

# Badjau

also known as “Sama Dilaut”

Data source: eHRAF

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Entered by Emily Pitek, Human Relations Area Files

*\* Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.*

*\* Secondary Source entry, prepared from a literature review by a Ph.D. RA*

Entry tags: Religious Group, Southeast Asian Religions

The Badjau of Tawi-Tawi Island (also known as the Sama Dilaut) is a subculture of the larger Samal culture. The Badjau group is distinguished by their nomadic, boat-dwelling lifestyle, which consequently allowed for the preservation of their indigenous religious beliefs (which differ from the Islamic beliefs of the land-dwellers). This entry focuses specifically around the time of 1963, “when the traditional culture of these people was still intact” (Nimmo, 1990:4). At this time, Badjau religious beliefs were not distinguished from other aspects of life; this entry therefore considers the religious group to be coterminous with the society at large. Badjau supernatural beings include an otiose high god (Tuhan), non-human spirits (saitan), ancestral spirits (ummagged), vengeful ghosts (panguah), and a variety of other ghouls/monsters. Religious practitioners known as djin (shamans) communicate with spirits, officiate rites of passage, and serve as ritual leaders. Magic is also present, and include the practices of anting-anting (the wearing of protective amulets), and kabolon (spells and formulas used to bring about desired ends such as weather changes). The most important social unit of the Badjau is the nuclear family, which will occasionally come together at moorages to form family alliance units that cooperate for work activities and religious ceremonies. In addition to family alliances, the Badjau recognize about seven localized kin groups (comprised of related family alliance units that regularly moor together). Localized kin groups are led by a headman, and usually contain at least one djin. Social organization among the Badjau is fluid and constantly changing as families move from moorage to moorage.



Date Range: 1940 CE - 1966 CE

Region: Tawi-Tawi and adjacent islands

Region tags: Asia, Southeast Asia, Philippines

Tawi-Tawi and adjacent islands, ca. 1963

## Status of Participants:

✓ Elite    ✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Nimmo, H. (1969). The Structure of Badjau Society. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii.
- Source 1: Nimmo, H. (1990). Religious beliefs of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. *Philippine Studies*, 38(1), 3-27.
- Source 2: Murdock, G.P. & Wilson, S.F. (Jul., 1972). Settlement patterns and community organization: Cross-Cultural Codes 3. *Ethnology*, 11(3), 254-295.
- Source 3: Tuden, A. & Marshall, C. (Oct., 1972). Political organization: Cross-cultural codes 4. *Ethnology*,

11(4), 436-464.

- Source 1: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. *World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research*.
- Source 2: Nimmo, H. (1968). Reflections on Bajau history. *Philippine Studies*, 16(1), 32-59).
- Source 3: Nimmo, H. (2001). *Magosaha: An ethnography of the Tawi-Tawi Sama*. Ateneo De Manila University Press.

## General Variables

### Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

— Yes

Notes: "When Islam arrived in the Sulu Archipelago of the southern Philippines during the mid-fourteenth century, the preexisting religion of the islands was not totally displaced...The Sulu people who have most completely retained their indigenous religion are the Bajau of the Tawi-Tawi Islands whose mobile, boat-dwelling culture has effectively separated them from their Islamic, island-dwelling neighbors" (Nimmo, 1990:3).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1649, Frequency of Internal Warfare (Resolved Rating), indicates that among the Badjau, internal warfare seems to be absent or rare (original code=1). Additionally, SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates that the Badjau were not pacified for all or part of the 25-year time period (as reported by ethnographer). Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

— No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1650, Frequency of External Warfare (Resolved Rating), coded the Badjau as a 1.5 (original coding), which is between external warfare being absent or rare (original code=1), and external warfare occurring once every three to ten years (original code=2). Additionally, SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates that the Badjau were not pacified for all or part of the 25-year time period (as reported by ethnographer). Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

— No

Notes: Because the Badjau religious group is coterminous with the society, there is no system for assigning religious affiliation aside from being born into the community.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the Badjau attempting to recruit new members. Because the religious realm of life is not distinguished from other aspects of life, the Badjau religion is considered (in this entry) to be coterminous with the society at large.

Does the religion have official political support

— Yes

Notes: The Badjau religion has political support because the religious realm of life is not distinguished from other aspects of life (such as the political realm); the Badjau religion is considered (in this entry) to be coterminous with the society at large.

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

— No

Notes: No religious infrastructure is present among the Badjau.

↳ Are the head of the polity and the head of the religion the same figure:

— No

Notes: There is no singular head of the polity or religion. Rather, multiple headmen and djin (shaman) are present.

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

— Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 1745 (Religio-Political Overlap) indicates that "officials at the level of maximal political authority are at the same time religious specialists" (Lang, 1998; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

## Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

— Estimated population, numeric: 1600

Notes: "In Tawi-Tawi, the number of Bajau approximates 1600 and represent only about four percent of the Tawi-Tawi population" (Nimmo, 1990:6).

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

— Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 4

Notes: "In Tawi-Tawi, the number of Bajau approximates 1600 and represent only about four percent of the Tawi-Tawi population" (Nimmo, 1990:6).

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: "Central to the Bajau religion is the djin, or shaman. The djin, who may be male or female, is able to communicate with spirits to discover causes of illnesses or misfortune. In addition, he or she officiates at all rites of passage to see that the spirits are properly invoked and appeased" (Nimmo, 1990:22). "Virtually no djin are full-time practitioners. Most practice their profession when need dictates, while the rest of their lives are indistinguishable from other Bajau" (Nimmo, 1990: 26).

↳ Is there a hierarchy among these leaders:

– No

↳ Are leaders believed to possess supernatural powers or qualities:

– Yes

Notes: "The djin, who may be male or female, is able to communicate with spirits to discover causes of illnesses or misfortune" (Nimmo, 1990:22).

↳ Powers are acquired by individual deeds carried out in past lives:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation.

↳ Powers are inherited:

– Yes

Notes: Inheritance is one way that an individual becomes a djin and receives his/her supernatural abilities. "One becomes a djin in various ways...But becoming a djin is not strictly a matter of inheritance" (Nimmo, 1990:22).

↳ Powers are culturally transmitted from a supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: Djin are described as learning supernatural powers through communication with spirits (see Nimmo, 1990:23).

↳ Powers are culturally transmitted from another human (e.g. teacher):

– Yes

Notes: The children of djin who later go on to become djin themselves sometimes learn supernatural powers from their family (see Nimmo, 1990:22-23).

## Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative

and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also “oral scriptures” (e.g. the Vedas of India).

— No

Notes: "The Sama Dilaut do not have an extensive oral literature dealing with religious matters" (Nimmo, 2001:139).

## Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

— No

Notes: Murdock and Wilson (1972, Column 6) indicates that "There are no structures in the community that are appreciably larger or more impressive than the usual residential dwellings" [Note: identical to SCCS Variable 66, Large or Impressive Structures].

Are pilgrimages present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of pilgrimages.

## Beliefs

### Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

— Yes

Notes: "All living beings have ummagged [a soul]...but those most important to the Sama Dilaut are the ummagged of once-living people, known collectively as mbo', or ancestors" (Nimmo, 2001:143).



Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

— Yes

Notes: "The Sama Dilaut disagree as to where the ummagged is located in the living body. Some say it is located in the heart or liver while others claim it is in the stomach. If the body is struck soundly, the ummagged may be dislodged and cause illness. It may even leave the body and cause fainting. The ummagged sometimes leaves the body during sleep and its adventures are remembered as dreams. At death, the ummagged withdraws from the body, lingers near the place of death for a short period, and then dwells on the cemetery island where its grave is located" (Nimmo, 2001:144).

Belief in afterlife:

— Yes

Notes: "At death, the ummagged[soul] withdraws from the body, lingers near the place of death for a short period, and then dwells on the cemetery island where its grave is located. For the most part, the ummagged reside contentedly on the cemetery islands. Much more localized than the saitan[non-human supernatural beings], they only leave the islands to punish offenses or to assist djin[shaman] in curing ceremonies" (Nimmo, 2001:144).

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details concerning the spatial location of the afterlife.

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

— Yes

Notes: The spirits of the deceased are described as inhabiting the cemetery islands where their bodies are buried (see Nimmo, 2001:144).

Reincarnation in this world:

— I don't know

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation. However, death/burial/the afterlife is not described in enough detail to be certain that beliefs in reincarnation are not present.

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

— Yes

Notes: "After an initial display of grief and mourning by the deceased's alliance unit, the more responsible members conduct the funeral activities. An older person, normally an uncle or older in-law of the deceased (female if the deceased is female), washes the body and prepares it for burial. Throughout the night following death, a wake is held in honor of the dead man...The following morning the body is taken to the cemetery islands for burial" (Nimmo, 1969:97).

↳ Cremation:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cremation. Only internment is described.

↳ Mummification:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mummification. Only internment is described.

↳ Interment:

— Yes

Notes: "After an initial display of grief and mourning by the deceased's alliance unit, the more responsible members conduct the funeral activities. An older person, normally an uncle or older in-law of the deceased (female if the deceased is female), washes the body and prepares it for burial. Throughout the night following death, a wake is held in honor of the dead man...The following morning the body is taken to the cemetery islands for burial" (Nimmo, 1969:97).

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

— I don't know

Notes: Not specified.

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

— I don't know

Notes: Not specified.

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

— I don't know

Notes: Not specified.

↳ Cannibalism:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cannibalism. Only internment is described.

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of exposing corpses to elements. Only internment is described.

↳ Feeding to animals:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of feeding corpses to animals. Only internment is described.

↳ Secondary burial:

— No

Notes: According to SCCS Variable 1850 (Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale), secondary bone/body treatment is absent among the Badjau (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Notes: Burial practices are not described in substantial details. No evidence is given for the presence of co-sacrifices in burials. Presumably, co-sacrifices are not present.

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: "Grave goods left with the corpse include food, water, cigarettes, and such personal property as dishes, clothing, and fishing equipment. Bottles of the mother's milk and cradle bars are often left with infants. I saw explosives placed in the grave of one man who was killed while using them in fishing. Valuables such as jewelry and money are sometimes left with the corpse. Grave goods are often broken to release their spirits" (Nimmo, 2001:181).

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

Notes: (Nimmo, 2001:181)

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

Notes: (Nimmo, 2001:181)

↳ Significant wealth (e.g. gold, jade, intensely worked objects):

– No

↳ Some wealth (some valuable or useful objects interred):

– Yes

Notes: (Nimmo, 2001:181)

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: "After an initial display of grief and mourning by the deceased's alliance unit, the more responsible members conduct the funeral activities. An older person, normally an uncle or older in-law of the deceased (female if the deceased is female), washes the body and prepares it for burial. Throughout the night following death, a wake is held in honor of the dead man...The following morning the body is taken to the cemetery islands for burial" (Nimmo, 1969:97). See Nimmo, 2001:179-182 for additional information on burial practices.

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

Notes: See Nimmo, 1969:97-98 for more details.



↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– No

Notes: The deceased are buried on cemetery islands.

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– No

Notes: The deceased are buried on cemetery islands.

## Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: "The world of the Bajau is populated with innumerable supernatural beings. They are found on the sea, under the sea, on the beaches, in the trees, atop the mountains, or beneath the ground" (Nimmo, 1990:14). "An investigation of Sama Dilaut religious beliefs reveals five general categories of spirits, namely (1) Tuhan, a supreme being who created the world, but rarely involves himself in human affairs; (2) saitan, supernatural beings who never lived as humans; (3) ummagged, spirits of once-living people, also known collectively as mboh' (ancestors); (4) panggua: the remains of once-living people who occasionally come back to haunt the living; and (5) a collection of ghouls, monsters, and tricksters distinct from the above. Except for Tuhan, who is usually perceived separately from other spirits, these categories should not be considered mutually exclusive. Most Sama Dilaut are very casual in their use of the names and reveal considerable variation in their definitions of them" (Nimmo, 2001:141).

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: "Bajau traditional religion has a vague concept of a supreme being who is responsible for creating the world and its ultimate functioning. This being, called Tuhan by the Bajau, is of minor importance in the day-to-day concerns of most Bajau who have only vague and often contradictory notions of his role in human affairs" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– Yes

Notes: "Tuhan is always referred to as male, and his residence is usually assigned to some vague place in the sky" (Nimmo, 1990:18).

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– Yes

Notes: "Tuhan is always referred to as male, and his residence is usually assigned to some vague place in the sky" (Nimmo, 1990:18).

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– No

Notes: (Nimmo, 1990:18)

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

– No

Notes: No monarch is present among the Badjau.

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

Notes: No monarch is present among the Badjau.

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– No

Notes: Tuhan is removed from the affairs of humanity (see Nimmo, 1990:17-18).

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– No

Notes: Tuhan is far removed from the daily lives of humanity, and does not interact with or show emotions to the living.

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– No

Notes: Tuhan is far removed from the daily lives of humanity, and does not interact with or show emotions to the living.

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– No

Notes: Tuhan is removed from the affairs of humanity (see Nimmo, 1990:17-18).

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: "Some [supernatural beings] are the spirits of once living people whereas others have always existed as supernaturals" (Nimmo, 1990:14). These previously human beings are called "ummagged". "A panguah is not a spirit like a saitan or an ummagged, but rather is usually described as a rotting corpse that returns to haunt the living. The chief reason a panguah appears is because its body was not properly bathed before burial. Also, the panguah may return to haunt people who dealt with them unfairly during their lifetimes or who failed to mourn their deaths properly" (Nimmo, 1990:18).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

— Yes

Notes: "If one sees a pangguah, sometimes his ummagged [spirit] is frightened from his body and he becomes ill or faints" (Nimmo, 1990:19).

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "In return for proper treatment, the ummagged occasionally assist the living. On the other hand, if such respect is not given, the ummagged may bring harm to the offenders" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Human spirits can reward:

— Yes

Notes: "In their [the ummagged] benevolent moods, they may bring good fortune, but more typically when they involve themselves in human affairs, it is as punishments for misdeeds" (Nimmo, 1990:17)

↳ Human spirits can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "For the most part, the ummagged appear to lead relatively contented existences on the cemetery islands. Much more localized than the saitan, they only leave the islands to punish offenses or to assist in curing ceremonies" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

— Yes

Notes: "Some [supernatural beings] are the spirits of once living people whereas others have always existed as supernaturals" (Nimmo, 1990:14). These non-human beings are called "saitan". "In addition to the above mentioned supernatural beings [pangguah, saitan, ummagged, and Tuhan], the Bajau believe in a host of ghouls, monsters, and tricksters who occasionally harass them" (Nimmo, 1990:19).

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: "Saitan bring illness to persons who express disbelief in them. If one speaks disrespectfully of the saitan, he may have a sore throat or laryngitis" (Nimmo, 1990:16).

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

— Yes

Notes: "Saitan bring illness to persons who express disbelief in them. If one speaks disrespectfully of the saitan, he may have a sore throat or laryngitis" (Nimmo, 1990:16).

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "Saitan sometimes cause illness or misfortune if their domains are disturbed, but more often they do so simply because of their nature" (Nimmo, 1990:15).

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: "The world of the Sama Dilaut is populated with countless supernatural beings...some are the spirits of once-living people whereas others have always existed as supernaturals...No Sama Dilaut can name all the spirits that inhabit their world. They are simply too numerous. A few Sama Dilaut can list the different types of spirits and describe their unique characteristics, but most know spirits only in a general way" (Nimmo, 2001:140).

## Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural monitoring and punishment is not described in substantial ethnographic detail. See questions below (as well as Nimmo, 1990:19-21) for available information regarding supernatural monitoring.

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

Notes: "Like many people, the Sama Dilaut occasionally have disagreements that result in family rifts. Kinsmen are important in all aspects of a Sama Dilaut's life, and to sever ties with them not only disrupts the normal flow of social intercourse but also angers the ancestral spirits" (Nimmo, 2001:162).

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

Notes: "Certain Sama Dilaut men know how to chant kata-kata, or healing chants. These are long, memorized chants that take two to three nights to complete with one or two hours of chanting each night. The kata-kata must be recited without error to avoid offenses to the ancestors" (Nimmo, 2001:164).

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

Notes: "A pangguah is not a spirit like a saitan or an ummagged, but rather is usually described as a rotting corpse that returns to haunt the living. The chief reason a pangguah appears is because its body was not properly bathed before burial" (Nimmo, 1990:18).

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– I don't know

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "For the most part, the ummagged [spirits of the deceased] appear to lead relatively contented existences on the cemetery islands. Much more localized than the saitan [non-human supernatural beings], they only leave the island to punish offenses to to assist shamans in curing ceremonies. In their benevolent moods, they may bring good fortune, but more typically when they involve themselves in human affairs, it is as punishments for misdeeds" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more details concerning the agents of supernatural punishment.

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Notes: The Badjau high god (Tuhan) is generally not involved in the affairs of humans.

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: The spirits of deceased humans are described as being the agents of supernatural punishment (see Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See below for reasons for supernatural punishment.

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

— Yes

Notes: "A pangguah is not a spirit like a saitan or an ummagged, but rather is usually described as a rotting corpse that returns to haunt the living. The chief reason a pangguah appears is because its body was not properly bathed before burial" (Nimmo, 1990:18).

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

— Yes

Notes: "In their [the ummagged, or spirits of the deceased] benevolent moods, they may bring good fortune, but more typically when they involve themselves in human affairs, it is as punishments for misdeeds" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Done randomly:

— Yes

Notes: The saitan [non-human supernatural beings] are described as causing illness or misfortune simply because of their nature (see Nimmo, 1990:15-16).

↳ Other [specify]

— Yes

Notes: "Saitan sometimes cause illness or misfortune if their domains are disturbed...two shipwrecks in Tawi-Tawi were attributed to saitan. In one case, the ship was too close to an islet inhabited by saitan..." (Nimmo, 1990:15).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

— I don't know

Notes: The afterlife is not described in substantial ethnographic detail.

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

— Yes

Notes: See questions below for descriptions of supernatural punishment.

↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck:

— Yes

Notes: "If a Bajau offends an ummagged, the result is illness, misfortune, or even death" (Nimmo, 1990:17).

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

— Yes

Notes: "If a Bajau offends an ummagged, the result is illness, misfortune, or even death"

(Nimmo, 1990:17).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

— I don't know

Notes: Ethnographic evidence indicates that if properly propitiated, spirits of deceased humans (ummagged) will assist the living (Nimmo, 1990:17). No other descriptions or examples of supernatural rewards are provided. Insufficient evidence to make a clear decision.

### Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of messianic beliefs.

Is an eschatology present:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of an eschatology.

## Practices

### Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required celibacy.

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required castration.

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required fasting.

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations.



Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of required human sacrifice.

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

— Yes

Notes: "The land-dwelling Islamic communities view the nomadic boat-dwelling Badjau as occupying "the lowest social position in the Bajau community since boat-dwelling has traditionally identified the Bajau as a pagan, outcast group" (Nimmo, 1969:217). "Within the Sulu Islands, the Bajau have always been viewed as an outcast group by the land-dwelling Muslims, but in recent years many of these sea people have abandoned boat-dwelling, embraced Islam, and become incorporated into the Islamic community of Sulu. Those of Tawi-Tawi, however, are still predominantly boat-dwelling, subsistence fishermen who continue to follow their traditional lifestyles which for some families also include the occasional cultivation of small farms on the plots of land owned by the Muslim land-dwellers" (Nimmo, 1990:6).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

— No

Notes: Small-scale rituals do not appear to be required, but rather performed when deemed necessary. "The simplest Bajau ceremonies are performed alone by the nuclear family. If the family happens to be in the vicinity of the cemetery islands, some members may visit family graves to leave small offerings of betel nut or cigarettes to a recently deceased relative. Sometimes the offering is left out of thoughtfulness for the deceased, but more commonly it is left to insure that the deceased's spirit will not visit the living with illness or bad luck. A similar ceremony occurs when a Bajau advertently or inadvertently passes a place known to be the hangout of saitan, evil spirits. As a placation for having possibly aroused the displeasure of the saitan by disturbing their home, the trespassers frequently leave offerings of betel or cigarettes, or small green or white flags, favorite colors of the spirits. A chant may be recited as the offering is left, but frequently no formal ritual is involved" (Nimmo, 1969:91).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

— Yes

Notes: "Unlike economic activities, Bajau ceremonies usually demand the participation of the entire alliance unit and sometimes of more distantly related kinsmen. In fact, besides the obvious functions connected with marriage, healing, and initiation, the chief function of Bajau ceremonies is to congregate the otherwise dispersed Bajau households. Only for ceremonies do large groupings of Bajau houseboats moor at a single village" (Nimmo, 1969:90).

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

— Yes

Notes: Rituals are led by religious practitioners known as djin. See Nimmo, 1990:22-26 for more details.

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

— Yes

Notes: See questions below for descriptions of extra-ritual in-group markers.

↳ Food taboos:

— No

↳ Hair:

— No

↳ Dress:

— No

↳ Ornaments:

— Yes

Notes: "A special ceremony called magtabok is held for young girls when their ears are pierced...The rationale for performing it varies from family to family; some claim it is important to hold the ceremony when a child is young so earrings or plugs can be inserted to protect her from malevolent spirits. Two ceremonies I witnessed for infants were held because the children were sickly and the families believed the ceremony would improve their health. Others say the ears are pierced for cosmetic reasons so the child can wear earrings to make her more attractive" (Nimmo, 2001:171).

|

↳ Archaic ritual language:

— No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of archaic ritual language.

↳ Other:

— Yes [specify]: Superincision

Notes: The magislam is a male genital operation held for boys during their adolescence (See Nimmo, 2001:172-174).

## Society and Institutions

### Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

— A tribe

Notes: The most important social unit among the Bajau is the nuclear family. "When a Bajau family arrives at one of the five moorages, it normally anchors near the houseboats of whatever kinsmen are there" (Nimmo, 1990:9). These family alliances usually consist of no more than two generations, and collaterally extend to siblings. Family alliance come together for work activities (such as fishing) as well as religious ceremonies. The family alliance composition is constantly changing as each nuclear family comes and goes. Leaders of alliance units are not formally chosen, but emerge as a result of special skill or knowledge. In addition to these family alliances, "The Bajau recognize a local group which perhaps can best be translated as localized kindred, a group of cognatic kinsmen, or more specifically, a group of related family alliance units who regularly moor together at a moorage. The Tawi-Tawi Bajau recognize about seven such groups among themselves. Obviously, these localized kindred are not closed kin groups, since ever member has kin ties which extend into other groups, either in the same or in different moorages. And, except for the sedentary core of people found at each Bajau moorage, membership in the groups is constantly changing as families move in and out of the moorage. A localized kindred may constitute an entire Bajau moorage, or a moorage may harbor two or three such localized groups. Each localized kindred recognizes a headman whose chief duties are arbitration and sometimes ritual leadership" (Nimmo, 1990:10).

### Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

— No

Notes: See question on social complexity.

### Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— No

Notes: SCCS variable 20, Food Storage, indicates that food is stored in individual households (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Notes: The Badjau are a nomadic, boat-dwelling society. There is no need for transportation infrastructure as transportation takes place via boat (see Nimmo, 1990:3-6).

## Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall (1972, Column 10: Police) "Police functions are not specialized or institutionalized at any level of political integration, the maintenance of law and order being left exclusively to informal mechanisms of social control, to private retaliation, or to sorcery" [Note: equivalent to SCCS Variable 90, Police].

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Notes: According to Tuden and Marshall (1972, Column 9: Judiciary) "Supreme judicial authority is lacking at any level above that of the local community" [Note: equivalent to SCCS Variable 89, Judiciary].

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

Notes: Because there are neither institutionalized police nor judges, presumably, institutionalized punishment is not enforced.

## Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 149 (Cultural Complexity Scale 1- Writing and Records), indicates that neither writing nor records are present among the Badjau (Murdock and Provost, 1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

## Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: "Those [Badjau] of Tawi-Tawi...are still predominantly boat-dwelling, subsistence fishermen who

continue to follow their traditional life styles which for some families also include the occasional cultivation of small farms on plots of land owned by Muslim land-dwellers" (Nimmo, 1990:6). Additional source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Fishing
- Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Notes: "Those [Badjau] of Tawi-Tawi...are still predominantly boat-dwelling, subsistence fishermen who continue to follow their traditional life styles which for some families also include the occasional cultivation of small farms on plots of land owned by Muslim land-dwellers" (Nimmo, 1990:6). Additional source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.