, the Bangsamoro Parliament had passed Autonomy Act Number 10, establishing the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) on February 28, 2020, in recognition of the “vital role” of the youth in nation-building. Nevertheless, governance has been identified as one of the priority agenda as the center for youth participation and development in the Bangsamoro region (Bangsamoro Youth Transition Priority Agenda, 2020), inclusive of health, education, peace-building and security, and active citizenship.

With the challenging social construct of *moral* governance, and the inexplicit dimension of citizen (specifically, the youth) participation in its development plan and its code of governance, the present paper deems to answer three pressing concerns: First is on how the Bangsamoro government framed and constructed participatory governance in light of its capacity to achieve specific goals; second, is on how and where do the Bangsamoro youth fit within its own governance framework; and third, to identify the windows of opportunity that are deemed open for youth engagement in the Bangsamoro construct of participatory governance.

2. Methodology

This research endeavor is both qualitative and descriptive; it is qualitative in the sense that it attempts to engage in an in-depth analysis of government documents and research data from published research materials using the discursive method. Also, it is descriptive because it selects from a finite number of materials using systematic inference

with the aim of describing the concept of moral governance.

The research considers the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) as its research setting. This research was done at the height of the pandemic in the last quarter of 2020 where strict travel restrictions were imposed, thus data sources were drawn from the website of the Bangsamoro Parliament, specific to the intent of establishing how the youth are empowered through participatory governance as framed by (and within) the Bangsamoro governance framework. The instruments of research are archived sources and government documents. The method is as follows: First, published documents and sources on governance are initially selected when they mention two keywords: Bangsamoro and Governance. Then the materials are broken down into a classification of three: definition, concern (focus), and method of participation. The classified documents are then cross-tabulated to answer the question *how* – specifying varied forms participation. These are then analyzed in the context of the framework of social constructivism and governance theory, whose relevant concepts are discussed in the section that follows. Purposively, the researcher acquired and examined copies of all the 122 resolutions passed by the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA) until the inception of the Bangsamoro Parliament from March 19, 2019 until March 25, 2021, and closely examined each document using the process previously mentioned for reference to youth participation in Bangsamoro governance. The process is done manually, without the assistance of electronic or artificial intelligence applications. These documents are made available for purposes of transparency at <https://parliament.bangsamoro.gov.ph/resolutions/>.

The method of data analysis is primarily textual as guided by social constructivism and governance theory as its frameworks of analysis. An inductive-qualitative method was used to critically analyze the texts as part of discursive deconstruction.

Frameworks of analysis

In political science theory, constructivism is an approach to discipline with

an anti-foundationalist ontological position having an interpretivist epistemology; this in turn, privileges a qualitative methodology. Let us simplify these, seemingly, technical jargon of the discipline. An anti-foundationalist ontological position means that no objective truth exists independently of the knowledge of the observer/actor since reality is a mere social construction. The superstructure of known truths is bounded by the social world by which the actor derives meaning, hence, his or her ideas are tainted, influenced and shaped by that which he or she draws meaning from. An interpretivist epistemological position simply entails that what can be known from that which exists can be derived from the world as interpreted by actors themselves – a hermeneutic level – or that an actor's interpretation can be interpreted by another (an observer) – as a double hermeneutic. In addition, though the relationship of ontology and epistemology are “contested” (Furlong & Marsh, 2010), the authors assert that the relationship of these two results to a path-dependence in terms of its research methodology – in the case of constructivism, qualitative methods are privileged, as is the case in this research.

Constructivism as an approach to political science, considers politics as driven by the denotations that actors ascribe to their actions and their respective individual context (Marsh and Stoker, 2010). Seminal work on constructivism has defined actors as referring to individuals and/or collectivities (Kratochwil, 1989), whose actions are governed by certain rules and norms. Accordingly, these actions are made meaningful only within an “intersubjectively understood context.” In addition, as deduced from this great text is the fact that actions are always driven by motives, and motives come because of the aptitude to think. This capacity to reason is, accordingly, the standard criterion for cognitive competence (Onuf, 1989). However, this competence develops only over time as individuals deal with a socially constructed reality, and that reality is not just an assemblage of rules, but rather, of multifarious practices. Acting within the boundary set by rules, the actor's interactions would constitute a social structure where these actors engage in meaningful action made in consideration of the demeanor of others. These ideas derived from canonical

texts of constructivism shall inform and figure in our analysis in the present endeavor.

However, an approach is only constructivist to the extent that it argues that subjective construction of meaning of some sort affects what people do (Parsons, 2010). What is distinctive about constructivism is its being enthralled with the role of interpretation (the constant construction and reconstruction of meaning) in human action, the supposed intersubjective understanding of context - shared meanings - as initially propounded by Kratochwil (1989). Thus, the meanings we attach to certain actions creates the context by which further actions and interactions are defined and further limited through the institutionalization of structures of meaning and interpretations.

For constructivists, ideas, norms, or identities do have “constitutive power”. The process of social construction, otherwise also known as meaning-making, through which people arrive at their conceptions, norms or identities are subjective to context, cognition and shared understanding of meaning. Hence, the adoption of certain social constructs comes prior to an arrival at a course of action (Parsons, 2010). However, we must be reminded that Constructivism is not a standalone theory in the discipline of political science, but rather, a broad umbrella of theoretical arguments built upon the idea that people only arrive at certain actions and decisions due to their adoption of certain meanings, their respective ‘social construct’ to interpret or construe the world.

The key concepts of Constructivism are social construction, intersubjectivity, and identity (Hay, 2002). In addition, the striking theoretical stance of constructivism are the following: (1) it allows for the exploration of the conditions of existence of both constants and volatilities in political behavior that are held to be context-dependent; (2) asserts that rationality is dependent on three factors: culture, context, and time; and (3) ideas (in the form of knowledge, norms, and convictions) influence political behavior. Moreover, constructivism's key assumptions are the following: (1) our thought processes play a critical role in the construction of meaning, and hence, our reality, (2) The social and the political are both constitutive intersubjective domains – a product of our social construction, (3) There is no objective social or political

reality that exists independently of our knowledge or understanding of it – hence, all social realms are human constructions, (4) ideational factors are material factors in international relations, and (5) for most constructivists, positivism cannot be in harmony with an interpretivist-intersubjective understanding of reality.

Another framework used by this paper is governance theory. Here, we adopt this definition of Governance: “It is about the rules of collective decision-making in settings where there are a plurality of actors or organizations and where no formal control system can dictate the terms of the relationship between these actors and organizations (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009).” Accordingly, the following are vital elements of this definition:

The first element is *rules*. The rules entrenched within a system of governance can stretch from the methodical to the informal. In studying governance, we are interested in both the methodical structures of decision-making that have been institutionalized, along with the more informal practices, conventions and customs. The authors refer to this as the ‘rules-in-use’, any specific combination of methodical and the non-methodical institutions that have a bearing on the way that a group of people settle what to decide, how to decide, and who shall decide. The second element is *the collective*. Collective decisions are judgments made by collectivity. Collective decisions include concerns of mutual influence and control. Hence in governance arrangements some would dominate the agenda, while others are assigned the burden, an obligation, to accept collective decisions. The third element is *decision-making*. Decision-making can be episodic or periodic, but it may also just be constant, as in the case of organizations and networks of organizations. Collective decisions demand established rules about which personalities can decide what, as well as how these decision-makers can be made accountable. And finally, the fourth element is *authority and coercion*. In governance, no formal control system’ can determine relationships, inclusive of outcomes. Hence, in multi-stakeholder participatory governance, authority and coercion are resources made available to some, under certain arrangements, but never in sufficient quantity or quality to enable them to dominate and unilaterally subjugate others in the process of

decision-making. Politicians may have the advantage of authority, but this can be counterpoised by surgical coercive tactics by coalitions and networks of disadvantaged groups.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Framing Participatory Governance

The definitions of governance mentioned in the extant literature are focused on the *concern* of governance - that of genuine inclusion in decision-making (Bingham, Nabatchi & O’Leary, 2005; Singh, Ansari & Singh, 2009; Chhotray & Stoker, 2009) - which differs from that of the Bangsamoro construct. Instead of looking at the concern of governance – how decisions are arrived at – the Bangsamoro construct of governance was framed from the *source* of governing, and rather focused on *how* to make exclusive decisions. The Bangsamoro construct of governance can only be derived from the Holy *Qur’an* and the *Sunna* (the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), *Qiyas* (analogous reasoning) and *Ijma* (consensus); this is so because Islamic governance, as a political rule, can only be derived from such sources (Bouzenita, 2012). Moral governance per se is a model of governance that balances the sociopolitical aspect of government activities and the ethical side (Bangsamoro Development Plan, 2020), guided by the principles of cognizance of God, moral and ethical values, vicegerency and upholding trust, and striving for excellence.

The Bangsamoro Chief Minister, Murad Ebrahim Al Haj, considers good governance to stem from a “morally upright” bureaucracy, with an end to building a strong foundation for a better Bangsamoro, by calling it with another name – *moral* governance. Moral governance refers to the set of rules, practices and processes completely devoid of all evils of graft and corruption, and explicitly driven by moral principles of utmost dedication, devotion, honesty, justice and integrity (Mindanao People’s Caucus, 2020). In short, Bangsamoro governance is moral because it is framed from holy sources, but at the same time anchored on the rule of law, the promotion of good governance, and democratic values enshrined in the Philippine Constitution.

Moral Governance and its foundational principles

In order to closely examine the principles where *moral* governance is anchored on, they have to be juxtaposed with the provisions of the law or the resolutions passed by the BTA-Parliament, as these are deemed to be indicative of its intent. The first principle is that of rule of law. As a constitutional principle, the rule of law, as defined by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) under the Philippine Development Plan of 2011-2016, indicates that the “government adheres to the impersonal and impartial application of stable predictable laws, statutes, rules and regulations, without regard for social status or political considerations.” It is the application of law constructed to apply to all regardless of class, partisan allegiance, or any other ‘special’ consideration. In the case of the Bangsamoro, punitive laws are covered by the Shariah (Islamic) Law. It is commonly known amongst Muslims that the Shariah is drawn from four sources: The holy Qur’an, the *Sunna* (*hadith*, or teachings of the Prophet Muhammad) *Qiyas* (analogical reasoning) and *Ijma* (juridical consensus). However, in consideration of the resolutions passed by the BTA-parliament, only two resolutions passed out of 122 pertain to the rule of law – Resolution 80 (Deep concern over the Moro killings in Polomolok and Tupi, South Cotabato) and Resolution 91 (Condemning the rape- slay of a 16-year-old from Kabacan, North Cotabato) respectively, urging the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice. The very few resolutions passed for the application of (punitive) laws within a span of two years is indicative of dismal failure and possibly due to the hesitation in the application of the Shariah knowing that enforcing Islamic punishment at the outset may be negatively perceived as they run counter to the Philippine provision of criminal justice.

The second principle is the promotion of good governance. Good governance is the functional and constructive cooperation between the State and its citizens (Keping, 2017), in this sense the Bangsamoro government and the Bangsamoro people, and critical to its success is the *quality* of participation of the latter - for purposes of the present paper, the youth - in political administration. However, governance is only

qualified to be “good” if it is participatory and at the same time consensus-oriented (Singh, Ansari & Singh, 2009), associating good governance with efficient and effective administration under a democratic framework. However, only two legislations passed by the BTA are relevant to the concept of good governance; one that explicitly encourages youth participation – Resolution No. 19 (Calling for the active participation of the youth in the administration of the Bangsamoro government) and two, Resolution No. 26 (The urgent need to constitute the intergovernmental relations body or the IGR of the Bangsamoro government), the latter being essential for effective governance. The passage of Resolution No. 19 confirms Archon Fung’s (2006) notion that, indeed, the selection of *who* participates is decided by the government; and with the passage of Resolution No. 26, the very same government has also decided on the ‘mechanism of involvement’ of those it allows to participate in the process. These very few resolutions passed to promote good governance is an indication of a morbid disposition towards participatory governance knowing that, though Islam is not antithetical to democracy, the ‘legal positivistic framework’ of traditionalist and Islamicist scholars (Malik, 2019) are a pervasive social construction and interpretation in Bangsamoro governance.

The third foundational principle for Bangsamoro governance is democratic values, such as free speech, social justice and democratic decision-making, among others. Freedom of speech is a constitutionally guaranteed right for every Filipino citizen (Art 3, sec. 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution) inclusive of the Bangsamoro, and can be deduced from RA 11054 (Art. 4, sec. 3), where social justice is made explicit (Art. 4, sec. 7), especially in the passage of Resolution No. 43 (Creation of a Bureau for orphans and widows who are victims of war and violence), and No. 45 (Inclusive and equitable distribution of Bangsamoro resources). Democratic decision-making, however, can be derived from RA 11054 (sections 2,3, and 4), as well as from the Islamic concept of *mushawarrah* (consultation). This latter value, democratic decision-making, is exactly what Speer (2012) refers to as ‘arrangements of participatory governance’ which are actual strategies for increased government responsiveness and

quality of service. The non-provision of free speech under the RA 11054 is an indicator of the ‘legal positivistic framework’ (Malik, 2019), meaning not everyone has a voice in Bangsamoro decision-making, only those who are “called” to participate may do so, very characteristic of Ehteshami’s (2003) *Shura* councils. Whether the BTA Parliament members admit it or not, their normative construction (and interpretation) of participatory governance is highly influenced by culture and context (Hay, 2002), that these would be made obvious if the national leadership had not appointed the BTA membership initially, but instead allowed the Bangsamoro to elect their leaders.

However, we need to be reminded that the essence of governance lies in its commitment to provide non-state actors with meaningful public spaces of engagement to be part of the process of policy development (Edwards et al., n.d.) or in decision-making. This makes the Bangsamoro conception of governance different, because of the way it was framed which redirected its focus from that of inclusion (the general conception of governance), to the problematic on *how* to rule.

Problematic framing

Due to the framing of governance focused on this problematic on *how* to rule, this ‘intersubjectively understood context’ of governance amongst the BTA members has dire consequences on their considerations for legislation, along with the consequent approved resolutions. The BTA legislation - in the form of resolutions – have instead focused on commending certain personalities for self-serving achievements (Resolution No. 18, 59, 71, 110) and sympathy messages for those who died (Resolution No. 11, 21, 46, 86, 87, 92, 103, 112), as well as Ramadhan allowances for BARMM Employees (Resolution No. 120). All of these are pieces of legislation that consumed valuable time and financial resources. And in addition, despite the framing of moral governance, the BTA members enacted Resolution No. 93 to extend their terms until June 30, 2025. Here the supposed *moral* governance narrative espoused by the Bangsamoro government has already been broken at the outset, as they have been unable to deliver the responsibilities required of them. Upon examination of the 122 BTA resolutions

within the defined timeframe, there is no indication of any of these legislations to have empowered citizens, the youth, or non-state actors to be able to share in, or at least have a say in, the control of the processes of public decision-making that affect the lives of Bangsamoro.

3.2 The youth in the Bangsamoro governance framework

Both the Bangsamoro Development Plan and the Bangsamoro Code of Governance are silent on the salience of youth participation in its governance framework. However, Resolution No. 19 of the BTA, adopted on July 29, 2019, legally enshrined active youth participation in the Bangsamoro Government. The resolution reiterates the following: (1) the critical role of the youth in nation-building, (2) encourages their involvement in public and civil affairs, (3) emphasizes youth development programs for their adaptive capacity, (4) recognizes the value of youth leadership, (5) provides for the sustained youth involvement in character building and development activities for civic efficiency, and (6) participation in structure of policy-making and program implementation. Nonetheless, the aforesaid resolution does not specify *how*. Consequently, on February 28, 2020, the BTA passed the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act Number 10, which created the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) and defining its powers, functions, and responsibilities. These are the only two legislations out of one hundred and twenty-two (122) within a span of two (2) years since the creation of the BTA which specifically mentions youth participation in the administration of the Bangsamoro government. This brings to the fore the reality that the BTA members had been preoccupied with superficial legislations that lack substantive contributions to the real issue of governance – collective decision-making.

In addition, a quick visit to the BYC website (<https://byc.bangsamoro.gov.ph>) and checking in on their programs for and involving the youth would indicate that the pages for these specific programs for the youth are still “under construction”, almost five years after the Commission’s inception. To be fair, however, the youth participation in United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) Bangsamoro Youth Ideation Impact Challenge (IIC), or the

exploration of BYC of the possible collaboration with the Ateneo School of Government (on policy research and program development), or even the Bangsamoro youth involvement in the OPAPRU's (Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity) five-point youth peace and security agenda are commendable, but all are lacking in transparency, as they do not disclose how these delegation were chosen from among the Bangsamoro youth.

Participation as a construct

Participation, however, is a social construct, it is an individual's decision to make meaningful interactions with existing state structures, and is primarily driven by selfish interests, though shaped and further reshaped by the quality of those interactions with the aforementioned structures. Participation is also a choice, made to further advance one's interests, albeit advertently or inadvertently also affecting others of similar interests. Nonetheless, the current leaders of the Bangsamoro parliament intended the Bangsamoro Parliament to be a parliament of consultation and consensus-building (Yusingco, 2021). This is done so by allowing people to freely participate in the political process (RA 11054 Art. 4, Sec. 3), and giving them a reserved seat for the youth sector in Parliament (Art. VII, sec.7c). In addition, the Chairperson of the BYC is part of the expanded cabinet of the Chief Minister (Sec. 5, par. 2, Bangsamoro Autonomy Act. Number 10). These windows of opportunity accorded to them in the formal decision-making structure are governed by rules (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009) that define the interaction of the youth with the policy-making body of the Bangsamoro, the Parliament. Citizen involvement in decision-making makes citizenships in the context of participation (Turnhout, Van Bommel & Aarts, 2010). Being citizens and stakeholders, the youth need to engage with decision-makers. As citizens interact with BARMM officials, this would construct and institute new forms of interactions between citizens and officials, thus also defining and redefining the concept of "rules-in-use" in those interactions (Parsons, 2010). Given this, with very few opportunities in the formal arena, the Bangsamoro youth should then mobilize and organize themselves

into networks, an assemblage of youth networks in informal settings that can meaningfully make decisions as a collective, before their formal representative(s) engage with the members of the Parliament. This can only be done if the youth's "process of social construction" (Parsons, 2010) allows them to see how powerful their constructed identities can be especially when they move in unison in great numbers.

Meaningful participation is a social construction. A socially constructed reality simply means that when we attribute meaning to certain actions, these would be constitutive (Parsons, 2010) of an understanding of that reality. Take the case for example of the meaning attached to political participation, which is primarily an act. The meaning of this act is defined by its intent as well as its perceived effect; as the intent of participation is to influence decision-making, this entails the understanding that when one participates, he not only attempts to influence, but also empowers himself and the ideas and notions he represents. As in peace negotiations, among the reasons for active youth participation in the peace process are sense of duty, a desire to contribute and be part of the solution, as well as engagement in gainful activities (Alar, 2017). The meaning attached to participation in, as well as the passionate conviction to, the peace process is a product of social construction, understood intersubjectively by the Bangsamoro youth to be a positive aspect of democratic processes. Clearly, their political behavior, in a very constructivist sense, is shaped by the idea – a very deep understanding - that their participation is relevant, necessary, and critical to the peace process, as the lives and the future of the Bangsamoro people depend upon it.

Furthermore, the perceived effect of participation does not end with the feeling of being empowered or its desired effect, but the trust that one's participation translates to better policy formulation and better decision-making processes.

4. Conclusions

First, the Bangsamoro construct of participatory governance is framed from four sources: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, *Qiyas* and the *Ijma*. These sources are not subject to any amendment at any time, and they are

permanently fixed, which can only be re-interpreted by a distinguished selection of scholars of the Islamic schools when absolutely necessary, but never to veer away from its original interpretation. This rigidity is purposely so such that ordinary men will not bend the rules (or its interpretation) to its maximum limits (without breaking them) to favor or further their self-serving agenda. Particularly, the Qur'an is already perfect by itself, establishing the Islamic way of life for Muslims, as well as for reverts. What is clear at the fore is that the Bangsamoro construct of governance, owing to its rigid sources, thus shifts the focus of governance from that of inclusive decision-making, to one of exclusivity as it redirects this focus on how to rule. As the BTA-Parliament decides on *who* participates with its ardent call for the youth to participate in governance (with BTA-Parliament Resolution No, 19) to the exclusion of all others, and on *how* they participate within structurally imbedded rules, they have inadvertently redefined participatory governance. To redefine is to reconceptualize the concept in light of its applicability, not just for purposes of comparison as Sartori (1970) puts it, but rather its immediate meaning as perceived by its intended beneficiary, the Bangsamoro youth, who are active partners in building a better *Bangsa* (nation) within the BARMM.

The way forward to ensure inclusive, thus participatory, Bangsamoro governance is to actively recast and redefine the rules that delimit participation through the democratic process of legislation by majority vote by the members of Parliament. It is recommended that legislative measures be proposed in Parliament, and be subject to majority vote, to hasten or at least enable maximum participation of the Bangsamoro constituency either through consultative assemblies or assemblies established for the purpose of popular consultations. These consultations will inform the august body of the Parliament of the real needs of the people – including sectors of women, the youth, the elderly, the poor, and the physically challenged and differently abled, among others – and be represented by their respective sectoral representatives in turn.

Second, the foundational principles of *moral* governance – rule of law, good governance and democratic values must be

reexamined in the light of resolutions passed by the BTA-Parliament as they are indicative of how this form of governance is to be achieved. Mere lip service to the spirit of the law does not change the fact that legislations passed are reflective of the social reality that appointed members of the BTA Parliament are not novices in governance but are rather geniuses of manipulation and persuasion who have mastered the art of politics. At the end of the day, it is the Bangsamoro people who would suffer the most when private interests reign in a game of deception masquerading itself as representatives of the interests of the Bangsamoro.

It is recommended that transparency and accountability be enshrined as legislations by the Bangsamoro Parliament in order to counter practices that are counter-productive in Bangsamoro governance. Appointive positions must be merit-based and have clear-cut expiration dates, and elective positions must be truly reflective of the voice of the majority; thus, perhaps calling for the pushing forward of the scheduled Bangsamoro elections as scheduled, minus the postponement and delays from the national leadership.

Third, the Bangsamoro youth fit the governance framework by being able to freely participate in the political process (RA 11054 Art. 4, Sec. 3), as well as having been given a seat for sectoral representation in the Bangsamoro Parliament (Art. VII, sec.7c). These are opportunity mechanisms where the youth may channel their synergies in networks of organized interests in order to further the causes of the youth. The BTA-Parliament has provided the path for participation, the youth should take meaningful action to achieve tangible results not just in terms of policy direction, but most especially in terms of results. Legislations, in the form of resolutions, that not only broaden avenues for meaningful participation, but policies that effectively discharge from the barrel the real gamut of *moral* governance must be the target. This should include permanent eradication of any form of corruption – be it in the form of extended term limits, consumption of state resource on non-trivial legislations and pronouncements, or even commendations to personalities whose achievements have not even benefitted the ordinary Bangsamoro. Transparency and accountability will follow if

the Bangsamoro leadership is serious about this aim.

Finally, participation in governance of the Bangsamoro youth are indeed encouraged and have been evident in their active participation in the peace process, however, meaningful participation in the Bangsamoro governance framework is yet to materialize as the avenue for participation is solely dependent on the ability of the Bangsamoro Youth Commission and its leadership to engage with the arrangements of participatory governance made available to the youth by the present governance structures of the Bangsamoro as defined.

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