

Interpersonal Relationships in Post-Conflict Governance: The Case of Bangsamoro

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Abstract

Interpersonal relationships and friendships play a pivotal role in post-conflict governance, particularly in transitional settings like the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Philippines. This study examines how relational dynamics shape decision-making, trust-building, and collaboration within the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), a diverse governing body composed of representatives from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), both former rebel groups, as well as the Lumads and Christians. Given the region's complex historical and political landscape, informal networks, kinship ties, and trust-building mechanisms play a crucial role in decision-making, collaboration, and conflict resolution. While these relationships can foster inclusivity and enhance governance effectiveness, they may also reinforce factionalism and historical grievances.

Through qualitative research methods, including, in-depth interviews, findings reveal that strong interpersonal relationships foster trust, accelerate consensus-building, and enhance governance efficiency. The abolition of the majority-minority bloc system in the second transition phase (Fiscal Year 2022-2025) facilitated unity, reducing factional divisions and improving legislative processes. BTA Members of the Parliament who developed trust-based relationships across ethno-religious groups successfully bridged historical divides, leading to more effective policymaking and institutional strengthening. Informal social interactions, such as non-legislative meetings and shared spaces, played a critical role in fostering cooperation.

This study provides valuable insights into how relational dynamics shape governance in post-conflict societies, offering practical strategies for inclusive governance, peacebuilding, and a long-term political stability- a crucial contribution to global discussions on transitional governance and conflict resolution.

Keywords

Bangsamoro, interpersonal relationship, peacebuilding, post-conflict governance, transition.