

- **Population size of the Sama Badjaos over time (by location)**

Notes on the population data:

- The datasets only cover 2000 and 2010 as these were the only census data that had categorized individuals by their ethnicity
  - The 1939, 1948, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 censuses do not provide such a metric
  - The 2020 census is not yet made available with respect to particular characteristics
    - Only the general population count as of 2020 is made public
- The 2000 census groups together Badjaos and Sama Dilaut
  - This was based off of the census report 2 which distinguishes the ethnicities per region
- The 2010 census distinguishes from Badjao, Sama Badjao (categorized as Sama Badajo which isn't an ethnicity when I was searching), Sama/Samal, and Sama Dilaut
  - The data was based off of each of the province/city census report 2A of 2010
  - I originally didn't include Sama/Samal since there had been conflicting sources on whether or not it is the overarching ethnicity that the Sama-Badjao come from
- I had thought of contacting the NCIP but they had been unresponsive on the FOI platform so I did not proceed with it since there were other people who asked the same data (badjao population) yet remained unanswered to this day

- **Governance Structure**

- The Sama-Badjaos' governance structure is called Panglima
  - This system still exists in Badjao villages but it no longer as prevalent as in the past
  - The Panglima, or the leader, was informally defined but was unquestioned by the community
    - All tribal activities were dependent on him and his decisions were respected by all
  - Currently, the power of the Panglima has been transferred to the heads of the barangay / LGU and now serves a more symbolic purpose

- **Access to resources**

- Education of Sama-Badjaos are insufficient due to a multitude of factors:
  - Most teachers are unwilling to move to the Sama-Badjao communities
  - Most Sama-Badjao children are faced with discrimination and often result in them getting bullied which affects the quality of their education and would lead them to dropping out
  - Sama-Badjaos would spend many hours of their day fishing which would often conflict with regular schooling hours
  - Financial problems making it infeasible for one to finish schooling
- As a result of their education, they are often forced to fish as a means of livelihood or even piracy due to their lack of alternatives
  - They lack the proper capital to keep up with the overfishing of modern fishing practices and technology
  - They don't have the qualifications to pursue any other formal means of employment
  - So, they may resort to illegal means of fishing like fish-bombing or cyanide poisoning
- Though, female Sama-Badjaos engage seaweed farming, mat weaving, and being a maid, while the men work as fishermen, porters, and street vendors
  - Though Badjaos are known for their mat-weaving, the problem lies in its relatively capital intensive nature which most of the Badjao population are unable to support, especially as their primary focus lies in short term survival
- Their incomes are not enough to support their large family sizes and so would often result in pulling children out of school in order to help their family survive through begging or even scavenging
- Most social programs provided by the government remain inaccessible to the Badjaos and instead, the private sector provides greater support through charity foundations or religious organizations

- **History**

- The exact origins of the Sama-Badjao remain uncertain due to the existence of varying accounts from external writers and even within the Badjao oral traditions alike
  - Starting with the first European report of sea nomads in the Malacca region in 1511
  - Magellan's crew then spotted them near modern-day Zamboanga in 1521
    - They noted that these people made dwellings in boats and do not live otherwise
  - In 1675, Dutch colonial officials then wrote of boat-dwellers in Celebes
  - Thomas Forrest also encountered these people in Celebes and in eastern Borneo in the 1770's
  - In 1839, the British mention the Mergui Island boat-dwellers for the first time
- One historical account links the Sama Dilaut to the Samal in Johore who migrated to the Philippines in the early 14th century
  - The Sama Dilaut were initially boat dwellers and later built stilt houses near fertile fishing grounds
- Another theory suggests that the Sama Dilaut were originally part of the land-based Sama group but they adopted a boat-dwelling lifestyle due to their occupation
- Blumentritt differentiated the Samal Laut and the Badjao as two distinct groups from one another, saying that the Badjao arrived after the Samal Laut
- The Sama-Dilaut people's history in the Philippines began in Zamboanga around 1,000 AD with settlements along the Basilan Strait and Zamboanga City
  - The Sama groups established settlements on various islands in the Sulu area as it became a trading center, preceding the arrival of the Tausug
  - The Sama Dilaut were known by many names such as: Lutao, Orang Laut, Bajau, and Samal-Laut
    - They inhabited the coasts and seas of Southern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago
  - Spanish and American influences on the Sama Badjaos were minimal due to their territory falling under Muslim Filipinos, although they were less influenced by Islam
- Displacement of by non-Sama migrants, particularly the Tausug, has affected the Sama Dilaut, leading to their movement to different areas in the Philippines
  - The Sama Dilaut faced challenges like war, pirate invasions, and the rise of dynamite fishing, prompting their migration northward
  - Sama Dilaut settlements can be found in various coastal areas (riverbanks and urban centers) throughout the Visayan islands and Luzon
- Traditional Sama Dilaut locations (e.g. Tawi-Tawi) have experienced a decline in population while settlements in other areas have grown

- **Culture, lifestyle, and religion**

- Badjaos have a varied culture considering how spread out they are and the various subgroups that have formed with respect to their respective environments, but one of the core elements of their identity is their relationship with the sea
    - Even though they are primarily known for their sea-oriented lifestyle where they live on boats, catch fish, and etc., since the mid-20th century, they've been forced to assimilate into the land-based communities of the archipelago
      - We have thus seen most of the Sama-Badjaos settle in stilt houses and communities still near the shore
  - Earlier on in their history while they were still predominantly boat-dwellers, the Sama-Badjaos would live as fishermen, pearl divers, boat builders, sea merchants, and even pirates
    - This orientation towards maritime activities comes as a result of their proximity to the sea in addition to their hostile conditions in their homeland
    - Because of their strong connection with the sea, their cultural norms also reflect a strong rejection of a sedentary, terrestrial lifestyle and there usually is a strong dissonance and adapting period if they do choose to go to land
      - Forbids the consumption of meat and eggs
      - They get physically sick if they venture too deep into land and feel nauseous in the absence of the motions of the sea
  - Their mobile communities also allowed them to merely avoid terrestrial communities (with more advanced boats, fishing techniques, and etc.) that would encroach upon their lifestyle but this also meant that they had a limited access to natural resources which hindered their own capability to innovate in such manner
  - Currently, the Sama-Badjao categorize themselves into three demographics:
    - Sama-Dilaut – fully sea-oriented
    - Sama-Lipid – use the sea for economic benefit while living on shallow waters
    - Pangutaran Sama – farmers who have a basic connection to the sea
  - To be a Sama-Badjao, the following criteria must be met:
    - To be from the region
    - To adopt the Sama-Badjao lifestyle
    - To convert to Islam
  - Conversely, for a Sama-Badjao to settle down and live in land would mean to lose their identity as Sama-Badjaos
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- Predominantly Muslim population considering their proximity to Muslim communities in the Sulu archipelago and Malaysia but they would retain features of their belief system in their faith
    - Granted the integration of their traditional religion with Islamic Sama culture, they are still considered pagan by the surrounding muslim communities like in Tawi-Tawi

- Though some members who've migrated to the other regions of the country have opted-in to Christianity as a means of social mobility / assimilation, redefining their ethnic identity in Davao city, and the discrimination by other Muslims who believe the Sama-Badjao to be people once cursed by Allah
- Origin Stories
  - Three types of myths:
    - Explaining the origin of life, death, and natural phenomena
    - Explaining how that Badjao came to Sulu
    - Explaining how the Badjao became boat-dwellers
  - There is great variation with these myths and legends depending on the community, region, and even the individual that have somewhat different facts
  - Few Badjao actually accept these stories literally but the vast majority of them acknowledge their underlying theme (i.e. the Badjao are outsiders or recently arrived in the area)
- Spirits
  - Most of the supernatural beings, for Badjaos, are innumerable and found everywhere around them
    - On the sea, deep under the sea, on the shore, atop the trees, deep in the mountains, and even underground
    - Their characteristics vary:
      - Sometimes they're visible, but most of the time they aren't
      - They can possess objects and beings
      - They may be hideous or beautiful
      - And so many other aspects
    - Devout believers conduct small rituals to the spirits during routine activities while some conduct rituals only during times of crisis whereas some few even express disbelief in the spirits
  - There are five general categories of spirits that are not exclusive of one another (except for Tuhan)
    - Saitan - supernatural beings who were never humans
      - Can cause illness, bad luck, and/or misfortune
      - The spirits of evil land-dwellers sometimes become saitan
      - The name is of Islamic origin but the belief in these spirits predates the arrival of Islam
      - They are most encountered during the night
      - It brings misfortune either out of having been disturbed or due to their inherent nature
      - Amulets and rituals may be done to discourage saitan
        - Ex. If boughs of citrus trees are placed upon the houseboat of a newly born child, the saitan are unlikely to harm the child
    - Ummagged - spirits of once living people
      - All creatures have ummagged but the most important to the badjao are the ummagged of once living people

- People should be treated with respect not just in life but also after death
    - Ummagged may help or harm the living depending on how they are treated
    - Offerings are sometimes made to atone for one's offense or if a badjao is passing by the cemetery islands
  - Tuhan - a supreme being who rarely involves himself in human affairs
    - The badjao's perception of a supreme being who created the world and keeps it functioning though it is of minor importance to the badjao's daily life
    - Tuhan is distinguished with Allah since the latter is associated with the religion of the land-dwellers
    - There was no ceremony conducted for Tuhan nor any offerings required
  - Panguah - remains of once living people who come back to haunt the living
    - It is described as a rotting corpse that haunts the living
    - This happens because its body was not properly bathed before burial or may return to haunt people who were unfair to them / didn't mourn them properly
    - They often are seen on land likely because the badjao believe the land people are cruel and they return to continue their evil deeds after death
  - Ghouls, monsters, and tricksters distinct from above
- Magic
    - Most badjao associate magic with religion as ways to approach the supernatural world
      - Many shamans use magic during curing ceremonies while
    - Two types
      - Anting-anting - wearing of protective amulets
        - Amulets of various sizes and materials are worn or kept offering various types of protection from harmful spirits or in bringing in good fortune
      - Kabolán - recitation of spells and formulas to bring about desired ends
        - Though this is less common, this magic can be used for similar purposes as the anting-anting
    - Magic can also be used for evil as the badjao claim the land people's sorcerers were a common phenomenon
      - Some villages/islands are well known for their sorcerers who use magic to bring illness, misfortune, or even death
  - Djin
    - The djin is able to communicate with spirits to discover causes of illness / misfortune each distinct from one another

- Usually it's passed down to one's child but it's not strictly a matter of inheritance
- The djin is involved in consulting and requesting aid from spirits in treating the illnesses of other badjaos
- Imam
  - People who conduct certain rituals like weddings and incisions
  - Djin are sometimes called imam
  - Sometimes the imam use a copy of the Quran for chanting, more often they don't
    - The chants are memorized and can be recited without such aid
    - Though, the imam don't know the meaning of the chants and can't translate/pronounce any word in the Quran

- **Tradition**

- Considering the many distinctions between Badjaos, Harry Nimmo limits his investigation between the traditions of the boat-dwelling and that of the house-dwelling badjaos
- Boat-dwelling in Tawi-Tawi
  - Family Unit
    - The nuclear family is the building block of Badjao society and it is very self-sufficient
      - Even broken nuclear families will add people so that it approximates the structure of the nuclear household
      - Though this is the most common composition, there still exists considerable variation
  - Because of the frequent movements of Badjao houseboats, the residence in a Badjao moorage on any particular day is different from every other day
    - Newly married Badjao oftentimes move between moorages considering the significance of one's houseboat, where most Badjao's have lived in one particular houseboat their whole lives
    - Badjaos believe that for a good marriage, it is best to marry relatives
      - All Badjaos are in some way related to one another
      - Badjaos can marry any relatives except siblings of parents and grandparents, grandparents, and members of the nuclear family
      - Love remains a significant factor in Badjao marriage and the couple will then communicate with their parents to who will take care of the formalities
    - The husband is the head of the household and is always with the family for every hour of the day
      - This then establishes the tight-knit families that are commonplace in Badjao communities
      - Even though the husband is the head, his wife must still be consulted with before decisions are made
        - The husband is responsible for fishing, repairing and maintaining the boat
        - The wife cooks, gathers firewood and good, and assists in fishing
        - Both are actively involved in caring for the children
  - Family Alliance Unit
    - This is the sets of boats of the siblings and family of the couples that travel together with the nuclear family
      - Work teams are made for daily activities like fishing, cooking, etc. which is decided based on trust, capability, and synergy which is ideally between siblings
    - People break off from the alliance as they get married and start their own families



- Leaders are not chosen formally but emerge through personal qualities though they are not permanent as various leaders may rise for the different activities
- Badjao ceremonies usually require the participation of the whole alliance though the simplest are performed by the nuclear family
- Families with only sons have more expenses than with only daughters
  - Boys require money for marriage and circumcision while girls don't have comparable expenses
- Ceremonies
  - There are several types of curing ceremonies depending on the illness
  - Ex. Magtimbang (during serious illness), Ear-piercing of girls, magislam (boys' circumcision)
  - When a Badjao dies:
    - An initial display of grief and mourning is done by the alliance
    - An older member washes the body and prepares it for burial
    - A wake is then held
    - The following morning, the body is taken to the cemetery islands for burial
- House-dwelling in Sitangkai
  - Their houses are well constructed built on piles driven into the reef floor and roofed with corrugated metal
    - Most houses are one-story and vary greatly in size
    - Only 14% badjaos here live in single nuclear-family households as opposed to the 77% from Tawi-Tawi
      - Instead, they live with their extended family combining about two or three nuclear families in one household
      - These represent a solidification of the fluid family-alliance units of the boat-dwelling Badjao
        - It is an ideal to live in large, extended households
      - If houses were occupied by only one family, they'd be vacant for months as the Badjaos followed the monthly fishing cycles
  - They also believe that it is best to marry relatives but notions of the best type of relationship differs
  - There is greater frequency of divorce in Sitangkai likely related to house-dwelling or to the extended family households since there is little love between them
  - Each nuclear family functions as an independent economic unit through work groups per household activity – women rarely leave their neighborhoods whereas men leave daily for work, to visit family, or to attend ceremonies
    - Females would assist in preparing food and mat-making
    - Men would fish
  - One man of the household is the owner of the house (usually because he built the structure or did most of the financing in its construction)
    - Though each family contributes to the maintenance and upkeep of the house

- The house is passed down to the owner's daughters and granddaughters
- Female members have the most intimate and enduring relationships within the household
  - Sisters are raised together and continue to live together until their deaths whereas brothers would leave for residence in their brides' homes
- In raising children, every member of the household contributes in the upbringing of the child rather than just their parents
- If a Sitangkai badjao dies, his widow and children are cared for by the rest of the household and usually poses no burden
  - A widow is expected to remarry after a period of mourning
  - If the wife dies, the widower would usually return to his original household bringing the children with them only if they are much younger
- Though there has been a downward trend in the family size of Sitangkai badjao households

- **Sources (hyperlinked to the document copies)**

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- Additional Reading:

- <https://www.yodisphere.com/2022/09/Sama-Dilaut-Badjao-Culture-History-Sulu.html>
  - While it might be an online article it goes extremely in-depth into the Sama-Badjao culture, history, and lifestyle