



Theme:

SEA-BOUND and CROSS-BORDERS Maritime Commerce and Sea-faring Lifeways of the Sama Dilaut in Tawi-Tawi Philippine Waters and Southeast Asian Seas.

Marine and oceanic environments link and bind the culturally-rich and politically dynamic Southeast Asian societies. Commerce and maritime trade have been instrumental in bringing about religious and cultural changes and ushering consequent values transformation. It was especially the era of Islamic missions that resulted in major reconfigurations of social and cultural ties of the Austronesian-based ethnic communities in Southeast Asian seas.

In these dynamics accounts and studies on Sinama-speaking sea-borne people who are known to academics by various nomenclature such as Badjao (also Bajau, Bajo), Sama Dilaut, Sama Palau or simply A'a Sama are rather thin. Their role in the cross-cultural pollination as well as the contributions of their sea-based economies and experiences on maritime trading in the region's progress has been least explored by academic interest, and if ever referred to, have been superficial gazes into their recalcitrance to change such that they are often subjects of development aggression and civilizing missions. Much dearth are literature when it comes to the richly variant and diasporized Sama Dilaut of Tawi-Tawi who have remained sea-faring and engaging in subsistent fishing in the waters of southern Philippines until today. This, and their contemporary ventures into the bigger Southeast Asian seas as traditional society has continually defied the logic and legalism of bordered nation-states.

Of those that have been written about the Sama Dilaut, discourses mostly take off from ethno-anthropological perspectives and hardly give importance to impacts and consequences of contemporary politics and the changing economies in the resilience of their traditional life and on the sustainability of their subsistent ways. This international conference on the Sama Dilaut hopes to fill in the gaps and to surface new discourses in scholarship and in how to study and understand the Sama Dilaut world. And, more importantly, in designing development programs and adopting appropriate interventions and

modalities towards to



making life better for them. Innovative models and frameworks are hoped to emerge, complementing and enriching alternative perspectives of discussing and presenting the Sama Dilaut contemporary sea-world.

By encouraging a 180-degree turn-about of the front-gates of scholarship and development programs back to the sea and the maritime world, this conference hopes to encourage and popularize alternative frameworks and innovative models in figuring the Sama Dilaut world both metaphorically and pragmatically.

While not so much about novel experimentation, finally, this meeting of scholars, scientists, statesmen and development actors with the Sama Dilaut themselves is an opportunity to look back to what has always been held by the Sama Dilaut as their life-ways since time immemorial and as traditional, and to commit to give them renewed winds to sail and to secure abundant seas that may facilitate their journey to reclaim their space and reorder their present realities.

Objectives:

To strengthen research and encourage academic interest on the plight and situation of the Sama Dilaut (Badjao) by highlighting their roles in the social and cultural development of the Sama society, and their contributions to the dynamics of maritime and sea-based economy in Tawi-Tawi and the Philippine waters, and the impact and consequences of geopolitics in Southeast Asian region in this roles and contributions;

To discuss development models and survey affirmative actions, and evaluate empowerment programs and interventions for this most marginalized of Sama ethnic communities; and

To provide venue and spaces for the Sama Dilaut to tell their narratives and as well as for listening to alternative voices speaking as interlocutors for Sama Dilaut issues.



Panels. Presenters and Themes

This Conference is a close conference and speakers are purposively sought and invited to present in the forums as resource persons or as panel of reactors. Interested scholars, social and natural scientists, as wells as development strategists, government officials and cultural practitioners are encouraged to attend and interact with the panel of expert discussants. Inquiries may be addressed to the Conference Chairman and/or the Co-Chairman

International:

The conference shall create spaces for dialogue between these foreign scholars and researchers with their local Sama Dialut informants with the aim of revalidating, reaffirming or, if needs be, rectifying, reconstructing and updating their findings as well as recommending areas for further engagements by future scholars.

Philippine scholars and researchers and their counterparts of foreign nationalities coming from countries outside of the Philippines who have studied and conducted fieldworks with Sama Dilaut in Tawi-Tawi and elsewhere in the Philippines hold conversations with their Sama Dilaut respondents and hosts.

- Profs. Harry Arlo Nimmo (U.S.A.)
- Dr. Leslie Bauzon
- Jun Nagamatsu (Japan)
- Nagatsu Kazufumi (Japan),
- Alice Dugan and Marlena Skobe (USA)
- Dr. Eric Casino

National:

Legal and development experts from national agencies such as the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), Autonomous Region on MuslimMindanao (ARMM) and the Local government

of the Province and Municipalities of Tawi-Tawi, by drawing from their experiences of direct engagement with indigenous people and those in the margins, are important stakeholders from the government and development sector who can provide a perspective to shed light on aspects of politics and development that has impacted and has implications on the prospects of Sama Dilaut and alternatives available to them.

- Atty. Cecilia Jimenez
- Atty. Laisa Masuhud Alamia
- Atty. Raissa Jajurie

Academic community and the MSU-TCTO:

Scholars and academics are given a whole day to present their discourses in three Thematic Panels:

1. Cultural Politics, Negotiation and Accommodation, and Marginalization;
2. Economic and Social Migration, Diasporization and Sama Dilaut Crossing Borders; and
3. Development, Environment and Towards Building Safer Seas for the Sama Dilaut.

Complementing those from national academic and research institutions and organizations, faculty and staff researchers from the MSU-TCTO will be given the chance to present their studies and reports on their engagements and actions with the Sama Dilaut

DATES TO REMEMBER

Submission of abstracts: 15 September 2015

Notice of acceptance: 20 September 2015

Full paper: 30 October 2015

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Atty. Lorenzo R. Reyes, Chancellor, MSU-TCTO (Conference Chairman)

Prof. Abduljim J. Hassan, Director, Sama Studies Center (Conference co-chairman)

Prof.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

National Commission on Culture and the Arts

Bureau of Cultural Heritage – ARMM

UNICEF

Asian Public Intellectuals – API Philippines

Philippine Association for the Study of Culture History and Religion (PASCHR)

CONFERENCE VENUE:

Marine Science Museum

Fishermen's Training Center

Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography

MSU-Sanga-Sanga Campus
Sanga-Sanga Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

CONFERENCE FEES: inclusive of kit and meals (lunch and snacks) for Dec.1-3, 2015

International – USD 150.00

National (Professionals) - 3,000.00

National (Students) – 1,500.00