or character traits. For some participants, people are poor because they are indolent, fatalistic, and selfish. Poverty is thus represented as brought about by one’s lack of faith and effort as well as one’s lack of concern for other people.

Poverty is Social: Krimen
Poverty was also represented as the cause of many social problems, such as overpopulation, crime, and vices. The Muslim, Christian, and Badjao participants saw poverty as one of the major contributors to the increase in population as poor people are perceived as bearing too many children. Poverty is also tied to criminality or criminal acts as some people are forced to engage in crime because of poverty. Thus, the poor are also depicted as involved in illegal activities including robbery, illegal logging, kidnapping, prostitution, and vote-selling, in their desire to meet their families’ basic needs. Poverty is also associated with vices such as drug addiction and pornography. Poor people are oftentimes described as the tambay (bum) and nalululong sa bisyo (people indulging in vices or immoral conduct).

Poverty was also associated with pollution, environmental degradation, and natural calamities. The people of Jolo saw poverty as linked to pollution brought about by basura (garbage) as well as with having a filthy and unpleasant environment. The social meanings of poverty were also strongly related to environmental degradation and natural calamities such as typhoons, earthquakes, and floods. Poverty was also understood as linked to conflict among different groups of people. Thus, kidnappings, killings, robberies, bombings, clan wars, tribal fighting, war, and even terrorism occur because of poverty. As a result of these acts of violence and aggression, unity and peace among different groups are severely compromised.

Poverty is Political: Kurapsyon
For the ordinary people of Jolo, poverty is inextricably intertwined with a poor and deficient system of government – a corrupt government with bulok na sistema (rotten system), a government where officials undertake pagnanakaw sa pondo ng mamamayan (stealing from the people’s money), and a government that runs on palakasan system where relatives and close friends of those in power are provided with political and economic favors and where power is concentrated in the hands of a few families. Thus, they attributed poverty to a political structure characterized by abuse of power, political dynasties, and nepotism. Poverty is associated with injustice, as manifested in how people in power take advantage of the poor and powerless. Moreover, the connection between poverty and injustice is also illustrated through human