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Abstract
In any given community, adaptation, assimilation, and reinvention contribute to cultural change which is always a gradual, complex, and continuous process. Such is the case of the Sama-Bajau, an indigenous group of Austronesians residing in the stretches of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and beyond. The Sama-Bajau community is a diverse group of people connected by the sea and the myths, rituals and dances that they carry beyond their ancestral homeland.

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RODNEY C. JUBILADO

On Cultural Fluidity: The Sama-Bajau of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas

In any given community, adaptation, assimilation, and reinvention contribute to cultural change which is always a gradual, complex, and continuous process. Such is the case of the Sama-Bajau, an indigenous group of Austronesians residing in the stretches of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and beyond. The Sama-Bajau community is a diverse group of people connected by the sea and the myths, rituals and dances that they carry beyond their ancestral homeland. Even the concept of homeland among the Sama-Bajau defies the conventional wisdom derived from the Western practice of delimiting a group of people in terms of geography. For the Sama-Bajau, the point of reference is the sea, the sea current, and the other seas beyond the horizon. Yet although scholars have argued that these groups of people are basically one from an historical perspective, a growing consciousness of political and economic boundaries is giving rise to a sense of separateness among the groups themselves that belies the evidence of a shared culture. This essay presents some aspects of the cultural fabric that binds and unifies these diverse peoples. Similar celebrations of festivities, ceremonies, music, and other performative expressions of the Sama-Bajau culture are found on both sides of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, in particular, amongst those who are residing in the Sulu Archipelago, Philippines and in Sabah, Malaysia.

Ascriptions, Imagined Divisions, and Dispersions

Owing to the fact that the Austronesians are mostly marine and insular, it is not surprising that the sea is conceptually and essentially important in relation to the dwellers of the seas and the islands. Where some of these Austronesians dwell in the sea with islands dotting the expanse thereof, this preferred location through political, economic, and historical processes substantiates the classification of some of them as sea-dwellers. Such are the Sama-Bajau, a diverse Austronesian people occupying the common maritime national boundaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Clifford Sather (1997) claimed that the majority of the Sama-Bajau are land-based in comparison to those who are sea-based. Their geographical location gives them the name either Sama Dilaut or Sama Darat which basically means sea-oriented Sama and land-oriented Sama, respectively. The sea is central to the former group which caused them to be called sea gypsies or sea nomads. It is the sea that unites them however dispersed and mobile they are.

Mark Donohue (1996) used the name Sama-Bajau to refer collectively to a group of maritime people called Sama or Bajau. Focusing on names, the Sama-Bajau call themselves Jomo Sama and other various names which can be based on the names of the islands and places they inhabit. This manner of self-ascription in terms of geographical location brings forth various names such as Sama Davao, Sama Zamboanga, Sama Sitangkai, Sama Siasi, Sama Simunul, Sama Tuaran, Sama Semporna, and Sama Sulawesi, among others, which indicates how widely these people are dispersed across the current political and international boundaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. This fact calls to the mind the question of these people's origins and areas of dispersion wherein current political boundaries were absent from the collective memory of the Sama-Bajau.

The Sama-Bajau in the Philippines always refer to the Sulu Archipelago as their place of origin. This is supported by the historical fact that these people inhabited the archipelago with the Tausugs and other indigenes even before the arrival of Islam in the fourteenth century. The political dominance of the Tausugs and the status of servitude of the Sama-Bajau is a complex construction that benefits only the dominant party. This situation existed only when the Tausugs, who eventually became dominant in the Sulu region, embraced Islam and achieved a cohesive functional unit equivalent to a state. In fact, Sulu attained Islamic statehood and became part of Darul Islam in 1450 AD (Tan 129). By the time they became the majority in the Sulu Archipelago, the Sama-Bajau people, who were considered the least Islamised and were dispersed widely across the two sides of the seas, evolved as subjects in the newly-formed political state, the Sultanate of Sulu. But in the eyes of the colonists, these two indigenous groups were described pejoratively as pirates and marauders who were the menace of the seas affecting the European trade from Singapore in the south to Manila in the north. But the Sama-Bajau's own myth of origin is recorded by Harry Arlo Nimmo who writes:

> Long ago the ancestors of the Sama Dilaut lived in Johore, a place to the West near Mecca, in houseboats much like those they live in today in Tawi-tawi. One day a strong wind began to blow. To secure his boat, the village headman stuck a pole into what he thought was the sea floor and tied his boat to it. The other villagers, also fearing the wind, tied their boats to that of the headman's. It turned out, however, that instead of going to the sea floor, the pole of the headman was stuck in the nose of a giant stingray that lay sleeping beneath the flotilla. That night as the Sama Dilaut slept, the ray awakened and began to swim, pulling the boats behind it. When the Sama Dilaut awakened the next morning, they were adrift on the open sea and did not know their way back to Johore. For one week, they drifted helplessly until finally the leader pleaded to Tuhan for help. Within minutes, Tuhan sent down a *saitan* [spirit] which entered the leader, who thus became the first *djinn* [shaman] among the Sama Dilaut. The *saitan* instructed the leader to sail for two days toward the East. The flotilla did as instructed and, on the second day, land was spotted. Upon reaching shore, the headman again stuck a pole [called *samboang* in Sinama] into the sea floor and all the boats were tied to it. This was the first mooring place in the Philippines for the Sama Dilaut and was consequently called 'Samboangan'. Today it is still called this by the Sama Dilaut while the rest of the world knows it as 'Zamboanga'. Shortly after their

> arrival in Zamboanga, the Sama Dilaut became subjects of the powerful Sultan of Sulu. During the course of his many marriages throughout Sulu, the Sultan gave groups of Sama Dilaut a bride wealth; thus, the Sama Dilaut became scattered throughout the Sulu Archipelago. (22–23)

On the other hand, if linguistics is used to identify the place of origin of the Tausug people, the Tausug language shows that its close sister languages are those of the indigenes of Butuan in northeastern Mindanao and the Cebuanos of Visayas. This linguistic fact leaves the Sama-Bajau people as one of the original inhabitants of Sulu Archipelago. However, not all Sama-Bajau refer to the archipelago as their point of origin. The Sama-Bajau of Sabah, in particular the East Coast Bajau, have another traditional story to tell. Owen Rutter presents this traditional account of origin:

> Of the Islamic people by far the most important are the Bajaus, or Sea-Gipsies, of whom there are about 31,000, and unlike the pagans they have definite traditions of their origin. It is said several hundred years ago a certain Sultan of Johore had a beautiful daughter, Dayang Ayesha, with whom both the rulers of Brunei and Sulu fell in love. Ayesha herself favoured the suit of the Sultan of Brunei, but as his rival was the better match she was packed off to Sulu with a strong escort of men and war-boats. Thereupon the Brunei prince, nothing if not a dashing lover, led out his own fleet and gave battle on the high seas; when the fight was at its fiercest he brought his own *prahu* alongside that of the princess, took her aboard and sailed away before any of the escort could stop him. The Johore people were aghast. Death stared them in the face whether they went on to Sulu or returned to Brunei. So cruising the seas, they picked up a living as best as they could, stealing their wives from unwary villages. Sometimes they settled on unfrequented islands, but mainly they lived as outcasts in their boats until gradually some of them formed scattered piratical communities along the coast of North Borneo. (73–74)

In parallel, another traditional account of similar theme is found in Herman Van Dewall:

> The Bajau originally came from Johore. Once a Johore princess disappeared during a storm at sea. The Sultan of Johore organized a group of people to search for her. However, the lost princess could not be found, and the people who were looking for her found themselves far away from Johore, and were unable to find their way back again, and so they settle down along the coastal areas of Borneo, Sulawesi, and in the Sulu Archipelago. (446)

These accounts are self-explanatory and speak of the Sama-Bajau people who used to serve in the Johore Sultanate, and involve a princess who is either lost or abducted. It is clear that they refer to a close affinity with their fellow Austronesian sea-dwellers occupying the Johore-Riau area. Moreover, these accounts deal with the seas and the sultanates, with the former speaking of them becoming outcasts who developed economic means by making use of the sea, and the latter account telling of settlement in Borneo, Sulawesi and Sulu.

However juxtaposing these traditional accounts with historical facts, such traditional accounts would point to the existence of the Brunei and Johore

Sultanates both of which did not exist in the 13th century AD. The Brunei Sultanate was established only in the 14th century AD and that of Johore only in the 16th century AD. Therefore the Sama-Bajau migration could have only occurred 400 to 600 years ago. Shifting towards empirical evidence, Kemp Pallesen did a study on the migration of the Sama-Bajau and made use of a dispersion hypothesis wherein chronology is set in AD 800 (116, 153). This hypothesis claims that the current geographical site of origin is situated in Zamboanga, Mindanao and dispersed towards Basilan and Sulu and moved onwards to Borneo, Makassar, and Sulawesi. He posited that the arrival of the Sama-Bajau in Borneo was sometime in the 11th century AD which is 300 to 500 years earlier than the oral traditions of the Sama-Bajau.

Although the Tausugs considered that the Sama-Bajau are not so Muslim and that their Islamic faith is syncretised with the animistic tribal beliefs commonly practised before the arrival of Islam, it cannot be denied that the Sama-Bajau possess knowledge of the Islamic teachings including that of the Al Miraj which is also known as the Ascension Night of the Prophet Muhammad. One of the Sama-Bajau stories is recorded by Gerard Rixhon followed by a translation:

> Maka Burrak na bintang mbal niya' dalowa na. Binatang langkaw min himar, sogoah siraka sab bagal. Bayhu' na bate saga bayhu' anak Apu' Adam. Maka' Baran na bate'; saga baran kura'. Hulas na manjadi pal-mata tipay. Mag-sinag sahaya na… Maka' mata na kaduwa-duwa, bate' mamahi durri. Bang papandang mata na, bate saga sinag ilaw. 'Mbal ra atud pandang. Taga gallang tallu nay' na. Halam niya' maka gaos nipat ma iya, malaingkan dakayu' kayu Tuhan… (37)

> There is no animal like Burak. The face is just like that of the descendants of Grandfather Adam. It is taller than the deer, but it has the body of the horse. There is nothing stronger in this world. Its sweat drops like mother of pearls. Its saddle ornamented with rubies… Its two eyes are like shining stars. And when you peek into them, they reflect the sun's brilliance. No one can stare at them. On three of its feet are bracelets but none on the right one. No one could describe it, save Allah… (37)

This story is the Sama version of the Ascension Night of the Prophet Muhammad wherein the Angel Gabriel invited Muhammad to a journey riding the supernatural animal described as half-human half-horse called Buraq. This story is celebrated by Muslim believers and the retelling is a whole evening event for the Sama-Bajau who chant it with accompanying instruments. The translation of the description of the Buraq is presented below as quoted from Rixhon:

In the Islamic orthodoxy, the description of the Buraq from Sahih al-Bukhari is that of 'a tall beast, larger than a donkey and smaller than a mule. In each stride it would place its hoof at a distance equal to the range of the vision…' For sure, various versions of the story of the Ascension Night abound in every corner of the Islamic world from Africa to Asia. It is in the process of acculturation that the versions are adapted where elements common in the natural setting of the adapting people are intertwined in the story in lieu of the non-translatable elements of the standard version. The same thing has happened in the version of Sama-Bajau

where the indigenous word *pal-mata tipay*, translated as 'mother of pearl' and of the pre-Islamic word *Tuhan* which is roughly translated as the Arabic 'Allah' are mentioned and accepted by the group as canonical. Aside from the communally accepted stories which are common among the dispersed Sama-Bajau, their performing arts and rituals are remarkably identical. Although the Sama-Banjau incorporated Islamic rituals like the reading of the Kur'an and the recitation of Arabic prayers, the practices of *pagkanduli* and *pag-umboh,* for example, retained their pre-Islamic animistic undertones (like the offering of fruits or the killing of a white chicken). Shared practices like these are bound by a common cosmological viewpoint even if some of the Sama-Bajau embraced the Islamic religion.

From the cosmological viewpoint of the Sama-Bajau, the most supreme being is called Tuhan[1] who is not only in heaven but also in the sea and everywhere. There is also *Umboh* who is the mediator between Tuhan and the Bajau. Some of the spirit beings are called *saitan*, described as capable of effecting good or evil and found in any place, or *djin*, a spirit which could cause evil, sickness, and other untoward incidents (Bottignolo 98). Included in the list are the spirits of the ancestors who are believed to be either benevolent or malevolent. Such characteristics play a role in the celebrations, festivities, and performance of rituals with the accompanying dance and music in the celebration such as *pagkanduli*[2].

Music and Dance: Unity and Diversity among Sama-Bajau

Perhaps the very essence of the cosmological structure and its efficacy in the daily life of the Sama-Bajau can be represented by the celebration of *pag-umboh* and *pagkanduli*. The celebration of *pag-umboh* is related to the communal reverence towards the ancestors, the *umboh*, among Sama-Bajau. In this celebration the *umboh* is believed to return to the community of the living and such return is celebrated in a festive mood by preparing the newly harvested rice during the *habagat*, the southwest monsoon which occurs in August or September. This celebration is also called *magpaay-bahaw* due to the fact that it involves the preparation of the *paay bahaw* 'new rice'. The word *paay* is a shortened form of the word *palay*, 'rice'; due to the syncope of the middle lateral sound, compensatory lengthening occurs, which is a common phonological phenomenon in Philippine languages. Calling the festival *Umboh Pai-Baha-o*, Bottignolo (73) refers to the whole festival which he called 'the grandest Badjao feast'. It is attested that this celebration is held on both sides of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas such as in Bangau-bangau, Semporna, Sabah, Malaysia and in Sitangkai, Tawi-tawi, and the Philippines. However, the Sama-Bajau of Banga-Bangau consider the *Umboh Pai-Baha-o* of Sitangkai as first among equals in the region (Hanafi 27).

In the celebration of *magpaay-bahaw*, the offerings include the newly harvested rice, coconuts, sugar cane, and corn, among others. The central element in this celebration is the *paay-bahaw*, the newly harvested rice, from which the name of the celebration is derived, and the preparation of which involves an elaborate procedure. Initially the de-husking of *paay-bahaw*, called *magtaparahu*, was

Figure 1. Paay-bahaw before the Magpaay-bahaw ritual began.

done with the recitation of *duaa* or Islamic prayers. This process was followed by *magpatanak* which is inclusive of the drying of the de-husked rice and the 'sleeping' of *paay-bahaw*. De-husking rice was done by female members of the community, in this case, the women of the host family. The house of this particular family became the locus of activity of the *magpatanak* which includes the 'sleeping of rice', which is the laying of rice overnight, in the middle of the living room. After a night or two of the 'sleeping of rice', the *paay-bahaw* was roused from its sleep and divided into three parts: two for *buwas kuning* 'yellow rice' and one for making *panyalam* 'sweet rice meals' and *durul* 'sweet rice cakes'.

In making the *buwas kuning* from *paay-bahaw*, turmeric was added to produce the conspicuous yellow colour. As the rice meals were cooked, members of the host family entered the middle part of the living room — considered sacred due to its status as the sanctified locus — to invoke the *Umboh* to ask for permission in raising the *panji kaumbuhan* 'ceremonial flag' to mark the start of the rites of *pag-umboh*. After this flag-raising, all the *paay-bahaw* meals were then placed in a row at the locus alongside the chosen coconut and incense. This was done while the members of the host family performed the *mandi katurunan* 'communal ritual bath' on the house jetty. After the communal bath, the members of the family assembled near the locus to continue the rites of *pag-umboh* by pouring the newly produced coconut oil onto the piles of *buwas kuning*. The

Figure 2. Panyalam and Buas Kuning.

members of the host family then chanted prayers, called *zikir*, to the *Umboh*, led by the Muslim prayer leader. The recitation and chanting of prayers were accompanied by burning incense as part of the offering. In the invocation and recitation of prayers, a loud voice was essential especially in the calling of the names of ancestors. During the loud chorus of prayers, one could notice that the prayers were directed towards and focused to the offerings situated conspicuously in the locus. In concluding the *pag-umboh*, the prayer leader approached the locus and prayed with words corresponding to the supplication for permission to end the *pag-umboh* and to give thanks to *Umboh* according to the objective of the celebration and performance of the rites. After the performance of the *pag-umboh* rituals, everyone in the household including the guests were invited to partake of the *paay-bahaw* sweet offerings accompanied by playing the gongs and the *kulintangan* 'graduated gongs', called *magtagunggu*, and performing the dance called *mag-igal*. This celebratory performance of music and dance was accomplished using the traditional musical instruments and dance steps.

The preceding procedural description of *pag-umboh* is the common pattern seen in many types of *pag-umboh*. Some modifications and variations do exist in the performance of the rites of *pag-umboh* depending on their purpose such as during childbirth, healing or exorcism, among others, which carry the objective of contrition, apology, request for protection, and other pragmatic or religious

reasons that the individual or the community needed. The time element of the celebration of *pag-umboh* is also crucial — depending on some factors such as the availability of the materials for offering, good weather, and no funeral services going on in the community, otherwise, the celebration of *pag-umboh* must not go ahead for fear of incurring the wrath of the *Umboh*.

Another form of celebration which marks the Sama-Bajau cultural identity is that of the *pagkanduli*, a communitarian celebration involving communal dancing, playing, and music performance. The celebration of *pagkanduli* is performed or organized for inter- or intra- communal purposes — be it social or religious. The same can be said of the concept of *pagkanduli* among Sama-Bajau, which is considered as one of the most peculiar identity markers of the group. To highlight the importance of *pagkanduli* in everyday life among Sama-Bajaus, the celebration of *pagkanduli*, which is also common among the indigenous communities of Mindanao and Sulu, is even exploited by peace-keeping bodies in the reconciliation process among conflicting groups.[3] *Pagkanduli* is celebrated by two groups of Sama-Bajau across the international boundary between Malaysia and the Philippines in particular those of Semporna, Sabah and those of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi.[4] The elements in the celebration of *pagkanduli* in the two groups are identical and are carried out in the same fashion. Both celebrations of *pagkanduli* include the elements of rituals, music and dance and the core participants.

Figure 3. Djin Lella holding the propitiary coconut.

Figure 4. Magpaay-bahaw ritual starts with the reading of the Quar'an.

In brief, the particular *pagkanduli* witnessed by the group of researchers headed by Dr. Hanafi Hussin of the Department of Southeast Asian Studies of the University of Malaya in 2008 started with the preparation of the journey from Sitangkai to Sikulan. When the party reached Sikulan, the participants performed the dances and gave the offerings to the spirits, called *bansa*, and placing these offerings under a tree which was believed to be inhabited by the principal spirit called Tuan Laut. After this part of the event, the procession proceeded to the abode of another spirit called Dayang Dayang Mangilai. After visiting this abode, the procession returned to the primary location and performed some traditional dances and games leading to the concluding rituals. Among the games they performed were *dundang* 'swing', *sipa* 'kick ball', *lakad-lakad* 'skip rope' and *hila* 'tug-of-war'. In the performance of the rituals, it was noted that the main participant is the *wali djin*, which roughly translates to a spirit medium, who performs the *igal-djin* 'dance of the djin' in a trance. Music is made by playing the traditional instruments such as the *pulau* 'flute', *gabbang* 'xylophone', *kulintang* 'set of graduated gongs' — an ensemble of gongs that are played for *tagunggu* which normally accompanies a dance characterised by the rhythmic movement of the body and hands. Each dancer must be invited to join the communal dancing to receive the blessings of the resident *bansa*. There were two primary dancers in the group, namely, *Djin Lella* 'male djin' and *Djin Denda* 'female djin' who

were designated as spirit bearers. Among the invited dancers, some had metallic finger extensions called *sulingkengkeng* making the movement of the hands more pronounced. This type of dance is associated with the resident *bansa* of the abode which the group visited. All the dances were performed and judged satisfactory by the *wali djin* and when such pronouncement was made, the *pagkanduli* was concluded by sprinkling tonics around the tree. The head researcher, Dr. Hanafi Hussin, suggests that the *pagkanduli* ritual 'reconstitutes the community in their processes of memory making through the passing of narratives, their shared experiences in communing with sacred as embodied in the dancing of the *djin* who co-dwells with the spirits, and their shared realization that ritual in a significant way informs their *pusaka* or heritage of identity that sets them apart from others' (personal communication 2010). It is also in the *pagkanduli* that the Sama-Bajau perform music and songs since these are integral to the accomplishment of the event. To this event, the Sama-Bajau bring their repertoire of vocals and chants for spiritual purposes.

In these two celebrations, the performance of music and dance is essential as it heightens the mood of the performers and participants alike. With the *pag-umboh* described as solemn, it was with *pagkanduli* that the jovial mode dominated and the atmosphere became more relaxed. It was with *pagkanduli* that wider participation of the community became apparent. There was much laughter, jostling, and

Figure 5. Djin Lella performing the ritual.

singing observed. Variations and modifications of the celebratory performances occur as the communal constraints dictate. For example, political references in the celebration and performance were noted when some of the members were seen raising the Malaysian flag in the background while their cousins in Tawi-Tawi could not even be bothered to buy a Phillipine flag. International political symbols, whether brought to the scene or not, were just an addition to the imaginary and real political division among these indigenous groups. The economic strength of the Sama-Bajau community in Semporna was apparent in the celebration with their use of more sophisticated materials including fabrics, clothing, boats, boat engines, and even musical instruments that were superior to those employed by their cousins in Tawi-Tawi.

Moreover, in some communal gatherings such as *kanduli pagkawin* 'wedding gathering', the Semporna Sama-Bajau proved to be more technologically and economically advanced by hiring singers and other performers from the Philippines. Performers from Tawi-Tawi and Sulu were hired to sing and dance in the *pagkawin* but used non-traditional instruments. The use of an electronic keyboard and electronic guitars replaced the traditional gong ensemble where *kulintangan*, *gabbang,* and other traditional instruments had previously been used. One of the informants said that in recent times some of the musical performances had employed a computer or laptop with a loudspeaker since some of the traditional Sama-Bajau musical pieces had already been digitised. In fact a quick check on YouTube would testify to the fact that the Sama-Bajau music does not only cross international boundaries but also enters the virtual world. Some musical pieces include the famous love songs of *dalling dalling*, *duldang duldang*, *pakiring pakiring,* among others, which are collectively called *sangbayan.* Talib Lim Sangogot defined *sangbayan* as a 'song that inspires dancers to dance artfully' (72). These songs are gaining popularity in the virtual community through blogs and video-sharing websites like YouTube where these Sama-Bajau songs are attaining wide circulation and currency. Such popularity does not only ensure circulation and currency but also gives rise to discussions about cultural identity and language across national boundaries. Of these songs, perhaps the most widely discussed is that of *pakiring pakiring* which is also known as *Dayang Dayang*. The locals in Sabah commonly called this song *pakiring pakiring* due to the movement of the dancers who turn around as part of the dance. This particular movement is called *pakiring* in the local dialect. In Sulu, the name *Dayang Dayang* is used because it is the official title of the song in its recorded and commercialised form. The recording on YouTube which is labelled under the single title *sangbayan pakiring pakiring* has received fifty-nine comments in the three years up to 17th September 2010. The dual title Pakiring/ Dayang Dayang has received 165 comments in the three-year period up to August 2010 while the performance labelled only by the single title *Dayang Dayang* has eleven versions, with a total a viewership of 2,249,994. Such numbers may indicate that this song is popular among people on both sides of the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea.

Conclusion

The Sama-Bajau are as dispersed as the islands of Southeast Asia yet even with this wide dispersion, there is still a bind which unites them: the seas. On both sides of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, these people are separated not only by the sea but also by the internationally recognised political boundaries of Malaysia and the Philippines. Yet the translocation of the Sama-Bajau does not prevent them from being identified as such, for the groups possess identity characteristics of a people irrespective of geographical location and economic strength. History has shown that these people travelled and migrated to various places of Southeast Asia and beyond, following sea routes for economic and social purposes. Culturally, these people perform the same rituals, chants, and other vocal practices for religious and social purposes although variations and modifications exist. Their histories, myths, rituals, music, dances, nominal ascriptions, and language point to the same people: they are the Sama-Bajau.

NOTES

1 Some scholars including Rixhon proposed that the word *Tuhan* is from the Malay language. *Tuhan* is common among Austronesian languages in the region and for this reason the same word is used by the various indigenous communities in the Sulu region to refer to a different notion of a deity not identical with the Islamic or Christian god. However, for the Malays Tuhan is synonymous with Allah.

2 Among regional Austronesian speakers, the Sama-Bajau word, *pagkanduli*, is morphologically derived from the word kanduli '*festive gathering*' and is cognate to other diachronic reflexes such kanduli/kanduri of the Manobo, Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausugs and the Yakans and kenduri among Malays and other Malayic people.

3 In fact from a collaborative report funded by World Bank Post Conflict Fund, *pagkanduli* is one of the strategies employed for the community building and reconciliation among displaced indigenous population (Daguino and Kamlian). The same conflict resolution mechanism is employed in Sabah among the Sama-Bajau (Torres 30).

4 For the past couple of years, scholars from the University of Malaya and the University of the Philippines, in particular, Dr Hanafi Husin and Dr Matthew Santamaria, respectively, headed a research team conducting studies on the Sama-Bajau on both sides of Sulu Seas. The studies dealt with comparative ethnography, performing arts, and cosmology of the Sama-Bajau in Sabah, Malaysia and Sulu, Philippines. In their study on the cosmology and the associated performing rituals of the Sama-Bajau, various cultural semblances were taken into account.

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