Post-Disaster Recovery in the Philippine Periphery
An Anthropological Approach to the Experiences of Sea-Oriented Indigenous Peoples

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Abstract

Vulnerable populations face the highest risks during disasters, not only because of exposure to hazards but also due to marginalization, which heightens their vulnerability. The impacts of disasters intensify when high-risk groups, particularly displaced Indigenous peoples, are not adequately included in disaster risk management efforts. The Sama Badjao are sea-oriented Indigenous peoples residing in the coastal areas of the Philippines. Their precarious circumstances, such as tightening border controls, ongoing armed conflicts, declining fish stocks, and movement restrictions, have compelled them to adopt a semi-sedentary lifestyle while maintaining their homes close to the sea. The experiences of the Sama Badjao challenge conventional notions of vulnerability and resilience in disaster contexts. This study investigates their post-disaster experiences following Super Typhoon Rai in 2021. To frame their narratives, I combined and adapted the concepts of othering and intersectionality theory within a historical context influenced by structural discrimination and exclusion based on gender, indigeneity, and religion. I gathered data through a household census, participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and focus group discussions, culminating in 10 months of fieldwork (2021-2022) in the coastal area of Bato, Leyte, Philippines. Findings revealed that the Sama Badjao were well-prepared for the impact of Super Typhoon Rai. They utilized their Indigenous knowledge and defined gender roles that complemented each family member's responsibilities before, during, and after a disaster, along with mutual kinship support. Nonetheless, Rai's unprecedented strength and misleading comparisons to Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 fostered complacency among the men, as Haiyan's landfall was slightly farther from their community. This led to delayed evacuation efforts among some households. A month later, the Sama Badjao community faced exclusion from state relief and recovery programs, including shelter reconstruction materials. They were initially denied monetary aid due to ongoing structural discrimination, which involved misrepresentations of their cultural identity and traditions, as well as exclusionary rules and policies targeting sea-based Indigenous communities. The traditional livelihood practice of *Magosaha* was misinterpreted from a Eurocentric and modernist perspective. Meanwhile, the lack of culturally appropriate aid reinforced their marginalized status. Intersection of indigeneity, gender, and religious identities shaped unequal access to resources for immediate recovery, exacerbating their vulnerability and placing women, the elderly, single parents, and children left behind in the community in a more disadvantaged situation, along with stigmas and stereotypes as 'beggars,' 'dirty,' and 'outsiders.' At the same time, the study highlights how the Sama Badjao people resist dominant narratives, counteract imposed identities, and challenge the public representation of 'Badjao' on the periphery. They engaged in nonconfrontational but strategic acts of resistance, such as rebuilding stilt houses to reclaim coastal space, women assuming caretaking and leadership roles, and continuing the practice of *Magosaha*. This research calls for inclusive and culturally informed disaster governance that recognizes Indigenous knowledge, addresses intersectional vulnerabilities, and ensures the genuine participation of marginalized communities in recovery processes.

Kurzfassung

Gefährdete Bevölkerungsgruppen sind bei Katastrophen am stärksten gefährdet, nicht nur, weil sie den Gefahren ausgesetzt sind, sondern auch wegen ihrer Marginalisierung, die ihre Gefährdung noch verschlimmert. Die Auswirkungen von Katastrophen werden noch verschlimmert, wenn Hochrisikogruppen, insbesondere vertriebene indigene Völker, nicht angemessen in die Bemühungen um das Katastrophenrisikomanagement einbezogen werden. Die Sama Badjao sind ein indigenes Volk, das in den Küstenregionen der Philippinen am Meer lebt. Ihre prekären Lebensbedingungen, wie verschärfte Grenzkontrollen, andauernde bewaffnete Konflikte, schwindende Fischbestände und Bewegungseinschränkungen, haben sie dazu gezwungen, eine halbsesshafte Lebensweise anzunehmen und ihre Häuser in Meeresnähe zu halten. Die Erfahrungen der Sama Badjao stellen herkömmliche Vorstellungen von Verwundbarkeit und Widerstandsfähigkeit im Katastrophenkontext in Frage. In dieser Studie werden ihre Erfahrungen nach dem Super-Taifun Rai im Jahr 2021 untersucht. Um ihre Erzählungen zu erfassen, habe ich die Konzepte des Othering und der Intersektionalitätstheorie in einem historischen Kontext kombiniert und angepasst, der durch strukturelle Diskriminierung und Ausgrenzung aufgrund von Geschlecht, Indigenität und Religion gekennzeichnet ist. Ich sammelte Daten durch eine Haushaltszählung, teilnehmende Beobachtung, halbstrukturierte und unstrukturierte Interviews und Fokusgruppendiskussionen, die in 10 Monaten Feldforschung (2021-2022) in der Küstenregion von Bato, Leyte, Philippinen, gipfelten. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass die Sama Badjao gut auf die Auswirkungen des Super-Taifuns Rai vorbereitet waren. Sie nutzten ihr indigenes Wissen und definierten Geschlechterrollen, die die Verantwortlichkeiten der einzelnen Familienmitglieder vor, während und nach einer Katastrophe sowie die gegenseitige Unterstützung der Verwandtschaft ergänzten. Die noch nie dagewesene Stärke von Rai und die irreführenden Vergleiche mit dem Super-Taifun Haiyan im Jahr 2013 verleiteten die Männer jedoch zu Selbstzufriedenheit, da der Landfall von Haiyan etwas weiter von ihrer Gemeinschaft entfernt war. Dies führte zu einer Verzögerung der Evakuierungsmaßnahmen einiger Haushalte während des Rai. Einen Monat nach der Katastrophe wurde die Sama Badjao-Gemeinschaft von den Hilfs- und Wiederaufbauprogrammen der Regierung ausgeschlossen, einschließlich der Bereitstellung von Materialien zum Wiederaufbau von Unterkünften. Aufgrund der anhaltenden strukturellen Diskriminierung, die sich in der falschen Darstellung ihrer kulturellen Identität und Traditionen sowie in den ausgrenzenden Vorschriften und Maßnahmen für im Ausland lebende indigene Gemeinschaften manifestierte, wurde ihnen zunächst finanzielle Unterstützung verweigert. Die traditionelle Lebensweise der Magosaha wurde aus einer eurozentrischen und modernistischen Perspektive fehlinterpretiert. Gleichzeitig verstärkte der Mangel an kulturell angemessener Hilfe ihre Marginalisierung. Das Zusammentreffen von Indigenität, Geschlecht und religiöser Identität führte zu einem ungleichen Zugang zu den Ressourcen für die unmittelbare Wiederherstellung, was ihre Verwundbarkeit noch verschlimmerte und Frauen, ältere Menschen, Alleinerziehende und Kinder, die in der Gemeinschaft zurückblieben, in eine noch benachteiligtere Situation brachte, zusammen mit den Stigmata und Stereotypen, „Bettler“, ‚schmutzig‘ und „Außenseiter“ zu sein. Gleichzeitig zeigt die Studie, wie sich die Sama Badjao gegen die vorherrschenden Narrative wehren, den aufgezwungenen Identitäten entgegentreten und die öffentliche Darstellung der „Badjao“

an der Peripherie herausfordern. Sie engagieren sich in nicht-konfrontativen, aber strategischen Widerstandshandlungen wie dem Wiederaufbau von Stelzenhäusern zur Rückgewinnung des Küstenraums, der Übernahme von Betreuungs- und Führungsaufgaben durch Frauen und der Fortführung der Magosaha-Praktiken. Diese Forschungsarbeit fordert eine integrative und kulturell informierte Katastrophenpolitik, die indigenes Wissen anerkennt, sich mit intersektionalen Schwachstellen befasst und die echte Beteiligung marginalisierter Gemeinschaften an Wiederaufbauprozessen sicherstellt.

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List of Abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFZ	Australian Fishing Zone
BAC	Born Again Christian
BDRRMC	Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee
BHW	Barangay Health Worker
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CL	Customary Laws
DepEd	Department of Education
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD	Department of Social Work and Development
ERMF	Edmund Rice Ministries Foundation
ESSCom	Eastern Sabah Security Command
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IKSPs	Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPED	Indigenous Peoples Education
IPRA of 1997	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 also known as Republic Act No. 8371
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGU	Local Government Unit
MDRRM	Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
MHA	*Masyarakat Hukum Adat* (Customary Law Communities)
MILF	Moro International Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAP	National Action Plan
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NHA	National Housing Authority
PAGASA	Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration
PAR	Philippine Area of Responsibility
RAFI	Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc.
SBHW	Sama Badjao Health Workers
TCWS	Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal
UN	United Nations

UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WNP	Wakatobi National Park
ZEF	Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung (Center for Development Research)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 From Seas to Streets: The Sama Badjao in the Philippine Post-World War II Era

It was the Christmas season of 2018. While purchasing a mobile load in my hometown, a child approached me for money, and I gave him a five-peso coin. A few minutes later, I was surrounded by several children asking for coins. I told them I no longer had enough spare to give to everyone. Later, I realized they were Sama Badjao when they replied to me in an unfamiliar language. I always noticed that from September to December, many of them beg for money in our city center. They usually camp and sleep in the streets or terminals. The Sama Badjao women carry the toddlers on their hips while male children/teenagers bring a makeshift drum. I grew up with this sight as the city is flooded with people enjoying holiday shopping discounts and Christmas decorations. During my undergraduate years, one of my professors told me they were from Bato, Leyte. Later, I learned that in our city, the Sama Badjaos who beg in the streets were apprehended and turned over to Bato, Leyte, in their settlement. It was an unsustainable way of ensuring their safety. I could not help but ask, if they already have homes, why do they keep coming to cities to camp on the streets? What happened to them during disasters?

The Sama Badjao, are also known as '*Sama Dilaut'*[1], which means the Sama of the sea. They represent one of the largest and most widely dispersed nomadic Indigenous groups[2] in maritime Southeast Asia. They are a subgroup of the Sama or Sinama-speaking peoples of the Sulu and Celebes Seas, who considered the sea their home (Sather, 2006). As of 2018, it is believed that there were more than 564,000 Badjao in the Philippines, 347,000 in Sabah, Malaysia, and 200,000 in eastern Indonesia (Stacey et al., 2018).

[1] 'Sama' means the name of the community, who are Sinama/Sama speakers. [Di]laut means the sea. 'Sama Dilaut' literally means 'Sama of the sea.' However, in some Austronesian languages, 'sama' means 'together' or 'same.'

[2] All 'Indigenous' words in the manuscript are capitalized to recognize and respect the identities, cultures, and histories of Indigenous peoples, in accordance with the ethical standards of American Psychological Association (APA) Style.

In insular Southeast Asia, unlike its popularity for coasts and islands abundant in maritime resources, the phenomenon of sea nomadism is hardly known to many. Sea nomads are mobile, boat-dwelling people who have practiced spatial mobility for hundreds of years to improve their well-being and survival (Chou, 2006). Nevertheless, scholars have debated the appropriateness of the word 'sea nomadism' to describe these maritime populations[3] in Southeast Asia. The term 'nomad' has its roots in the Greek νομὰς, meaning 'pasture', and later on refers to people 'without a fixed abode,' most often referring to (terrestrial) pastoral groups owning livestock. Emphasizing mobility and the lack of fixed settlement, this definition of nomadism has led many scholars to question the actual nature of the mobility of sea nomad populations. It appears that most of them are migratory or have sea- and land-based territories. Hence, the preference of the terms 'semi-nomadic', 'sea-oriented', or 'maritime mobile populations' (Boutry et al., 2024, pp. 32–33).

Adding to the debate is the diversity and complexity of the Sama-speaking population, which I argue can be interpreted emically and etically. From the insider's perspective (emic perspective), villages that may seem close to each other perceive themselves as distinct or unique, with their own identity rooted in their geographical location. Each village within an island views itself as unique from other Sama groups and is known by a toponym (e.g., Sama Sitangkai, Sama Tabawan, Sama Bangigi, etc.) (Nimmo, 2001). The Sama people also differentiate themselves according to their dwelling place or place of residence. The Sama of the sea, who live in houseboats, call themselves 'Sama Dilaut' or 'Sama Laut.' The Sama who live in the coastal or littoral areas call themselves 'Sama Bihing' or 'Sama Lipid,' and the sedentary Sama who live on land call themselves 'Sama Dileya' or 'Sama' (Jumala, 2011; Nimmo, 2001; Sather, 1993).

However, from outsider perspectives, Nimmo (2001) argues that this complexity led to singling out the Sama Dilaut as a separate people and calling them 'Bajau [Laut],' a name used for boat-dwelling people in eastern Borneo and 'Bajo' in eastern Indonesia

[3]Aside from the Badjao, there are also two other groups of sea-oriented peoples in Southeast Asia, each of which is the product of an apparently independent history of adaptation, geography, culture, and linguistics. These are the *Moken/Moklen* of the Mergui Archipelago of Burma and southwestern Thailand. The third congeries are collectively referred to as *Orang Laut* (Sea people), who inhabit the islands and estuaries of the Thai–Malay Peninsula, Singapore, and Sumatra (Sather, 2006).

(Grange, 2017; Sather, 1997). Additionally, they are called 'Badjao' in the Philippines, while 'Sama' designates the more sedentary Sama-speaking groups (Toohey, 2005). The Sama Dilaut speak dialects of the Sinama language, view themselves as Sama, and are identified as Sama by other people of the Sulu Archipelago. Perhaps, their significant distinction from the other Sama, aside from living in houseboats, is that some of them have not fully embraced the Islamic faith (Nimmo, 2001). On the contrary, according to Saat (2003), the general wisdom is that all Sama populations are Muslim, which may explain their exclusion from the Lumads[4] in Mindanao (Ulindang, n.d.). Saat (2003) believes that the Sama Dilaut consider themselves Muslims, too, although they do not practice all basic Islamic teachings.

The Sama Badjao, together with other Indigenous communities in southern Philippines, are 'untouched' by Spanish and American colonial rule (Toohey, 2005). When the government of the Republic of the Philippines was established in 1946, they remained untouched by the rising modern culture stemming from the capital city of Manila and other major urban areas in the country. Until the 1960s, they mainly lived on their *Lepa* (houseboats), which can be used as fishing boats when sails are attached. They also built makeshift wooden stilt houses using lumber, bamboo, nipa, and *Anahaw* roofing on shallow shores and coral reefs subject to tides and weather conditions (Nimmo, 1969; Roxas-Lim, 2017). Before the conception of international borders, they traditionally traversed the Sulu and Celebes Seas and considered the maritime area their ancestral domain. This results from their adaptation to the flow of the fish, tides, and seasons (Lagsa, 2015). They are expert line-, net-, and spear fishers, vendors/traders, weavers, divers, and boat builders (Aoyama, 2014; Hoogervorst, 2012; Máñez & Pauwelussen, 2016).

Currently, the Sama Badjao are considered one of the most marginalized Indigenous peoples in the Philippines due to their displacement from their ancestral domain and transformation of their dwelling patterns (Maglana, 2016). Stretching from the coastal areas of Zamboanga Bay to the Sulu Archipelago, they abandoned their territorial seas due

[4]*Lumad* is a Bisayan term that means 'native' or 'Indigenous.' The Philippine government strictly distinguishes Lumad from the Moro and Christian Mindanaons. In the Philippines, all land- and sea-based Sama are considered Muslim ethnolinguistic groups. Hence, this excludes them from being Lumad or native in Mindanao although the NCIP recognized the Sama-Badjao as Indigenous peoples. For a full list of Lumads in Mindanao, see https://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/c.php?g=105238&p=687428

to continuous armed conflict caused by the Moro separatist groups that started in the 1970s during Philippine Martial Law, alongside sea piracy, and longstanding ethnic clashes (Bracamonte et al., 2011; UNHCR, 2014). This places them in a vulnerable position, first as internally displaced persons, and second as 'Badjao.' Without livelihood support, the term Badjao has often been depicted as mendicants since migrating inland (Jumala, 2011). Most of them moved and scattered in the northern (Luzon) and central (Visayas) parts of the Philippines and many parts of Sabah, Malaysia (Bracamonte et al., 2011; Lubiano, 2019; UNHCR, 2014).

Scholars (Amper, 2013; Jumala, 2011; E. R. Navarro, 2015; Nimmo, 1969) who conducted ethnographic studies regarding the sedentarization of Sama Badjao agreed that they were never explicitly forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle. In reality, they are left without alternatives except to become sedentary. Living sedentarily may create feelings of uneasiness or culture shock, and undoubtedly, they also encounter hardship as they adapt to a new lifestyle (Jumala, 2011). With the problems of access to sea resources due to their displacement, they have to go where the resources are. The movement to the urban centers made them more marginalized in the process (Amper, 2013; Bracamonte et al., 2011; Lubiano, 2019). Nevertheless, most Sama Badjao still uphold a close relationship to the sea by living on the shores or islands in semi-permanent settlements. The condition and rhythm of the sea pervade almost every aspect of community life, such as household activities, life-cycle rituals, and culinary practices (Máñez & Pauwelussen, 2016).

Due to their vulnerability and disadvantaged situation, several government agencies, local and international NGOs, faith-based religious organizations, and charitable institutions implemented intervention programs to assimilate them into mainstream society (Amelia et al., 2016; Amper, 2013; Aoyama, 2014; Hoogervorst, 2012; Nagatsu, 2001; E. R. Navarro, 2015). Each nation-state in insular Southeast Asia has its own way of integrating the Sama Badjao, influenced by its historical and colonial past. For instance, both Malaysia and Indonesia enforced their sedentarization efforts through land titles, permanent housing mandates, and the banning of houseboats. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, through the provision of housing programs, access to health & education, issuance of legal identities, conditional cash transfers, and livelihood support, as further discussed in Chapter 2.2.

Specifically, I explored the settlement processes of Badjao migrants living in the coastal area in the Eastern Visayas region in the Philippines. The region is one of the most calamity-prone areas in the Philippines due to its geographic location, facing the Pacific Ocean in the eastern portion (Meniano, 2018). In recent years, destructive typhoons have struck the Eastern Visayas region. Along with the impact of severe weather disturbances, they already suffered from repeated displacement, housing, land, and property issues, severe poverty, lack of food security, absence of integration, inaccessibility to basic services and assistance, including health centers and schools, absence of sustainable livelihoods, and discrimination (UNHCR, 2014).

Based on observation and informal conversations at the beginning of my fieldwork, they referred to themselves as 'Sama' when interacting among themselves. So, I call them Sama during my stay in the community and 'Badjao' when referring to them during my interviews with non-indigenous peoples. The study participants clarified that they preferred being identified as 'Badjao' without mockery. For them, their parents and grandparents were the Sama Dilaut, for they moored and lived in houseboats, while the current generation already lived in stilt houses. To maintain clarity, I will refer throughout the manuscript to the Sama Dilaut in the Philippines as Sama Badjao, the Sama in Malaysia as Bajau or Bajau Laut, and the Sama in Indonesia as Bajo or Bajo Laut, following the established literature.

Unlike most land-based ethnic groups in the Philippines, the Sama Badjao's separation from mainstream society, due to their culture of spatial mobility, prevented their access to basic health services, housing, education, and formal occupations (Olasiman & Bascar, 2017). Although historically, they never had access to or an aspiration to these services, their sedentarization and exposure to the dominant society have led them to change their needs and aspire to access these services embedded in formal institutions.

Moreover, development projects targeting Indigenous peoples, depending on how they were managed, could either help them survive or destroy their cultural heritage. So far, these so-called projects have failed to consider Indigenous priorities, undermining the urgent need to assess and monitor the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples. The international community had to be continuously reminded that the Indigenous

peoples were still denied the ability to govern their own resources and destinies. This is the fundamental cause of their continued poverty and marginalization. Indigenous communities that still had those resources did not view themselves as poor since they possessed ecological capital, their ancestral territory, and resources (UN Press, 2004). Therefore, understanding the social exclusionary processes of the sedentarized Sama Badjao community requires the recognition of the historical context, which stems from their social and spatial location in Philippine society (Macalandag, 2009).

Taking the social exclusion the Sama Badjao experience into consideration, I am guided by my interest in their conditions during and after extreme weather events. Due to its geographic location, the Philippines is one of the most at-risk nations in the world in terms of disasters because of its location on the Western Pacific Basin and Circum-Pacific Seismic Belt. The Western Pacific Basin is where most tropical storms are formed and the busiest among the typhoon belts, while the Circum-Pacific Seismic Belt, also known as the Pacific Ring of Fire, is where earthquakes are frequent, and volcanoes are found (Meniano, 2018; World Bank Group, 2021). The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 by Germanwatch ranked the Philippines as the fourth most affected country by weather-related events between 2000 and 2019. The country is affected by extreme events on an ongoing basis and is always in the process of recovering from almost yearly destructive typhoons (Eckstein et al., 2021). Additionally, the World Risk Index ranked the Philippines as the most disaster-prone country in the world. The World Risk Index represents the synthesized concepts and discourses on the phenomena of exposure, hazard, and vulnerability. In disaster research, the interaction of these phenomena is deemed the cause of risks (*World Risk Report, 2022*).

The major objective of this study is to examine the post-disaster experiences of the Sama Badjao Indigenous community from Super Typhoon Rai that ravaged the Philippines on December 16, 2021. The core of this study is answering the central research question: How does the semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao community navigate the aftermath of extreme weather? The sub-questions are as follows:

1. How did Rai affect the Sama Badjao community (Before, during, and after the super typhoon)?

2. How did government relief programs address semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao after Rai?
3. What role did gender, indigeneity, and religion play in Sama Badjao's recovery capacity from extreme weather?

1.2 Scientific Significance and Research Contribution

This thesis contributes to the literature in three key areas. First, it provides insights into inclusive disaster governance through a decolonial and intersectional lens. It explores the Sama Badjao's worldviews in a disaster context by highlighting their Indigenous knowledge systems in planning, preparation, and recovery, combined with the disaster risk reduction (DRR) skills they learned from their leaders. Second, this study redefines the vulnerability and resiliency of Indigenous communities to avoid depoliticizing them as passive victims. This research ensures that their resistance and agency are framed according to local ontologies rather than Western notions of 'insubordination' or 'passive' victims of disasters. This offers insights into the theory of othering through structural discrimination of the Sama Badjao and their adaptation to climate change-related disasters, such as super typhoon. Lastly, it advances a theoretical contribution by applying intersectionality theory to Indigenous issues, examining how different forms of categories intersect and shape their marginalization. It shows the relevance of intersectionality theory in Indigenous studies, specifically for the sea-oriented Sama Badjao in insular Southeast Asia. Intersectionality is already prominent in international discourse but has yet to be fully applied in Sama Badjao studies. The findings of this research are valuable in supporting vulnerable ethnic minorities, as development projects must address their socio-cultural and socio-economic needs. Disaster response and rehabilitation programs should be culture-sensitive to ensure their success.

By understanding the realities faced by the Sama Badjao, this work identifies policy gaps and advocates for ethnodevelopment interventions, such as inclusive disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) programs for urban Sama Badjao. As Clarke (2001) argues, Indigenous peoples have long been the victims of ethnocidal policies that promote assimilation. Since the early 20th Century, progress in ethnodevelopment in Southeast Asia

has been modest, with few initiatives addressing the broader patterns of disadvantage and domination. While minority protection laws vary across Southeast Asian states, they generally fall short. Many states maintain assimilationist policies toward minorities, though they may be more lenient at regional and international levels (Meijknecht & Vries, 2010). Until recently, discussions of Indigenous peoples' rights remained a 'sensitive' topic in Southeast Asia (Wilson, 2020).

The empirical findings of this study aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the Sama Badjao as they seek refuge inland and adapt to the challenges of displacement exacerbated by extreme weather. While the generalizability of these results is limited, the insights gained offer implications for improving the well-being of Sama Badjao communities through inclusive policies and culturally sensitive programs. The results may also inform policymakers and practitioners involved in disaster recovery, rehabilitation, and development planning. Beyond practical implications, this research contributes to broader academic interdisciplinary discourses in decolonial studies, disaster studies, Indigenous studies, Southeast Asian studies, gender and development studies. The following section outlines the structure of this dissertation.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This monograph comprises eight chapters, including the introductory chapter. Chapter 1 sets the scene by providing the current condition of the Sama Badjao in the Philippines, the objectives of the research, and its significance and contribution to international scholarship.

Chapter 2 begins with the displacement and sedentarization of Sama Badjao in Southeast Asia. I lay out the relevant Sama Badjao ethnographic studies to provide insights into various sea-oriented Sama Badjao in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. From here, I discuss the international and national laws for Indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia and how these laws excluded the Sama Badjao. Against this backdrop, I shed light on the policies of governments and non-government organizations (NGOs) and the role of socio-economic and environmental programs that quell the movement of nomadic Indigenous groups for the sake of sustainability. As they moved from being sea-based to land-based

dwellings, I explore how climate change-related disasters have impacted Indigenous peoples. The change in the Indigenous people's dwelling dynamics provides the foundation of the patterns of discrimination the Sama Badjao experienced in Southeast Asia.

Chapter 3 provides insights into the conceptual and theoretical framework of the overall structure of the thesis. First, I define discrimination using Lippert-Rasmussen's (2013) generic definition and advance to Burn's (2008) structural discrimination definition, consisting of institutional and cultural discrimination. As a result of these discriminations, I discuss further how certain groups of people are considered the 'Other' or 'Unwanted' because of the discourses created by a dominant group. These arguments are guided by the Theory of Otherness/Othering (Staszak, 2008). Moreover, Chapter 3 presents the intersection of indigeneity, gender, and religion that played a significant role in othering this collective group as an outgroup through the lens of intersectionality theory. I also demonstrate how they resist the othering and recover to better prepare for upcoming extreme weather events.

Chapter 4 focuses on the overall methodology and methods of this research. As informed by my research questions and objectives, I explain why I chose the study area, the process of my field entry, the utilization of data collection methods, and the data analysis. This chapter also discusses my positionality as a researcher, ethical considerations, and the study's limitations.

Moving to the empirical part of this study, Chapter 5 describes their experiences before, during, and a few days after the typhoon. I situate their narratives within the temporal phase of the disaster management framework: before, during, and after a disaster. It provides insights into their DRR skills, related aspects of their Indigenous knowledge, and gender roles within disaster settings. This chapter also shows how vital risks are appropriately communicated to Indigenous communities to make sound judgments for emergency preparation, planning, and preemptive evacuation.

Chapter 6 examines the experiences of the Sama Badjao in availing relief and rehabilitation programs such as relief goods, cash aid, and shelter reconstruction materials, and their social location within the disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) program. In this chapter, I elucidate the institutional and structural discrimination they experienced after the super typhoon. I demonstrate the bureaucratic problems and

persistence of colonial practices extrapolated to the Sama Badjao community as they integrate into mainstream public life. I emphasize that disasters like this augment their existing political and social issues, increasing their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Chapter 7 investigates the vulnerability and resiliency of Sama Badjao using a decolonial intersectionality lens. I analyze the role of gender, indigeneity, and religion in Sama Badjao's capacity to recover and access resources. I discuss gender power distribution/politics inside and outside the community, the prevalent identities during calamities, its unique impact on women and children, and how men and women resisted 'Otherness.' Additionally, this chapter highlights the most vulnerable group (e.g., women and children) during disasters and the impacts on the community and their culture as they adapt to bounce back better after Rai.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes and concludes the entire research. I tie together the theoretical and empirical findings, discussing the study's implications for future research. The othering of Indigenous communities was pre-existing and inherent in modernizing postcolonial Philippines. This compromised the well-being of the Sama Badjao and their access to resources for immediate recovery after disasters. The structural discrimination and marginalization of the Sama Badjao were shaped by intersecting categories, including gender, indigeneity, and religion. This historical context has established a foundation of uneven vulnerability for women, single parents, widows, children, and elders. Additional factors that contribute to the marginalization of these vulnerable groups have also emerged, such as socio-economic status, age, and marital status, warranting further exploration in future research.

Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Sama Badjao Diaspora

The sea nomadic people were, across pre- and early modern Southeast Asia, aquatic populations often served as respected subjects to land-based rulers (Hoogervorst, 2012; Scott, 2009), e.g. Malay Sultanates of Melaka, Brunei, and Sulu, respectively. Dispersed in the watery regions of Southeast Asia, they could evade slavers and states amid the complex waterways of the archipelago while raiding, slaving, and occasionally serving as mercenaries themselves (Scott, 2009). In this sense, the Sama Badjao notions of 'self' and 'otherness' were often patterned on the historical trajectories of imperial control. To highlight, this was not the imperial control of the Western colonizers within the 16th – 19th Centuries. Instead, the groping tentacles here were those of other, more aggressive sea peoples, such as the Bugis and Makassarese communities[5]. They demanded analogous labor, collecting duties from the Sama Badjao, and seasonal levies of manpower for other purposes (Sather, 2006; Tagliacozzo, 2009).

When European hegemony[6] reached Southeast Asia in the 19th Century, it ended the importance of all these communities. Part of the colonial state-making project in Southeast Asia was the conceptual division of space and assigning certain arenas to people deemed to be 'of' that domain, racially or otherwise. Though much of this process was attempted on land, Europeans knew that to be genuinely effective in ruling this region, they would also have to succeed in these aims by sea, which I will discuss further in the next section. This was also a typical project of the post-colonial state, which struggled to

[5] The Bugis, also known as the Buginese, and Makassarese are the main ethnic groups of South Sulawesi of Indonesia. Their dominance in number as well as the large areas in Southeast Asia has made them the most influential ethnic group with regard to economic and political activities in the area. See Said, N. (2004). Religion and cultural identity among the Bugis. *Inter Religio*, *45*, 12-20.

[6] The demand for spice led the Portuguese and Spanish marine spice traders and explorers to Southeast Asia in the 16th Century and later on, Dutch, French, and British domination in the successive centuries. The Spanish in the Philippines; the Dutch and British in the Malay world; and the French in northern Vietnam. The Portuguese's influence weakened in the Malay world but continued its hegemony in the Island of Timor (Tagliacozzo, 2009).

continue many designs that Westerners left unfinished in the mid-20th Century (Tagliacozzo, 2009).

The Malay states and other maritime-oriented political entities lost their control over the seas. They started to adopt land-based lifestyles, breaking with a much longer history of nautical activities, skills, and traditions. As the services and marine expertise of 'sea people' are now no longer required, at least not on a scale comparable to the era of the Malay kingdoms, their descendants face the choice of assimilating into the mainstream, land-based populations or continuing to pursue an increasingly marginalized maritime lifestyle (Hoogervorst, 2012). The other sea nomads' nonstate option was to continue taking their boats (Scott, 2009). Consequently, many do not have access to capital, modern equipment, education, and healthcare (Hoogervorst, 2012).

A decade after World War II and with the installation of the Third Philippine Republic in 1946, the Indigenous communities, along with the Muslims, turned out to be a minority due to the systematic resettlement of Christians from Luzon and Visayas in Mindanao (Figure 1) and large-scale divestment of land and agrarian rights (Franco, 2016). While Luzon and Visayas had been developed substantially, some parts of Mindanao remained wanting for infrastructure, such as hospitals and roads. Because of this neglect, frustrations filled the Tausug[7] ethos, which had its own independent state known as the Sulu Sultanate[8] (Jumala, 2011). Muslims in Mindanao have a long history of contesting homogenizing influences from Manila, located in Luzon, the capital of the Republic of the Philippines. Their long history of armed resistance started with almost incessant warfare against Spanish colonial rule and continued during the United States occupation (Franco, 2016). Having a government of their own during pre-colonial times, they wanted exclusion from the Philippine mainstream when the United States granted independence to the Filipinos in 1946. This ethos still pervades today (Jumala, 2011). With that in mind, I argue

[7] Tausug which means 'people of the sea current' are the dominant and largest ethnic group in Mindanao. They are also called Suluk in Sabah, Malaysia.

[8]Before the Spanish colonization, the Sulu Sultanate was the largest, best, organized, and powerful political entity in the Philippine archipelago. Their economic activities extended in China, Japan, Malacca, Sumatra, Java, etc. At the beginning of the 18th century, the domains of the Sulu Sultanate extended over the whole Sulu Archipelago, the southern tip of Palawan, and North Borneo territory (See Majul, 1965).

that the way to understand the Sama Badjao diaspora is to comprehend the civil unrest in Mindanao and its relationship with Sabah, Malaysia.

Figure 1. Map of the Philippines showing three major islands, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

Source: Base map provided by GeoportalPH and adapted by the author via QGIS, 2025

During President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr.'s era, from 1965-1986, widespread Muslim outrage against Christians and the armed conflict between the two communities intensified. It started in March 1968 when young Muslim army recruits, composed of Tausugs and Sama, were brought to Corregidor (an island in Manila Bay) for training. The operation was to invade and reclaim the disputed territory of Sabah from Malaysia. Yet after mutinying, they were executed by Philippine army officers. Later on, the officers involved in the massacre were found not guilty by the military court. This has resulted in Muslims showing solidarity by appropriating and identifying as 'Moros'. Conflicts between armed Christian and Muslim groups in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago escalated, resulting in more than 30,000 people fleeing their fields and villages to avoid the conflict (Ochiai, 2020).

In 1971, another transgression broke out called the 'Manili Massacre', which killed 65 men, women, and children in a mosque in the village of Manili in Mindanao. It led the Libyan government to offer support for the secessionist movement (McKenna, 1998). Muslims living in Mindanao formed armed groups and confronted the Philippine government as part of a liberation movement to protect the rights and land of the Moro people. This instigated the unification of the Moro groups, which led to the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) (Jumala, 2011).

At the turn of 1972, President Marcos, Sr. declared Martial Law due to the Muslim separatist movement and communist insurgency (Hedman & Sidel, 2005). In the mid-1970s, nearly 75% of the troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had been deployed to Mindanao, including the Sulu Archipelago, with violent clashes leading to an estimated 50,000 casualties and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents (Hedman, 2009).

People with relatives outside Sulu migrated to the northern part of the Philippines, including Zamboanga City and Sabah, Malaysia. Among the migrants to Sabah were the Sama Badjaos. Those Sama Badjaos who stayed in Semporna eventually returned to Sulu after the signing of the peace accord in 1976. However, the coral reef where they moored was destroyed to construct a bridge (Jumala, 2011). Following the signing of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Philippine government and the MNLF, armed conflict persisted due to the ideological differences that arose among its founding members. In

1984, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed, consisting of MNLF defectors. The MILF aimed to establish an Islamic state based on *Sharia law* through *Jihad*. MILF numbers grew as further defections occurred after the MNLF signed the 1996 Final Peace Agreement with the Philippine government (Franco, 2016).

From 2000, however, and deepening with the onset of the 'Global War on Terror' in late 2001, Mindanao saw large-scale government military campaigns in the name of 'counterterrorism,' causing casualties, destruction, and forced displacement on a scale not seen since the early-mid 1970s. A 'total war' begun in 2000 dramatically reduced the effective control enjoyed by the MILF over Muslim areas of central Mindanao. A later wave of military operations in the islands of the Sulu Archipelago was waged against the shadowy, small Islamist terrorist network known as the 'Abu Sayyaf' group (Hedman, 2009).

In October 2008, there were more than 600,000 people who were said to have been forcibly displaced by the fighting against MILF in central Mindanao. Over one-third have returned to their home communities and residences (Hedman, 2009). While many have returned to their homes, deep concerns persisted about the conditions when they return, their ability to reclaim land and assets, and the status of those still displaced. Over 6,400 homes were totally destroyed: the displaced found shelter in 276 evacuation centers, and among relatives far from the conflict (UNDP, 2004). While in the islands of Sulu, there were more than 15,000 people displaced in January 2009, mainly outside the meager evacuation centers established by the government. After a month, another wave of military operations against the Abu Sayyaf in areas of Basilan and Sulu forced hundreds of families to flee (Hedman, 2009).

In February 2013, a separate incursion by armed Sulu militants who claimed Sabah as part of the Philippines' territory occurred. The incursion into Eastern Sabah by the Sulu militants was driven by a 300-year-old claim of Sabah on behalf of the current 'Sultan of Sulu.' The conflict (also known as the 'Lahad Datu Standoff') lasted nearly two months, resulting in loss of life in both the Philippines and Malaysia. In response, the Malaysian government established the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCom) to enhance maritime security and enforce a curfew. During these 'clearing operations,' ESSCom officers verify the identity documents of anyone they consider a threat to national security.

If the documents are found invalid, or someone cannot provide any form of identification, they may be forcibly evicted from their settlement, placed in an immigration detention center (sometimes indefinitely), and/or deported to their alleged home country. The Bajau Laut are deported to the southern Philippines, regarded as Sama Badjao (Acciaioli et al., 2017). Unlike Malaysia and Indonesia, the Philippines has no mandatory policy to settle and integrate the Sama Badjao into the broader public. Nevertheless, as part of the Philippine government's efforts to address statelessness, acquiring birth certificates and identity documents has enabled them to access public and welfare services. Still, it has forced them to limit their mobility.

These historical and critical events have placed them in vulnerable conditions right now. Their displacement from their ancestral domain within the waters of the Sulu and Celebes seas has led them to scatter inland and wander in the streets. After three decades, the international NGOs have settled the 26,400 population of Sama Badjao in Luzon and Visayas (Maulana, 2015).

2.2 Sedentarization Towards Citizenship

During pre-colonial Southeast Asia, a large portion of the population of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago relied on the sea for their sustenance. Others almost certainly responded to this richness by developing even more proficient fishing and strand-gathering technologies, while some groups may have abandoned seafaring to concentrate on the land (Sather, 2006). One of the earliest accounts of the Sama Badjao was by a Portuguese merchant, Tomé Pirès, in Malacca circa 1515. He described them as *Celates* (sea robbers) who were brought up on the sea and great rowers (Pires, 1944). In 1521, Venetian scholar and explorer Antonio Pigafetta first recorded sea-dwelling peoples in the Sulu archipelago, where he described them as "the inhabitants of this island [who] always live in their vessels, and have no houses on shore (Pigafetta & Baron, 1874, p. 120)."

The sedentarization began when the British government granted a royal charter to a British and Austrian merchant company operating in northern Borneo in 1881. This merchant company, known as the British North Borneo Chartered Company, became the

authorized colonial government for the territory of North Borneo. During the colonial period in 1887, the chartered administrator in Sabah, Malaysia, initially regulated the entire Sama population (both sea- and land-based) crossing the Sulu Sea to combat piracy and promote permanent residence by registering their live births as 'Bajau' (Acciaioli et al., 2017). The term Bajau enables them to claim social advantages within the ethnicized socio-political context of Malaysia (Nagatsu, 2001). They identify themselves more specifically, toponymically, as 'Bajau plus [name of their island or village],' for example, Bajau Selakan for those living on the island of Selakan, or Bajau Laut for Bajau living at sea (Acciaioli et al., 2017).

The representation of the Colonial British Administration to the Bajau, as well as the natives in North Borneo, "repeatedly characterizes them as 'pirates,' 'kidnappers,' 'slave traders,' and 'practicers of human sacrifice' (Nagatsu, 2001, p. 217)." They used this description to justify their occupation by offering a paternalistic role to civilize the natives, making them abide by laws, settling them down permanently, and making them live peacefully. All of these mandatory transformations from sporadic to civilizing the natives through permanent residency were under the auspices and guidance of the British North Borneo Chartered Company (Nagatsu, 2001). Likewise, Sopher (1977) writes that the Indonesian government's efforts to settle the Sama Dilaut, known as Bajo, started after the Dutch East India Company occupation in early 1820 for the same reasons.

Said (1978) argues that the European and American interest in the 'Orient' was politically based on historical accounts. Nonetheless, it was the culture that conceived that interest, enacted forcefully along with brute economic, political, religious, and military justifications to shape the Orient as a diverse and complicated place. The European civilization constructed its own identity as superior to all the non-European peoples and cultures, with very little resistance from the native population (Said, 1978). The natives never spoke for themselves, their emotions, presence, or history. The European superiority discredited that there were natives who were independent, skeptical, talented, and critical thinkers because of their perceived backwardness (Rizal, 1890; Said, 1978). The West only spoke for and represented them (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985).

Filipino anticolonial thinker Jose P. Rizal (1890), in his political essay entitled *Sobre La Indolencia de los Filipinos* (The Indolence of Filipinos), argues that before the

arrival of the Europeans, the Malayan natives carried on an active trade, not only among themselves but also with all the neighboring countries. Rizal (1890) further asserts that the natives did not economically prosper during the colonial period, not because of their backwardness and indolence, but due to the unfair and differential treatment of the Spaniards and Filipino elites towards them. In his book, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia,* Scott (2009) describes the commonality of the encounter between the dialectic self-governing and state-governed people is variously styled as the "raw and the cooked, the wild and the tamed, the hill/forest people and the valley/cleared-land people, upstream and downstream, the barbarian and the civilized, the backward and the modern, the free and the bound, the people without history and the people with history (Scott, 2009, p. 3)."

Since the beginning of the 20th Century, nomadism has continued to decline because of the intensification of several external factors. These factors include 1) fewer economic opportunities available to nomads, 2) surge of public security for settled communities provided by stronger central governments, paving the nomads to settle in areas with favorable conditions (previously deemed as unsafe), 3) more employment opportunities in urban or rural areas, 4) government programs to sedentarized nomads, and 5) reduction of pastural land in various areas due to agricultural encroachment (Ebrahim, 1984). As a result of the worsening conditions, misguided concepts of modernization, and a desire to control nomads, many governments attempted to do so primarily through agricultural projects (Ebrahim, 1984).

The West Coast of Sabah and parts of Sulawesi saw the transition of the nomadic Bajau fishermen into flourishing farmers within a few generations due to government support programs (Hoogervorst, 2012). The condition of the Bajaus in the aforementioned areas in Indonesia and Malaysia is gradually improving. Several Bajo villages in southeast Sulawesi have seen the emergence of stilt-house medical health centers (*Puskesmas*) and elementary schools as integral and essential parts of their village, while specialized academic programs that bring together the traditional knowledge of Bajo fishermen and the latest developments in modern fisheries management have been developed over the past few years. Collaboration and dialogue between community leaders and local

governments have also significantly improved over the years, yielding poverty alleviation programs set up, especially for Sama Bajau communities (Hoogervorst, 2012).

The changes in economy and politics made it necessary to train and educate the citizens in the modern age, since the very objective of contemporary power is to assure order and efficiency of human multiplicity (Foucault, 1997). It should be added, however, that many communities in Sabah and Sulawesi cannot benefit from any of these developments due to the issue of questionable citizenship (Hoogervorst, 2012). Although the Bajau Laut in the East Coast of Sabah holds a long history in this watery region, they are not deemed 'Indigenous' by the Malaysian government. This may primarily be linked to the negative connotations of security and illegal transmigration from Mindanao in the 1970s during Martial Law. Thus, they are not protected by the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which I will expound further in the next section. Consequently, the Bajau Laut in this area have encountered social dislocation and cannot access Malaysia's developmental aids of health, education, and land (Saat & Mansur, 2016).

On the other hand, the Wakatobi government in Indonesia gave the land certificate to those reclamation houses in 2014, and the Bajo used this asset to access capital debts from banks and other informal sources. The Bajo, who do not have these kinds of assets, have been marginalized by area-based development. This issue is also becoming a driver for cultural discrimination that has the potential to lead to socio-cultural conflicts between the Bajau and Masyarakat Hukum Adat (MHA), which means traditional communities or Masyarakat Traditional communities in Wakatobi. All Bajo villages in Wakatobi have historical ties to temporary shelter permits. Those informal permits were defined by MHAs to fully control the Bajo (Ariando & Arunotai, 2022).

Over the past years, the Indonesian government has obliged the entire Bajo population to create permanent houses to facilitate community empowerment programs. These various interventions of government programs affected the Bajo community, both in terms of physical settlement and traditional values (Amelia et al., 2016), for example, policy provisions such as banning boat-dwelling. The Bajo used to live in a houseboat

called *Soppe*[9], and their mobility was very high. But because they get caught by Australian maritime border control[10] while fishing and encroaching on their sovereign territory, *Soppe* is banned and thus extinct, forcing them to build stilt houses connected to the sea (Amelia et al., 2016; E. R. Navarro, 2015). Since the 1950s, Australia has successfully carried out a series of maritime territorial expansions culminating in establishing a 200-nautical-mile Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ), legitimized under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These claims have gradually encroached on the traditional fishing grounds of several ethnic groups from Indonesia and turned Indonesian sailors of the open seas into trespassers and illegal fishermen (Stacey, 2007).

Many of the Bajo now live in government-founded pile dwellings on the water in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Since establishing the Wakatobi National Park (WNP) in southeast Sulawesi, the construction of luxury resorts and the joint program from NGOs in the Wakatobi marine areas have changed the social dynamics and conservation mindset of coastal communities, especially the Bajo. Outsiders entered the Bajo villages to provide social assistance, but unfortunately, there was a lack of informed consent and cultural consideration (Ariando & Arunotai, 2022).

The government, NGOs, and the private sector carry out activities leading to co-management in the Bajo communities in Indonesia. The activities predominantly target the issues of marine protected areas, conservation, and tourism. The private sector offers private yacht charters[11] by advertising the Bajo communities as 'Sea Gypsies' in real life. Furthermore, Ariando & Arunotai (2022) found fundamental challenges in implementing co-management of the Bajo community in Wakatobi. Firstly, the Bajo communities do not have management rights to the coastal and marine areas. It means there is no space for the Bajo people regarding coastal management because they are categorized as recent migrants

[9]The Sama Badjao, depending on their geographic area, called their houseboats *Soppe* (Amelia et al., 2016), others also called them *Lipa* (Nimmo, 1990), *Lepa, or Lepa-lepa* (Zacot, 2002). It is a type of large houseboat common among the Sama-Bajau after World War II. Aesthetically, it is the most attractive of all the houseboats, with its flowing lines that sweep into the prominent prow, the distinguishing feature of this boat (Nimmo, 1990, p. 199).

[10]Australia's response to these illegal incursions has been to adopt a series of policy strategies aimed at deterring Indonesian fishermen and protecting fisheries resources. These policies take the form of the following: Apprehension of boats and crew found operating illegally in the AFZ; prosecution; confiscation of boats, catch and equipment; jail terms for repeat offenders; and repatriation of fishermen to Indonesia at Australia's expense (Stacey, 2007).

[11] See https://www.barefoot-cruising-indonesia.com/private-yacht-charter/indonesian-sea-gypsies/

to Wakatobi waters. However, they have a national identity and are Wakatobi-registered people. Secondly, there are internal issues within the Bajo communities themselves. The principal problems are weakened social cohesion and even distrust among the Bajo, especially regarding family politics, competition for economic-based assets, limited skills in the formal management system, and the lack of community participation (Ariando & Arunotai, 2022).

Like other governments trying to oversee migratory and sea-oriented Indigenous peoples, the Australian, Indonesian, and Malaysian authorities are investing considerable effort in halting their movement. They have been operationalizing systematic programs of directed change to reorient sea nomadic people to become sedentary citizens of the nation-states. In return, they are obliged to abide by the laws, borders, and boundaries. This negative top-down perspective of sea nomads has the impetus for many land-based communities to look condescendingly at them as marginalized, backward, and unprogressive people (Chou, 2006).

Going back to the East Coast of Sabah's offshore islands, several stateless Bajau Laut communities are pigeonholed by the Malaysian government as undocumented Filipino immigrants. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, where they are called 'Badjao,' they are considered Indigenous peoples and protected by the Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 in the Philippines. This law recognizes, protects, and promotes the rights of Indigenous communities/people and guarantees that they are well represented in the policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, 1997). Specifically, the law ensures that all Indigenous peoples exercise the following: The right to ancestral domains, the right to self-governance and empowerment, social justice and human rights, and cultural integrity. Along with the law is the creation of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the agency responsible for promoting and protecting the rights, interests, and well-being of the Indigenous communities in the Philippines according to their beliefs, traditions, customs, and institutions(Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, 1997).

The IPRA is consistent with the policy and principles of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 (ILO Convention

No. 169), adopted in 1989, and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) 2007. The UNDRIP consolidates and affirms the mandate of governments to address all issues concerning the rights of Indigenous peoples. It complements, reinforces, and reaffirms the principles of ILO Convention No. 169 (Candelaria, 2012). The ILO Convention No. 169 is the only international legal instrument solely for the protection of Indigenous cultural communities/Indigenous peoples that is open for ratification by States (Candelaria, 2012). However, the Philippines has not ratified it but has adopted the UNDRIP 2007.

At present, IPRA still faces a massive problem with its enforcement and implementation. Hence, Candelaria (2012) strongly recommends that the Philippine government ratify ILO Convention No. 169 to complement and supplement IPRA. The ILO Convention No. 169 will strengthen the promotion and protection of Indigenous peoples' rights by addressing in greater depth and emphasizing the areas that the IPRA does not sufficiently cover. For example, the provision for the Indigenous cultural communities/Indigenous peoples an additional forum at the international level, where recourse can be made in cases of violation of their rights.

Although the IPRA recognizes Indigenous peoples' right to self-governance, empowerment, and cultural integrity, this particular right is still bound by the national system and international human rights principles. In other words, the Sama Badjao's right to identify and decide priorities for their self-development is still dictated by the State and its concept of development and morality (Macalandag, 2009). Moreover, the law is mostly rhetoric, for not all Indigenous peoples are aware of this and what this means for them. IPRA mandates that the Indigenous peoples maintain and develop their own Indigenous social structures, but this may not happen in their programs. Thus, Macalandag (2009) challenges the inclusiveness of IPRA based on the applicability of its land-based territorial concepts concerning the Sama Badjao.

Furthermore, in 2017, the Philippine government identified Sama Badjao as one of the populations at risk of statelessness. Under former president Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022), the government launched the National Action Plan (NAP) to end statelessness by 2024, the only country in Southeast Asia to have adopted this program (UNCHR, 2022).

As of December 2021, there were 128,492 persons at risk of statelessness[12] in the country; among them were the Sama Badjao. Through the efforts of the Philippine government, 1,442 Sama Badjaos have been issued birth certificates, 24.7% of them are children (UNCHR, 2022). To end statelessness, the NAP aims to give stateless families documentation to access education, health care, and housing services in the Philippines through birth registration. The program was established in partnership with the local communities, Local Government Units (LGUs), Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), private sectors, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and international NGOs (Macalandag, 2009; Padura-Deguit et al., 2019; UNCHR, 2022).

In Tawi-Tawi province, Philippines, several Sama Badjao families have availed themselves of the government's housing and conditional cash transfer programs in the southernmost part of the Philippines. For them, the conditional cash transfer made them Filipino in the paper since they can no longer wander in the sea, unlike a Sama Badjao, who is free. Many also believe this is why they cannot go to Sabah without getting passports (E. R. Navarro, 2015). Scott (2009) stresses the critical understanding of what is being evaded by the State. It is not a relationship per se but an evasion of subject status. "What the people on the periphery of states have been evading is the hard power of the fiscal state, its capacity to extract direct taxes and labor from a subject population (Scott, 2009, p. 330)."

The sedentarization efforts of the marine population in Southeast Asia started during colonial times. It can be linked to the Western views of modernization, which resulted in prejudices against the sea nomadic peoples. Scott (2009) believes that the attempt of the peripheral peoples, which he also refers to as 'out-of-the-way' peoples, to fully integrate them in the pretext of development, economic advancement, literacy, and social integration has meant another thing. Rather than making them productive, the main goal has been to ensure that their economic activity is legal, taxable, assessable, and confiscatable; otherwise, the State would replace this livelihood. Hence, States have

[12] The State-identified populations at risk of statelessness, aside from Sama Bajau are Persons of Indonesian Descent (PIDs), unregistered children within the context of forced displacement due to armed conflict, children of Philippine descent in migratory settings, and foundlings, who have yet to be mapped (*Universal Periodic Review: 4th Cycle, 41st Session*, 2022)

compelled mobile populations to settle in permanent communities. With the formation of nation-states after World War II, sedentarization programs continued by various governments and supported by NGOs and civic societies. Yet, many Sama Badjao still refuse to settle permanently and enjoy a semi-sedentary lifestyle, migrating from one Sama Badjao community to another. As a result, this made it difficult to claim benefits linked to citizenship, making them vulnerable during and invisible after disasters.

2.3 Living on the Typhoon-Prone Coasts

From the 16th (1565) to the 21st Century (2015), the Philippines has been pounded by roughly between 4,500 to 9,000 typhoons, or an average of ten to twenty storms annually (Warren, 2016). In the past 20 years, tropical cyclones claimed 17,119 lives and injured 51,068, with 5,198 still missing. It affected at least 24.8 million families or 122.1 million people and caused damage to agriculture, infrastructure, and private properties worth ₱354.7 billion (€19 billion) (NDRRMC, 2014). In this section, I explored the impacts of super typhoons,[13] which made landfall in the Eastern Visayas region in the Philippines until 2021, where the study area of this research is located.

Powerful typhoons have consistently affected Eastern Visayas. Although their intensity and wind speed are not officially recorded, many scholars believe the region has experienced super typhoons in the past (de Viana, 2014; Takagi & Esteban, 2016, 2016; Warren, 2016). One of the earliest accounts was recorded in 1897, describing a powerful storm that landed on the islands of Samar and Leyte with strong winds and a deadly 'tidal wave.' This tidal wave was unmistakably a storm surge caused by the storm blowing significant volumes of water inland. The typhoon hit and left the towns in less than half an hour, a mass of ruins. Reports at the time estimated that the storm was *"*one of the worst disasters reported from the Southern Ocean in many years" and had killed more than 6,000 local residents and 400 Europeans (de Viana, 2014, p. 199). The report appeared in the

[13] After Haiyan in 2013, the PAGASA modified the public warning signals adding the Super Typhoon (STY) category. It is defined as is a tropical cyclone with maximum wind speed exceeding 185 kph or more than 100 knots. See https://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/information/about-tropical-cyclone

issue of the New York Times on November 28, 1897, and was recorded by the *Observatorio de Manila*[14] (de Viana, 2014; Takagi & Esteban, 2016).

In 1912, another powerful storm caused widespread devastation in the Eastern Visayas. On November 29, 1912, the typhoon made landfall and directly hit Tacloban and neighboring towns. The exact death toll from the storm was unclear. American newspapers such as the Washington Herald and the Evening World reported that more than 15,000 people had died, probably half of the population of Tacloban and Capiz (de Viana, 2014; Takagi & Esteban, 2016). However, a report on the same day by the New York Times put the death toll far lower at slightly more than 300 (de Viana, 2014).

Moreover, two subsequent powerful storms hit central and southern Philippines on August 27, 1984, with typhoon Maring (International name June) and on September 1, 1984, with typhoon Nitang (International name Ike). Nitang caused extensive damage with maximum winds of 185 kph near the center (Holliday, n.d.). Total estimated damage to property, crops, livestock, and infrastructure was ₱303 million (approximately $17 million), with more than 662,000 persons affected (119,000 families) and 135,000 homeless (22,500 families) (UN DHA, 1984). The subsequent two typhoons killed 1800 people (Holliday, n.d.).

Moving to 2013, the Philippines had its fair share of weather disturbances. The country had a total of 25 typhoons that year (NDRRMC, 2014b), wherein Yolanda (International name Haiyan) was the strongest and most destructive. It made landfall packed with 315 km/h maximum sustained wind speed and 379 km/h wind gusts. The storm was the strongest ever recorded based on wind speed at landfall (NDRRMC, 2014). As per the assessment, the economic impact was estimated at nearly €12 billion. The typhoon killed more than 6,000 people; a further 1,062 were missing, and 28,688 were injured. Ninety-three percent of the total number of deaths, 94.72% of the missing, and 91.28% of the injured came from the Eastern Visayas region. A total of 3.4 million families and more than 16 million persons were affected and displaced; among them are the Indigenous communities (NDRRMC, 2014).

[14] *El Baguio de Samar y Leyte, 12-13 de Octubre de 1897"* by P. Jose Algue, S.J. were published by the *Observatorio de Manila, Dirigido por los Padres de la Compañia de Jesus. Foto-tipografia de J. Marty*. Manila: 1898. From the Emilia A. Lotilla Book Collection

The Eastern Visayas region was significantly affected by the number of damaged houses. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014), there were 950 Sama Badjao affected by Haiyan in the area. The vast majority of those who lost or were prohibited from their homes returned to where they lived before the disaster in a relatively short period, even if their homes had been completely destroyed. Their return was undeniably the main avenue taken in response to displacement. Still, the extent to which it represents a durable solution remains an open question. Based on a household survey, one and a half years after the disaster, only 17.6% of the population feels that life has returned to 'normal' (Sherwood et al., 2015). Besides, the disaster relief and recovery process became highly politicized, intertwining with electoral ambitions and rivalries. Many actors involved had dramatically differing approaches, expectations, capacities, and agendas, generating significant tensions and coordination barriers (Sherwood et al., 2015).

For the Indigenous communities, whenever there is a calamity, they resort to their Indigenous knowledge. During Haiyan, all migrant Indigenous communities in Eastern Visayas were unaware of disaster risk reduction laws and the basic disaster drill at the local level. Nonetheless, 100% of all Indigenous peoples survived with zero casualties. They used their traditional knowledge to identify the forthcoming super typhoon but failed to predict its strength. All groups stated that their Indigenous knowledge is weak compared to their elders. Regrettably, the communities hesitated to discuss their traditional methods for fear of ridicule (UNHCR, 2014).

Eight years after Super Typhoon Haiyan, Super Typhoon Rai (known locally as Odette) brought similar torrential rains, violent winds, mudslides, floods, and storm surges to central parts of the Philippines, leaving a wide path of destruction and debris in its wake. It packed maximum sustained winds of 195 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 240 kph. While not as powerful as Haiyan, Rai damaged houses, infrastructure, and livelihoods on a comparable scale. It struck as people across the Philippines were already coping with increasing poverty, unemployment, and a rollback on development gains following two years of the pandemic. Resources were depleted, and local coping capacities were severely strained (OCHA, 2022). Rai was even more destructive, damaging more than one million

homes, than Haiyan. The billions of dollars of losses from Rai amounted to roughly 1.45% of the Philippines' GDP, 0.45% higher than from Haiyan (Goegele, 2022). According to the assessment by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) (2022), the typhoon brought massive damage to residential, agricultural, and industrial areas for about ₱11.5 billion (approximately €200 million) in economic losses. It affected around 135,000 ha of crops and around 2 million infrastructures (approximately €532 million infrastructural damages). Rai made landfall in the central and southern islands of the Philippines, affecting 2.2 million families, displacing 103,569 individuals, with 405 deaths and 85 missing persons (NDRRMC, 2021).

Currently, extreme weather events are growing progressively more destructive and unpredictable. The impact of our worsening climate crisis is increasingly fundamental for millions of Filipino fisherfolk and farmers living across the Pacific shorelines. While the pressure in emergency operations is to deliver quickly and massively, taking a longer-term view is vital, and ensuring help for the most vulnerable is sustainable. The lessons from Rai show there is a need for practical and pragmatic solutions applicable to the most isolated and disadvantaged communities as they adapt to future climate shocks (Goegele, 2022).

I argue that the Indigenous population has historically faced disasters but increasingly weakened their resilient capacity because of the loss of traditional knowledge, displacement from their ancestral territory, the pandemic, and the increasing frequency and intensity of these weather disturbances. Aldrich (2012) calls resilience the recovery process of disaster-stricken communities and the presence or absence of the capacity to do so. Recovery is not a static point or a single moment in time but an extended process. Community recovery is the repopulation process by survivors, who may have fled or been evacuated, and new residents, along with the gradual resumption of everyday routines for those occupants. Some measures, such as temporary housing and access to assistance, encapsulate earlier stages of recovery. On the other hand, population return, immigration, and growth take place over years and even decades. A return to normality may take far longer, and population levels may never reach pre-disaster points (Aldrich, 2012).

2.4 The Disaster Risk Management Programs

Since adopting the Hyogo Framework for Action[15] in 2005, countries have progressed in adopting policies or laws addressing disaster risk reduction. Nonetheless, much more still needs to be done since it is subject to member states' implementation rather than being nationally enacted. Many institutional, legislative, and policy frameworks did not sufficiently facilitate the integration of disaster risk considerations in most countries' development decisions (UNDRR, 2019). In Southeast Asia, the annual economic loss due to disasters is estimated at $86.5 billion. Droughts, floods, and tropical cyclones are the significant contributing perils that affect the Southeast Asian region (ESCAP, 2020).

In line with the Philippines' commitments to the Hyogo Framework for Action and Millennium Development Goals in 2009, the government enacted laws to protect Filipino citizens from disasters. These are the Climate Change Act of 2009, otherwise known as Republic Act No. 9729, and Republic Act 10121, also known as the Philippine DRRM Act of 2010. The Climate Change Act of 2009 mainstreams climate change into government policy formulations, establishing the framework strategy and program on climate change, creating the Climate Change Commission, and other purposes (Republic Act No. 10121, 2010). Meanwhile, the DRRM Act of 2010 strengthens the country's DRRM and "…ensures that disaster risk reduction and climate change measures are gender-responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems, and respectful of human rights (sec. 2j)."

The structure of DRRM parallels the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) framework. The NDRRMC is the agency responsible for preparing for and responding to natural hazards, such as typhoons, floods, and earthquakes. They also monitor human-induced crises, like armed conflicts and maritime accidents. Currently, the Philippine DRRM is divided into four thematic areas: (1) Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (minimize the effects of disasters), (2) Disaster Preparedness (plans on how to respond), (3) Disaster Response (efforts to minimize the hazards created

[15]The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts between 2005 and 2015. It was adopted in 2005 at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan. Its goal was to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015. See https://www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/hyogo

by a disaster), and (4) Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery (mechanisms on returning the community to normal condition) (DRRNetPhils, 2010). RA 10121 claims to be a more bottom-up and participatory approach to disaster risk reduction. It also changed the view of disaster as a mere result of a physical hazard to a perspective that addresses the notion of vulnerability (NDRRMC, 2014). The thematic areas encompass all activities, programs, and measures undertaken before, during, and after a disaster. Their overall aim is to prevent disasters where possible, reduce their impacts, and support recovery from damage and losses. This integrated approach is known as Disaster Risk Management (Khan et al, 2008).

On the other hand, the country assessment by the United Nations in 2021 highlighted that many poor Filipinos still live in weakly built housing despite being frequented by many storms and typhoons annually (A. M. Navarro et al., 2021). Moreover, around 25% of households in the country do not have any kind of insurance to protect them from sickness or disasters. A disaster preparedness kit at home remains an unfamiliar concept in the Philippines. It is, therefore, essential that DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA) be at the forefront of the country's programs and policies alongside strong political will in implementing these DRRM policies (A. M. Navarro et al., 2021).

Despite limited research on Indigenous DRR strategies, Indigenous communities are not always helpless during hazards and disasters. They have their own strategies for coping with calamities to reduce risks using their indigenous knowledge passed on from generation to generation (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012). Nevertheless, Gaillard & Mercer (2012) contend that DRR policies, specifically in developing countries, ignore the significance of Indigenous knowledge while relying on scientific knowledge.

When Haiyan came in 2013, Indigenous peoples were represented inadequately in the DRRM at the local level. Prior to Haiyan, irregular migrant Indigenous people in Eastern Visayas were already suffering the following: repeated displacement; housing, land, and property issues; severe poverty; lack of food security; absence of integration; inaccessibility to basic services and assistance, including health centers and schools; absence of sustainable livelihoods; and discrimination. Because Indigenous communities seem to be invisible, many international organizations operating in or near Haiyan-affected communities have been almost uninformed of their existence in the area (UNHCR, 2014). Specifically, the Sama Badjaos' irregular status renders them invisible and overlooked as

potential recipients of state services and in national development plans, where only citizenship confers visibility (Acciaioli et al., 2017). I argue that calamities like typhoons aggravated not only many of the Indigenous peoples' existing protection issues but also added another problem as well. These include displacement and loss of shelter and livelihoods, social and political discrimination in the aid distribution due to a lack of local community support system or network and information, overlooked or missed due to their isolated locations, and agencies' lack of information, etc.

The non-inclusive regulations and lack of protection of the Indigenous peoples suggest that there is a need to review DRR policies among at-risk communities to ensure a genuinely participatory process in which the people themselves are the active decision-makers. By taking into account Sama Badjao's experiences before, during, and after Super Typhoon Rai, I intend to unveil the assumptions underlying the vulnerabilities of Indigenous people in a disaster situation.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the existing knowledge about the transformation of the Sama Badjao lifestyle from dwelling to boats to stilt houses and how the literature contributes to the broader context of the research area. To understand the othering of many Sama Badjao, one should return to their cultural identity as sea-oriented people and the historical formation of nation-states in the Malay Archipelago. The colonization of the West disrupted the power structure within the Malay world, resulting in a long-standing territorial and ethnic conflict until the present. Along with the concept of modernization is the dialectic idea of the backwardness of the traditional boat living and nomadism, thereby making ethnocidal policies that lasted even after Philippine independence and were followed by successive governments.

In other words, the challenging conditions of the Sama Badjao in the Philippines are brought about by colonial residues and imposed by nation-states, such as tightening maritime border controls, restrictions on movement, and continuous armed conflicts. These had led them to follow a semi-sedentary or entirely sedentary lifestyle. Nevertheless, a

subjective fear of rejection or ridicule due to discriminatory attitudes and a lack of alternative livelihoods and opportunities made it difficult for most of them to assimilate into larger societies. It may also be cultural differences, such as attachment to the nomadic way of life, that cause them to return to the sea, far from public life. Yet, the states' reach can be felt through policing the maritime borders in the pretense of national security.

For the Sama Badjao who chose to live in littoral areas, their vulnerability and exposure to extreme weather events are high. With the impact of the worsening climate crisis, taking a longer-term and reactive plan is fundamental, while ensuring emergency relief and operations for the most vulnerable groups are sustainable. Most disaster research and policy frameworks focus on the costly damages of typhoons, state capacity, humanitarian response, and infrastructure restoration. Post-disaster recovery policies assume fixed residence, formal documentation, and legible citizenship. Indigenous peoples are often framed primarily through vulnerability, not agency, and rarely as knowledge holders or political actors. Further exploration of the disaster risk management programs and their inclusivity/exclusivity towards vulnerable communities is needed to understand the unequal impacts of climate change. In this context, I take the case of the Sama Badjao's post-disaster experiences after a catastrophic typhoon to uncover their precarious situation and how they recover from it.

Chapter 3 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the concepts and theories used to analyze empirically the impact of disasters on Indigenous peoples. I begin by unraveling knowledge production and how it framed the research through a decolonial approach. In this research, a decolonial approach refers to the dismantling of colonial systems of domination (decolonization) and the ongoing critique of coloniality (decoloniality), which is the persistence of colonial structures in knowledge, power, and being, which are shaped by Western modernity and the hegemonic civilization project (Maldonado-Torres & Cavooris, 2017).

In this regard, this study adopted a decolonial turn to understanding the impacts of disasters on Indigenous peoples. I followed the definition of disasters as a socially constructed phenomenon. Wisner et al. (2004, p. 4) explain that "they are a product of social, political and economic environments (as distinct from the natural environment), because of the way these structure the lives of different groups of people." Moreover, it does not occur suddenly but gradually as a result of longstanding structural[16] and slow violence[17] (Carrigan, 2015; Curato, 2018; Nixon, 2011). Politically and emotionally, different kinds of disasters possess unequal weight. Climate change, unpredictable weather disturbances, avalanches, volcanoes, and tsunamis have an instinctive, eye-catching, and page-turning power that tales of slow violence, unfolding over the years, decades, and even centuries. These stories can be about cataclysmic toxic buildup, massive greenhouse gases, and accelerated species loss due to devastation. Still, they are scientifically complex cataclysms that postpone casualties, often for generations (Nixon, 2011). The heart of decolonizing the impact of disasters considers how it might bring together a transformative

[16] Structural violence Structural violence, which may also be referred to as social injustice, is a concept developed by Norwegian sociologist (1969). Structural violence occurs when social structures and social institutions cause harm to individuals by depriving them of basic needs.
[17]Slow violence is a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence via delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all (Nixon 2011).

process towards more ‘open’ research. For instance, a way of shifting towards a more ‘open’ system of analysis and response is part of the work of decolonization, on which the reduction of global vulnerability depends (Carrigan, 2015).

Vulnerable populations are those most at risk during disasters. Not simply because they are exposed to a hazard but because of marginality, making their life a ‘permanent emergency.’ However, the disproportionate incidence of disasters in the non-Western world is not simply a question of geography. It is also a matter of demographic difference, exacerbated in more recent centuries by the unequal terms of international trade, that renders the inhabitants of less developed countries more likely to die from hazards than those in more developed ones (Bankoff, 2001). This marginality, in turn, is determined by the combination of variables such as class, gender, age, ethnicity, and disability that affect people’s entitlement and empowerment or their command over basic necessities and rights as broadly defined (Wisner & Luce, 1993).

Moving forward, this research conceptualized the persistence of coloniality leading to the othering of ethnic minorities after disasters. Furthermore, guided by a decolonial intersectional approach to research, I argue that women were generally overlooked during disaster recovery and rehabilitation programs. Those lacking resources are the principal casualties of slow violence (Nixon, 2011). Nevertheless, I also examined how they cope with calamities like typhoons while engaging between the state and the public.

3.2 Structural Discrimination

This section operationalizes structural discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples in contemporary society. I use Lippert-Rasmussen’s (2013) generic definition of discrimination, where he explains that to discriminate against someone is to treat them disadvantageously relative to others because they have or are believed to have some particular feature that those others do not have. In other words, discrimination against someone simply is disadvantageous differential treatment. According to Burns (2008), structural discrimination consists of both institutional and cultural discrimination.

3.2.1 Institutional Discrimination

Institutional discrimination consists of norms, rules, regulations, procedures, and defined positions determining access to resources and fate control. Cunningham & Light (2016) refer to institutional discrimination as "prejudicial practices and policies within institutions that result in systematically denying resources and opportunities to members of subordinate groups. This form of discrimination is maintained by the laws, organizational guidelines, or traditions of an institution."

An institutional approach emphasizes that social institutions embody power and have actual consequences, but in some cases, unintended, for minorities and immigrants as well as for different host populations (Burns, 2008). For example, state power is used (or not used) through law and the exercise of administrative power in such a way as to normalize discriminatory or exclusionary practices. Institutionalized category systems, stereotypes, and models define the 'Other.' Institutionalized discrimination and exclusion can occur in various settings, either in public agencies, labor markets, housing, education, etc. In any situation, decisions are made, resources are allocated, opportunities given (or denied), and persons included or excluded. In other words, the questions that center on this scenario are: Who is being discriminated against and excluded? Where does this occur? What are the main mechanisms involved (Burns, 2008)?

Institutional discrimination occurs in both direct and indirect forms. Direct institutional discrimination is defined as explicit institutional or state-level policies. Meanwhile, indirect institutional discrimination refers to policies and practices that differentially affect subordinate groups without an explicit intent to harm. Indirect institutional discrimination may be reinforced through the equal application of a given policy that engenders differential treatment or through the differential enforcement of seemingly neutral policies (Cunningham & Light, 2016). In this research, I only concentrated on indirect institutional discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples after disasters, since there is no explicit institutional or state-level legislation that discriminates against Indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

3.2.2 Cultural Discrimination

The second element of structural discrimination is cultural discrimination. It is a widely shared system of categorization, stereotypes, and social paradigms that, among other things, distinguishes 'us' (in-group) and 'them' (out-group) (Burns, 2008). They are not necessarily discriminatory in intent. Nevertheless, they may motivate the exclusion of those who deviate from or challenge social norms. Discrimination and exclusion do not need to be reflections of prejudice or racism but more a concrete judgment of a 'contradiction' or 'misfit' between established legal norms and the behavior (or the potential behavior) of deviants (Burns, 2008), making them 'others.'

Even if a discriminatory law is overturned or a longstanding tradition is challenged, changes in discriminatory behavior may not automatically reflect, especially when legislation only addresses the symptoms of discrimination while disregarding the cause (Cunningham & Light, 2016). Nixon (2011) claims that discrimination predates disaster, e.g., failure to maintain protective infrastructures, failure at pre-emergency hazard mitigation, failure to maintain infrastructure, and failure to organize evacuation plans for those who lack private transport. All of these make people with low incomes and minorities disproportionately vulnerable to catastrophe. People worldwide with low socioeconomic status are more likely to live in housing that is vulnerable to disasters. They also may live in areas where risks from disasters are higher, particularly vulnerable to climatic variations that lack adequate representation in political arenas and policymaking (Hilhorst et al., 2015; K. Johnson, 2017).

Because people of low socioeconomic status have fewer assets, they have less to lose. However, when they experience financial loss in disasters, a given amount of loss has a more significant economic impact on them than it does on people of higher socioeconomic status. The loss is proportionally greater relative to a poorer person's assets than it will be relative to the assets of someone of higher socioeconomic status. They also may have their savings concentrated in fewer possessions, such as home and livestock, so they may be more vulnerable to economic losses in disasters than people of higher socioeconomic status who have their savings distributed more widely and saved in financial institutions. Following a disaster, people of low socioeconomic status face many

barriers to receiving aid to help them rebuild their homes and meet their other needs. Research indicates they may also have trouble accessing housing and other resources (K. Johnson, 2017).

3.3 Theory of Otherness/othering

I argue that othering a particular group stems from "the ideological imperative of knowledge of the Global North disguised as modernity imposed on the knowledge of the Global South in a unidirectional manner. This truncated the ways of being, living, and proper thinking of the people who have been colonized (Passada, 2019, p. 10)." After the 'discovery' of the New World, the creation and consolidation of Western modernity, with its hegemonic ways of being and thinking, led to the understanding of the demarcation between 'some' civilized and 'other' barbarians, paving the way for colonization. It raises the conviction that everything that is 'outside' of the territoriality of the West and episteme is non-civilized, non-political, backward, and, therefore, non-human. In this framework, these 'barbarians' are required to think of themselves as responsible for their own misfortunes and are forced to reproduce the logic of modernity in favor of their dignity (Passada, 2019). Smith (2012) points out that while the 'Others' live at the margins, they are constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence, and lack of 'higher' order human qualities.

Staszak (2008) expounds that otherness is the result of the discursive process by which the dominant in-group ('Us', 'Self') constructs the dominated out-group ('Them', 'Other') by stigmatizing a difference (be it real or imagined) presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination. Although human beings have a natural tendency to make categorical distinctions, the categories themselves and the meanings associated with those categories are socially constructed rather than natural (Powell & Menendian, 2016). Meanwhile, creating otherness, which Staszak (2008) calls 'othering,' results in the categorization of individuals into two hierarchical groups: 'them' and 'us.' The out-group 'Other' usually 'lacks identity' and is always 'coherent' with the

in-group. The asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of otherness. Only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of others (their otherness) while imposing corresponding discriminatory measures (Staszak, 2008). Spivak (1988) argues that the Other, referred to as 'subalterns,' who are at the margins of society, lack the proper agency to voice out their concerns and demand a just distribution of resources.

Ashcroft et al. (2013) added that colonialism was crucial to constructing and naturalizing otherness. In the same manner, Smith (2012) argues that what is generally agreed upon is that colonialism is but one expression of imperialism. Smith (2012) added that imperialism tends to be used in at least four different ways when describing the form of Western imperialism, which started in the 15th Century: (1) Imperialism as economic expansion; (2) imperialism as the subjugation of 'Others;' (3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and (4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge (Smith, 2012). Imperialism, in this sense, could be tied to a chronology of events related to 'discovery', conquest, exploitation, distribution, and appropriation. At present, I contend that the word 'globalization' is substituted for the word imperialism. Globalization and conceptions of a new world order represent different sorts of challenges for Indigenous peoples. While being on the margins of the world has had dire consequences, being incorporated within the world's marketplace has various implications and, in turn, requires the mounting of new forms of resistance (Smith, 2012).

Othering a group because of imperialism, colonialism, and globalization established the colonizers' cultures and worldviews as normal and natural. It is the process through which colonial discourse produces its subjects. A colonial view of Indigenous beings is identified through their difference from mainstream culture. These so-called differences are rooted in their 'exotic' cultural practices that have been reified through time and space (Ashcroft et al., 2013)

From religious racism to color racism, then the creation of racial and gendered identities, all of these were extrapolated to the colonies, as well as knowledge generation that resulted in Indigenous knowledge being inferior (Grosfoguel, 2013; Lugones, 2010). The colonization erased the Indigenous self and identity of the natives, as well as their connection to their ecological practices, ancestral religions, arts, and cosmos, even

manipulating reproductive, sexual practices, and gender relations. Colonialism implemented the West's understanding of gender and sex through Christianity, altering the various conceptualizations of sex and gender systems that existed during the pre-colonial era (Lugones, 2010). Alder (2021) points out that gender and religion overlap rather than parallel categories. She further considers religion as a long-understood, powerful ideological tool underpinning patriarchal structures and contributing to the images of the 'Other' (Alder, 2021).

On the other hand, there are two different ways to look at Indigenous peoples facing disasters, either as 'resilient' or as 'victims.' As discussed in Chapter 2.4, Indigenous peoples are not always the passive victims of disasters. For instance, in Batswana in Northwest Province, South Africa, composed of various ethnic communities, women had a vast Indigenous knowledge of environmental conditions, including climatic changes. They oversee household and community activities such as farming, food processing and security, and natural resource management. During a famine, women collected and stored edible wild foods (Kaya & Koitsiwe, 2016).

Meanwhile, a case study by Leeftink (2014) explores the Indigenous practices of Igorot communities in Cordillera, Philippines. Findings from her research revealed that the poor disaster mitigation program and marginalization of Indigenous groups within the country enhanced the vulnerability of Igorot communities to disaster instead of reducing it. Nonetheless, she identified that the Igorots' most vital Indigenous coping strategies are '*Bayanihan*', which means helping each other, rituals and religion, and early warning systems. Interestingly, these mechanisms originated from everyday practices and cultural values. Needless to say, these coping strategies are similar to non-indigenous responses to disaster. Hence, some scholars warned against the understanding that Indigenous knowledge is grounded in a long tradition of coping with disasters (Leeftink, 2014).

Although Indigenous peoples have a thousand years of connection to their ecosystem, it does not make them prepared for the mega-disasters that increasingly plague their areas under the influence of climate change and displacement. Disasters are never normal, yet despite a sizeable collective history of disasters in the Philippines, households and individuals still experience each disaster as a catastrophe (Hilhorst et al., 2015). Hence,

Hilhorst et al. (2015) caution against the idea of resilient Indigenous peoples because it bears the risk of constructing the Indigenous as "depoliticized subjects."

Meanwhile, in a study by Mosurska et al. (2023), they investigated how expert news media represented Indigenous peoples in disasters. They found out that the media frame them as helpless while the government and NGOs are caring for the Indigenous people, thereby justifying their outside influence and actions. Media news experts attempt to depoliticize disasters and vulnerability as well. However, they also found that fewer dominant discourses focus on systems of oppression and self-determination in disaster management. These discourses recognize disasters as political and include a discussion of the role of colonialism in disaster creation (Mosurska et al., 2023).

While the impact of disasters does not discriminate based on gender, class, status, indigeneity, religion, and other factors, communities (out-group) that are socially constructed by the in-group are perceived as unworthy of government assistance (M. Méndez et al., 2020). The outcome of othering is self-other distantiating and dehumanizing the other, but this does not necessarily have to be an affirmation of self-superiority and other-inferiority. The Other is not so much (implicitly) inferior but radically alien. In either case, the effect is a near-impenetrable border between the self/in-group and the inferior or completely alien other/out-group, 'justifying' social exclusion, discrimination, and subjection (Brons, 2015).

3.4 Intersectionality Theory in Disaster Research

Intersectionality theory can be traced back to the antiracist feminist theory during the 1980s, specifically from the political movement of Black women, Chicana and Latina women, and other women of color (Carastathis, 2014). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first used the concept of intersectionality to denote the various ways race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences in the United States. Furthermore, it has been considered a pertinent approach to understanding numerous identities and social locations in the hierarchies of privilege and power

(Carastathis, 2014). This theoretically based approach considers how multiple categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage, including gender and class, interact to produce outcomes (Hyde, 2014).

Although intersectionality was already recognized for its role in understanding overlapping inequalities and power relations, there has been ongoing debate about its practical utility (i.e., as a theory, methodology, and practice). Critics highlight the lack of a specific method for applying intersectionality theory. However, Großmann et al. (2024) view this absence of a particular methodology as an advantage rather than a weakness. In intersectionality research, methods need to be combined and reconsidered, which can only benefit the field as it continues to develop. Additionally, few scholars have attempted to outline methods for applying the theory in empirical research (Angelucci, 2017; Boonzaier, 2019; Hankivsky, 2014; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Kurtiş & Adams, 2016).

Using intersectional approaches enables one to maintain a critical focus on power. Foucault (1982, p. 788) explains that "power exists when it is put into action... the exercise of power is when certain actions modify others." Likewise, Rueschemeyer (2009, p. 184) says, "Power is the capacity to get things done," which I find crucial in disaster recovery programs. I argue that power frames people's perception of resilience, mainly how men and women survive and recover after disasters. More importantly, in the following decades, it is predicted that the impact of climate change will intensely affect billions of people. People living in a poor environment are more susceptible to catastrophes brought on by climate change (Loster, 2012). Generally, the effects of disasters aggravate if high-risk populations, particularly Indigenous peoples, are inadequately addressed in disaster planning and response. Oftentimes, they are deprived of resources for survival, both physical and cultural, further weakening their capacity to deal with natural and man-made hazards (PAHO & WHO, 2014).

Olsen (2018) claims that intersectional approaches can provide important insights and reflections for Indigenous studies. Research on Indigenous people and communities is broad and complex, consisting of more than simply discussing Indigenous identity. I argue that various intersectional approaches provide an opportunity to understand several aspects of identity and a diverse set of issues relevant to Indigenous communities. Although most studies focus on race and colored feminism, scholars have shown increased interest in

Indigenous women's position at the intersection of gender and ethnicity/indigeneity, particularly regarding their exclusion from government and non-government organizations' intervention programs, extending to economic, political, social, and cultural processes (Munro et al., 2014; Radcliffe & Pequeño, 2010). Johnson et al. (2021) underscore the limited but emerging body of work using an intersectional approach to studying climate change vulnerability and Indigenous ways of adaptation. Similarly, Bankoff's (2001) notion of 'culture of disaster' emphasizes how certain societies have developed culturally embedded ways of living with risk. Long histories of vulnerability, marginalization, displacement, and everyday resilience inform these adaptations. In this study, adaptation refers to the interrelationship of humans and the natural world, as well as the influence of the physical environment on a community's social and cultural development for survival (Bankoff, 2007).

Building from the previous literature on intersectionality theory, this study follows a decolonial intersectionality standpoint that denaturalizes the dominant patterns that hegemonic discourse portrays as natural standards (Kurtiş & Adams, 2016). From this perspective, conceptions of gender equality that prescribe equal growth-oriented relationality for women, at least those with enough power to take advantage of resulting opportunities, may result in the unintended reproduction of racial, ethnic, and class domination in the name of gender equality. So far, however, there has been little discussion about the nexus of vulnerability and recovery of semi-sedentary Indigenous peoples from disasters. This could be fundamental to policies and programs relating to culturally sensitive disaster risk reduction management. Hence, the relationship between gender, indigeneity, and religion is of particular interest in this research by illustrating the case of Sama Badjao in the Philippines after Super Typhoon Rai.

3.4.1 Indigeneity

Radcliffe (2017, p. 221) defines indigeneity as the "quality of being Indigenous." Other scholars suggest that indigeneity "implies a population's distinct set of knowledge, beliefs, interpretations, and practices about the natural world referred to as cosmologies" (Holland et al., 2017, p. 1). Indigenous communities are deeply grounded in their territories and

customs. They usually live in areas rich in natural resources and remote from urban areas or cities. So why do Indigenous peoples migrate from one place to another? According to Gonzales (2016) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration or internal displacement of Indigenous people arises due to multiple factors. These are mainly the need to escape from conflicts and persecution, the impacts of climate change, the dispossession of their lands, and social disadvantage. Limited access of Indigenous peoples to services such as education, health, and employment opportunities is another factor that may cause their mobilization. However, the said aspects are not part of their culture.

In the case of the Sama Badjao, part of their identity is related to mobility. Yet, according to some scholars (Saat, 2003; Sather, 1997), there is a possibility that the original way of life of these people was not as 'sea nomads' and 'sea gypsies.' How long the ancestral traditions of these historical forms of boat nomadism may have been present is uncertain. Nevertheless, evidence for the Sama Badjao suggests that scattered groups of sea nomads may have emerged as much as 1000 years ago, perhaps earlier. What was explicit is that by the time of European exploration in the 15th Century, maritime foragers were already widely dispersed throughout much of the islands of Southeast Asia; some of them are the Sama Badjao (Sather, 2006). From a longer perspective, their nomadic lifestyle was, therefore, a temporary change. They may have turned to the nomadic way of life only when conditions dictated it. The *Sama Dileya* or *Sama Dea*, the land-based Sama population, are likely to be one of the examples. When the Sama Dilaut (Badjao/sea-based Sama population) had an opportunity to settle permanently on land, they may adapt very quickly and soon develop a new material culture (Saat, 2003). From nomadic to sedentary, the Sama Badjao people are slowly changing their lifestyle for various reasons. They are adapting their culture to present conditions by changing the material of their houses and learning to adjust their sedentary lifestyle. However, with multiple interventions and developments, many still refuse to change their environment, living either in the middle of the sea or the littoral areas (Amelia et al., 2016; Lubiano, 2019).

In disaster research, less attention is given to the vulnerability of migrant Indigenous peoples as they navigate the public sphere after a calamity. Most empirical studies on indigeneity focused on local-Indigenous knowledge and integration with Western scientific understandings of risks and hazards (Rumbach & Foley, 2014). The

literature shows that practitioners underestimated the usage of Indigenous knowledge and traditions when dealing with disasters, as this is usually perceived as outdated and primitive (Dube & Munsaka, 2018).

3.4.2 Gender

Each country has a specific history and its own economic and political systems that determine and shape gender relations (Bouteldja, 2014). This creates a premise for understanding Indigenous communities wherein there are numerous subject positions an Indigenous (or non-indigenous) person can inhabit. A man/woman and Indigenous/non-indigenous pairs are not binary. There are several ways of being a man, of being Indigenous, of being an Indigenous man (Olsen, 2017). It should be noted that prior to the 'great encounter' with the West, there were spaces where gender subordination did not exist, and there were even regions of the world where the female gender did not exist. There are regions where, on the contrary, there was a local patriarchy that was not Christian-centered and not necessarily heterosexist. As Bouteldja (2014, para. 6) says in an interview, "…before the great colonial night, there was a great diversity of human relationships that we should not idealize, but that is nevertheless worth noting."

Furthermore, Indigenous voices may not always be harmonious. Indigenous interests may clash. One Indigenous voice can deny the existence of another, as some queer Indigenous persons experience. One Indigenous voice can downplay the meaning and position of another, as Indigenous feminists have experienced. Thus, it is based on the ideas and principles of Indigenous methodologies necessary to define more precisely where the starting point is. A gender perspective should investigate internal differences as well. This goes not only for gender and Indigenous identity; it is also relevant for sexual identity, age, class, and other aspects of social identity (Olsen, 2017).

But as Euro-centered, global capitalism was constituted through colonization and neoliberalism, a different notion of gender was introduced to colonized subjects. The scope of the system of gender imposed through coloniality encompasses the subordination of females in every aspect of life (Lugones, 2016). For Lugones (2016), coloniality means not just a classification of people in terms of the coloniality of power and gender but also the

process of actively reducing people. It is a form of dehumanization that fits them for the classification, the process of subjectification, and the attempt to turn the colonized into less-than-human beings. This is in stark contrast to the process of conversion that constitutes the Christianizing process (Lugones, 2010). Thus, 'coloniality' does not just refer to 'racial' classification. It is an encompassing phenomenon since it is one of the axes of the system of power. As such, it permeates all control of sexual access, collective authority, labor, subjectivity/inter-subjectivity and knowledge production within these inter-subjective relations. Alternatively, all control over sex, subjectivity, authority, and labor is articulated around it (Lugones, 2016).

During calamities, the socially determined role of women exacerbates their vulnerability and subordination. Women and girls are deprived of resources and happen to be marginalized by developmental interventions during post-disaster rehabilitation programs (Clifton & Gell, 2001). Meanwhile, most of the international policy frameworks and guidelines determining national policies for DRRM ignore sexual and gender minorities (Gaillard et al., 2017). Padura-Deguit et al. (2019) claim that the case of Sama Badjaos demonstrates how stateless people could be at risk for protection issues, including gender-based violence, whenever there is a disaster.

3.4.3 Religion

The Contemporary Filipino society, according to the 2020 census of population and housing, is composed of Christians (85.4%), Muslims (6.4%), and those who belong to other religious affiliations (8.2%). Meanwhile, approximately 0.2% did not report a religious affiliation or belonging to different groups, such as animism or indigenous syncretic beliefs (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023).

Not all Sama Badjao practice the Islamic faith, though many Christians mistakenly consider themselves Muslims (Aoyama, 2016) or animists (Bottignolo, 1999). Yet semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao found converting to the dominant religion within their host community offers them leverage to be part of the public sphere (Aoyama, 2014). For example, the Sama Badjao migrants in Davao City, Philippines, embraced Christianity. They increasingly accessed the influence of missionaries from other countries or the West,

who were not directly involved in the local politics but were considered to be as 'symbolically' powerful as, or even more powerful than, the local politicians and other leaders. Their intentions were somewhat common with the Sama Bajau in Semporna. Both took advantage of the authority of the 'outsider,' whether the national government or evangelical missionaries from the United States, to seek better social status in the local society where they had been marginalized (Aoyama, 2014).

Meanwhile, in their ancestral domain in the marine waters of the Sulu archipelago, Mindanao, the Sama Badjao are marginalized by the Tausug and the Sama Dileya (also called Samal) in terms of population and economic standards (Jumala, 2011). They continued to be considered 'illegitimate' Muslim groups by their neighboring dominant ethnic groups, especially the Tausug (Aoyama, 2014). They justified their discrimination against the Sama Badjao through a local myth that they were an inferior group cursed by Allah (Aoyama, 2014) and the incorporation of their traditional beliefs and practices despite embracing Islam (E. R. Navarro, 2015). The Sama Badjao practice ancestral worshipping centered on the *PagMboh*[18] ceremony, often mistakenly classified as Islam or animism by outsiders. The Sama Badjaos have their own unique religion; what outsiders refer to as superstitious practices are manifestations of a set of beliefs where '*Tuhan'* is the creator and supreme spirit and '*Mboh'* the venerated first ancestor (Bottignolo, 1999; Jumala, 2018).

On the other hand, the Sama Bajau in Semporna, Malaysia, gradually became recognized as Muslim, and they are widely accepted as members of the local Muslim society nowadays (Aoyama, 2014). Nagatsu (2001) attributed this phenomenon to basically two factors: 1) the 'officialization' of Islam in Malaysia and 2) the Sama Bajau's intentions to seek approval from religious institutions as part of their strategy to secure a position in the local society.

Aoyama (2014) agreed that in Semporna, Malaysia, the religious experience of the Sama Bajau developed in the process of the 'officialization' of Islam in and by the nation-state. In Davao City, Philippines, however, the Sama Badjao's religious transformation still happened within the geographical territory of the nation-state. In other words, it occurred in a secular nation where the government did not directly lead the Sama Badjao to

[18] The act of celebrating or worshipping *Mboh or spirit ancestors*, also spelled as *Umboh/Omboh.*

participate in any religious affairs outside their community. Their acceptance of Christianity offers them a new identity as 'Christian Badjaos' that took place under the layers of intensions of different private actors in the landscape of Davao City, one of the rapidly growing Asian cities in the contemporary globalized world (Aoyama, 2014; Nagatsu, 2001).

During disasters, several studies revealed the critical role of faith in building resilience after disasters (Gonzaga et al., 2022; Hasan et al., 2021; Wilkinson, 2015). Nonetheless, Nguyen (2019) describes how contemporary Filipino society presently perceives gender in a disaster setting, and this perception can be traced back to Spanish colonialism. The Philippines is a gender-unequal society that most likely combines colonial and pre-colonial patterns of patriarchy, which persists until now, independently of disasters, but that show particularly after disasters, e.g., Catholicism and its conservative values, patriarchal society, women as carers, and *Maria Clara*[19] as idealized Filipina (Nguyen, 2019).

For an Indigenous person without an official religion, it may still provoke personas of primitiveness where their neighbors are Christians or Muslims (Aoyama, 2014). Taken together, religion significantly influences gender relations. Then, gender can be a path leading to the field of indigeneity; it can show and open internal diversity. Despite the dominance within gender studies of women researching women, it is important to stress that gender is not only about women, but it must be about men, too. Likewise, indigeneity has to be about those on the margins of Indigenous identity, too (Olsen, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 2.4, I developed a framework of the othering of the Sama Badjao in disaster risk governance (Figure 2). It has four thematic areas that include mitigation, preparedness, relief, rehabilitation, and recovery activities. The framework adopts a decolonial approach to show how the community navigates structural discrimination in disaster risk governance by recognizing capacities such as Indigenous knowledge, coping strategies, and agency that are marginalized through othering. It further highlights how intersecting social categories shape differentiated vulnerability

[19] *Maria Clara* is one of the main characters of the infamous novel, *Noli Me Tangere* written by Dr. Jose P. Rizal, one of the national heroes in the Philippines. Since then, this name epitomizes the ideal image of a native Filipina who is pure, innocent, god-fearing, and feminine.

and capacities within the community. Chapter 5 focuses on disaster preparation/planning response/relief. Chapter 6 explores the othering of the Sama Badjao experienced by the Sama Badjao within the DRR program. Chapter 7 analyzes the role of religion, gender, and indigeneity in the recovery capacity of the Indigenous community after Rai.

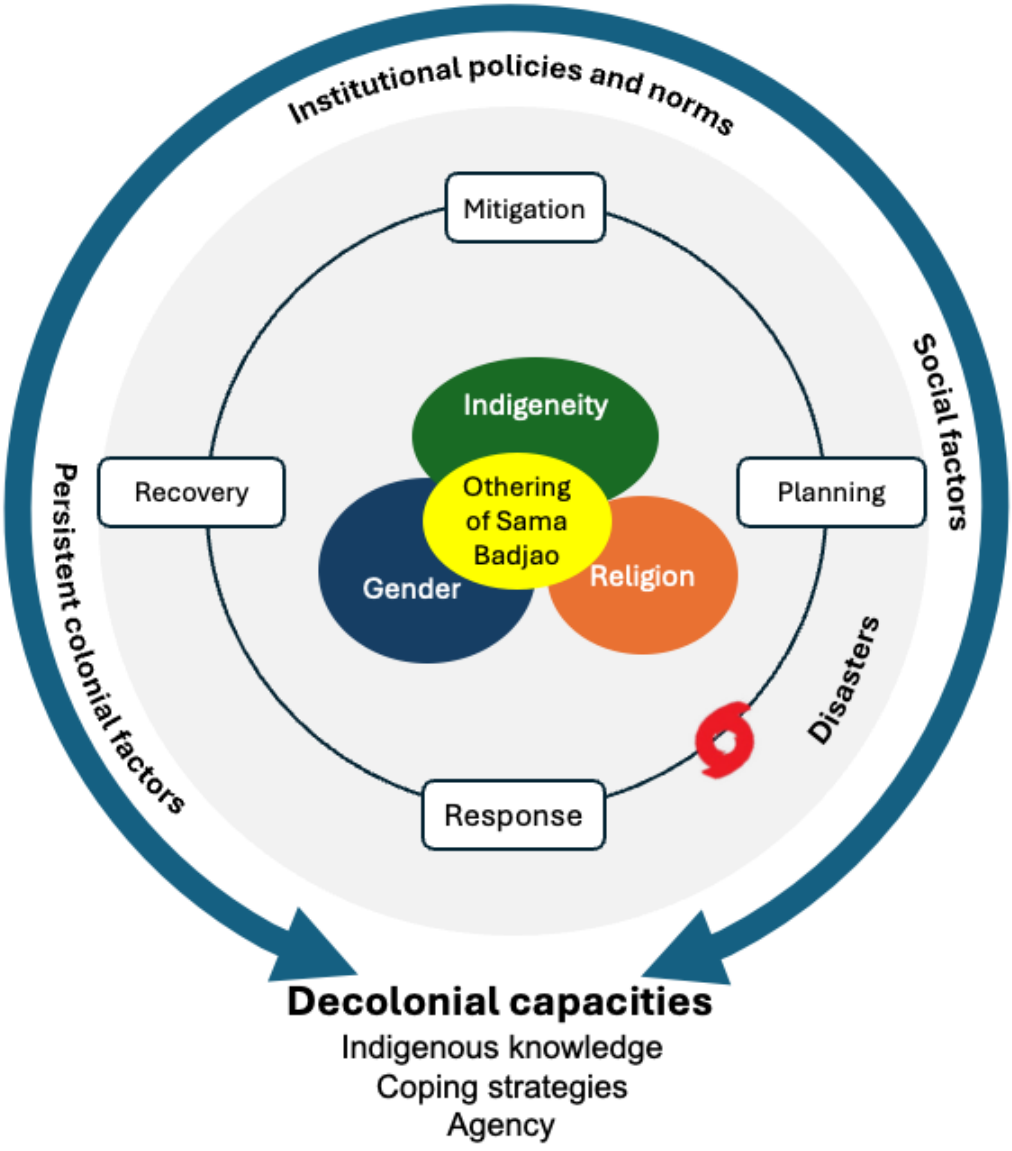


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of Sama Badjao's position in the DRRM program

Source: Author, 2021

3.5 Conclusion

This study draws on the theory of othering and intersectionality theory to understand the vulnerability and recovery capacity of semi-sedentarized Indigenous peoples in a disaster situation. Othering refers to the process of dividing individuals into hierarchical groups, such as 'them' and 'us' or 'self' and 'other.' The asymmetrical power dynamics reinforce the definition of the 'other' through perceived differences that carry stigmas, which may contribute to the denial of their identity or marginalization. On the other hand, the intersectionality approach explores how multiple social categories, identities, differences, and disadvantages interact or overlap, potentially shaping unique experiences of exclusion, inequality, or discrimination.

To be a semi-sedentary Indigenous man and woman in a modernizing society puts them in a vulnerable and disadvantaged situation after calamities. With all these facets, I contend that they complicate the obscurity of 'Sama Badjao' identity more with their semi-sedentary lifestyle, which may exclude them from disaster recovery programs. Hence, I assert that the notion of heteronormativity has the power to exclude people who fail to conform to society's expected norms.

In a disaster setting where people are fighting for power, it is crucial to consider the othering through structural discrimination and intersecting power relations in looking at the existing disaster response efforts of governments to their constituents and NGOs to their beneficiaries. Cultural discrimination is operationalized as practices, beliefs, and interactions that frame the Sama Badjao as 'different' or inferior in everyday life. Meanwhile, institutional discrimination is operationalized as formal or bureaucratic structures and policies that disadvantage the Sama Badjao. It would suffice as a critical lens in questioning disaster recovery efforts and how it frames people's perception of recovery interventions, mainly how migrant Indigenous men and women survive and negotiate after disasters.

In the Philippines, like in other countries around the globe, it is ironic that Indigenous peoples who resided in the country before colonialism turned out to be the excluded group. The literature suggests that coloniality is deeply embedded historically and has the power to inform who is superior and inferior or civilized and primitive. The

process of colonization resulted in social differentiations, which intersect with each other, leading to the othering of particular groups, for instance, the Sama Badjao. Hence, this has put the Sama Badjao in a unique situation during disasters. When Super Typhoon Rai ravaged the country, I argue that othering through structural discrimination exacerbated their vulnerability. Yet, after calamities, it is still unknown how their position at the intersection of social categories such as religion, indigeneity, and gender has shaped their recovery capacity as they navigate public life. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring how these intersecting categories influence both their vulnerability during disasters and their capacity to recover.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study followed an ethnographic research design. Ethnography began in comparative cultural anthropology conducted by early 20th Century anthropologists, such as Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mead (Creswell, 2013). As a scientific inquiry, ethnography is committed to producing a story about events that occur in natural settings where people interact (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). This approach is appropriate for research that describes how a cultural group works and explores their beliefs, language, behaviors, and the issues they face, such as power, resistance, and dominance (Creswell, 2013). Several ethnographic studies show how ethnography can ethically address vulnerable communities, especially during post-disaster context, but doing so requires special attention to inclusivity and listening to the community's voice (Bustinza et al., 2021; Danley et al., 2021; Leach & Rivera, 2022; Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018).

The first challenging part of ethnography was data collection. The time to collect data was extensive, involving prolonged time in the field. Most researchers could not spend many months or years on a study site unless it was where they had chosen to live and work regularly (Creswell, 2013). Second, there were social restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In January 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted social interactions, including academic activities worldwide. Many countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, and the Middle East have imposed their own travel restrictions and health protocols. As the situation evolved and vaccines came out in 2021, each country adjusted their restrictive measures (UNWTO, 2020). In the Philippines, the government quickly launched a vaccination program, allowing a gradual shift to the 'new normal'[20] in the first quarter of 2022 by enabling localized travel and activities (Kabagani, 2022).

[20] New normal denotes how the COVID-19 pandemic totally transformed public and individual lifestyle, professional identity, economic subsistence, work and family organization, all educational levels. This in turn demanded a radical revision of the traditional ways, practices, and skills in order to manage these changes (Manuti et al., 2022).

Despite these challenges, high-quality ethnographic research can be accomplished within relatively brief periods of research time and limited resources by restricting studies to a topic/lens through which the researchers view the community they are studying. Contemporary ethnographies nowadays focus on a particular aspect/dimension of culture. They tend to be problem-oriented, addressing specific issues/problems in a community context that serves to narrow and focus the research endeavor (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Ethnographers tend to work for shorter periods in communities of varying size and complexity as well as in institutions that may be local, regional, or national/on a particular aspect/dimension of culture (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

In this research, I focused on the post-disaster experiences of the Sama Badjao Indigenous community from Super Typhoon Rai. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork for ten months from December 2021 to September 2022 in Barangay (Brgy.)[21] Dolho, Bato, Leyte, Philippines (Figure 3), which I discussed in the next section. I primarily used ethnography as a research approach within a post-disaster setting because it allowed me to focus on the perspectives, understandings, and voices of the Indigenous community. Contrary to other research that focused on whether policies were successful, ethnography is oriented towards a community vision of what was important in the post-disaster setting (Danley et al., 2021).

[21] Historically, barangay (abbreviated as Brgy.) refers to barrio, the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village. See more: https://pia.gov.ph/features/2023/06/28/barangay-sk-elections-cornerstone-of-grassroots-governance

4.2 Study Area

4.2.1 The Sama Badjao Community in Bato, Leyte

The justification for choosing this community among the other Sama Badjao communities throughout the country is twofold. First, out of the provinces at risk of typhoons (see Holden & Marshall, 2018), the Sama Badjao people in Leyte province are more exposed to risk from extreme weather events in comparison to other communities scattered across the country. Second, the Sama Badjao in Brgy. Dolho, Bato, Leyte, is the largest migrant Indigenous community in the region.

Bato, Leyte is a fourth-class coastal municipality in the province of Leyte with 38,505 total population. It has 32 barangays with a land area of 72.45 square kilometers. Brgy. Dolho is the largest village in the municipality, constituting 8.95% (3,446 individuals) of its total population (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025). Its primary source of income includes port operations as well as agricultural, fishery, and slaughterhouse operations (Commission on Audit, 2019).

The population size of a Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, varied from time to time depending on several factors such as the fishing conditions, vending expeditions, and other activities such as elections, wedding celebrations, graduations, other rituals and celebrations, or disasters that hit the area (e.g., pandemic and typhoons). The total typhoon-affected population of the area, as per NCIP, was 865 individuals. This means that the population of the Sama Badjao community constitutes approximately 25% of the total population of its host barangay.

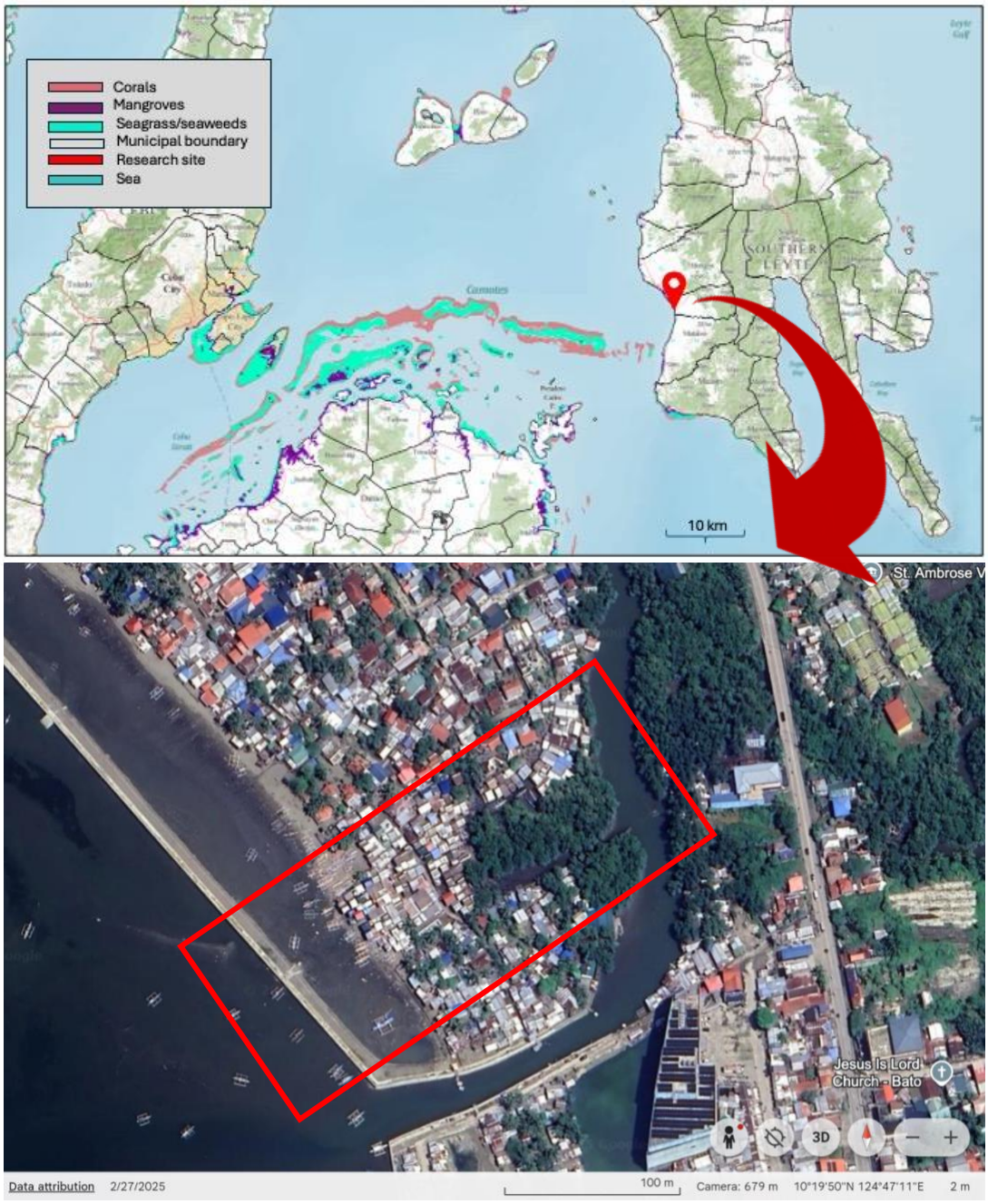


Figure 3. Coastal resources that surround the Sama Badjao Community in Dolho, Bato, Leyte

Source: Google Earth (2025) and GeoportalPH (2020) adapted by the author, 2020

Before collecting data, I clarified certain assumptions through casual or informal/unstructured interviews with gatekeepers and experts outside the community. Informal interviews evoke rich and informative conversations about specific themes, ideas, and issues without predetermined questions (O'Leary, 2017). I also reflected on my biases and maintained my judgments through reflexive essays, reminding myself of my positionality.

In an informal interview with a researcher in Bato, Leyte, she mentioned that the Sama Badjao could not provide an exact date for the initial settlement of their elders. However, based on the ethnographic data and observations by Uy & Neri (1979) in Metro Cebu and Bantayan Islands,[22] a nephew of the *Imam* (high priest) stated that the first Sama Badjao settlers arrived in 1963 on these two islands when two boats called *pilang*[23] landed on the shores of Dulho. This was followed by a series of migrations towards the newly founded settlement due to a lack of peace and order in their ancestral area in Mindanao. Uy and Neri (1979) also notably observe that these seafaring ethnic minorities migrated to Cebu and Leyte, Samar, Masbate, and other parts of the Visayas in 1963. Various interviews I conducted with non-indigenous residents in Bato, Leyte living close to the Sama Badjao community supported this, confirming the narratives that the Sama Badjao people have reached Masbate and have been influenced to adopt compressor fishing.[24] Meanwhile, various online news outlets reported the initial wave of Sama Badjao migration to the Visayas around the time of Philippine Martial Law in the 1970s-1980s. Then, they began settling in Brgy. Dolho, Bato, Leyte.

The areas of Brgy. Dolho inhabited by the Sama Badjao are divided into two settlements: By a concrete bridge called '*Tabok*' (Across) and '*Baybayon*' (Seashore). The majority (84%) of the households lived in Baybayon, closer to the shoreline area, while

[22] These are islands close to Leyte province.
[23] Pilang, like lepa but smaller, appears to have originated in the northern Sulu Islands, also known as vinta. It is a double outrigger boat used as houseboats by Bajau Tawi-Tawi and many of their kin ties to the Siasi and Jolo areas of northern Sulu. Vinta appears to be a name introduced to Sulu from the northern Philippines. The Bajau call this boat pilang, while the Tausug call it dapang (Nimmo, 1990).
[24] Compressor fishing is a basic form of surface-supplied diving. It is usually practiced in the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Caribbean, for artisanal fishing (Bañez & Ramos, 2023). See more: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-G8_RPc_lks

16% lived in Tabok, closer to the river and more inhabited by Bisaya.[25] The residents of Baybayon, especially with stilt houses on the shallow sea, were primarily new migrants.

A gatekeeper working in an NGO revealed, *"The Badjaos aren't that typical tribe [ethnic group] that you can see in other Philippine tribes [ethnic groups]."* Most stayed for a few months and left Brgy. Dolho to visit relatives or earn as vendors or traders in different places, particularly around the islands of Leyte, Bohol, and Cebu. Nevertheless, he could not confirm if they were registered residents there. One thing he was certain of was that the Sama Badjao who settled permanently in Dolho were fishermen.

4.2.2 Community Entry

In compliance with Section 59 of IPRA 1997 and the NCIP Administrative Order No. 1 Series of 2012 entitled the "Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPS) and Customary Laws (CL) Research and Documentation Guidelines," research/documentation involving Indigenous peoples or Indigenous communities in the Philippines should apply for a Certification Precondition with the NCIP regional office. The law mandated that research and documentation involving Indigenous peoples and/or Indigenous cultural communities should apply for a Certification Precondition with the concerned NCIP regional office.

In February 2020, I submitted my application to NCIP Region VI and VII and received the Certification Precondition in May 2021. This document certified that I should follow the guidelines of securing free, prior, and informed consent from the Indigenous community and would assure the confidentiality of data and identity of my study participants. My gatekeeper, who worked for Edmund Rice Ministries Foundation (ERMF), an NGO in Leyte province, agreed to assist me in establishing legitimacy and trust in the community for my stay.

[25] The Bisaya(n) or Visaya(n) are Philippine ethnolinguistic group native in the Visayas and significant portion in Mindanao.

When I arrived in Brgy. Dolho, Leyte, I sent letters of my research application permit and a copy of the Certification Precondition to the mayor, brgy. captain[26] or chairperson, DSWD regional office, and *Panlima* (Chieftain). I complied with the necessary paperwork before the Christmas holiday season. I first explored the host community and neighboring areas before visiting the Sama Badjao community to familiarize myself with the municipality of Bato, Leyte. I returned to the Brgy. Multipurpose Hall to ask for possible connections to the Sama Badjao community and for them to review the permit letter for the panlima. One of the brgy, officials said that *"the barangay communicates with the Badjao community through [Trini][27] instead of the Chief because she works here as a health worker. She is our representative for the Badjao because she speaks Bisaya well."*

According to the Native American Center for Excellence (2010), when conducting research involving native communities, it is necessary to get to know and establish relationships early on with elders and spiritual leaders who can serve as mentors, guides, and facilitators throughout the data collection. The brgy. secretary in Dolho requested a health worker to bring me to Trini's house. We discussed their conditions after the typhoon, my background, the overview of my research, my intention to be around the community, and if she could introduce me to their elders and *Panlima* for a meeting. Trini disclosed that their *Panlima* was not around because he is in Cebu with his new wife. However, one of the *Panlima* representatives was present and was also related to the elder, whom I called Ruby.

The elder was grinding cassava when I encountered her and her sister. They used a machine to grate cassava, a traditional, stable food for the Sama people. We went upstairs to her house, and I was introduced to Mauro and Bert, Ruby's adult sons. Bert was rebuilding their mother's roof, blown away by Rai. I was well received in the house. Ruby gave me a piece of *Terno* traditional Sinama clothes (colorful long-sleeve blouse or *Sablay* and skirt), which she carefully stored in her *Baul* (wood chest). We discussed the duration

[26] Brgy. Captain or Punong Barangay assumes the role of the chief executive officer of the barangay. They implement policies and programs that directly impact the lives of the residents, ensuring peace and order, and the overall welfare of the community members.

[27] I replaced all names with pseudonyms and modified some specific information to keep the confidentiality of my interviewees.

of my research, research methods, the importance of their approval and consent, and my intention to hire on-call Sinama translators. At that time, Mauro served as my translator for Ruby because she could not speak Cebuano[28].

I understood that I was considered a visitor and an outsider at the early stage of my data collection in the community. It was initially challenging to build rapport with the community through the informants since I did not speak the Sinama language and belonged to the dominant group, Bisaya. However, as time passed, I built up mutual trust through everyday visibility in the area. I dined with the informants and translators, served as a photographer in municipal activities involving the Sama Badjaos, showed respect for the elders and appreciation of their Indigenous traditions and religion, and helped them within my capabilities. I also showed the other side of my personal life by working with them in my apartment and invited them to my hometown in Baybay, Leyte. Somehow, my informants and I mixed up personal life and fieldwork as we established deep connections extending beyond this research. Following this, I started the in-depth data collection.

[28] The Cebuano language is the native language in Central Visayas, parts of Eastern Visayas, and has spread to many areas in Mindanao.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

4.3.1 Primary Data

In ethnographic research, data collection includes participant observation and is often complemented by interviews or both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methods (Madden, 2017). It is essential to clearly outline the justification for the methods used, or what Madden (2017, p. 26) refers to as "a case of data transparency." A deep acknowledgment of the researcher's role, rather than reflexivity for its own sake, lends methodological strength to the study and appropriately addresses debates about objectivism and subjectivism. In other words, they are opposing forces that must overcome each other, and in any solid ethnographic account, they are collaborators (Madden, 2017). I employed the following data collection methods to address my research questions: a) semi-structured interviews, b) participant observation, c) unstructured/informal interviews, d) household census, and e) focus group discussion (FGD) (Figure 4).

My firsthand observation of the recovery phase after Rai provided a good case for directly observing the phenomena and immersing myself in the community. Participant observation is a practice that values the idea of knowing other humans through doing what others do: living, eating, working, and experiencing the same daily patterns (Madden, 2017). Bustinza et al. (2021) remark that more researchers used participant observation in disaster recovery than in other disaster stages. As an approach, observation is often used in studies to comprehend how affected communities and their residents recover, for example, by identifying the elements that obstruct/support their recovery (Bustinza et al., 2021). In this research, I am particularly interested in capturing how the community collectively recovered from typhoons concerning their recent experiences with Super Typhoon Rai and the municipality's DRRM program. I recorded my observations through daily journals, mobile video recordings, and photographs with consent.

Trini, an informant, shared that the SBHWs have not yet updated their household profiling, so their household list has been outdated since 2019. Also, ERMF said that their latest household profiling was in 2016, and they did not finish their recent profiling in 2020 because their activities were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To get a recent

overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the community and to better inform myself of the next activity, I conducted a household census in both *Tabok* and *Baybayon* settlements. A household census is a type of survey that does not rely on a sample (O'Leary, 2017). I used the results of the census to develop and finalize my in-depth interview questions and identify my target interviewees for semi-structured interviews.

A semi-structured interview uses a flexible structure; interviewers can start with a defined questioning plan, but shift to follow the natural flow of conversation. Interviewers may also deviate from the plan to pursue interesting tangents (O'Leary, 2017). I created a list of target interviewees from the household census and validated them with key informants. The number of participants was determined through data saturation. Data saturation happens when there is enough information to replicate the study. In other words, it is when additional new information has been attained, and further coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015)**.** I had a total of 31 interviewees identified via purposive sampling with the following criteria:

1. Individuals who were directly affected by Super Typhoon Rai, specifically those who experienced total destruction of their homes.
2. Good balance of Pangkat and/or Christians
3. Ability to converse in the Cebuano language
4. Availability

I hired on-call Sama Badjao translators to occasionally translate and interpret Sinama words, especially terminologies, without direct Cebuano translations. I often reminded my interviewees that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and they could express themselves in the Sinama language. At the same time, I also conducted unstructured interviews with other Sama Badjaos to extract information, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs about their personal experiences during and after the typhoon and recovery in general.

To identify the role of gender, indigeneity, and religion in Sama Badjao's recovering capacity after Rai, I complemented my observations and interviews with two separate FGDs for men (seven participants) and women (eight participants). Then, another session of FGD was held for both Sama men and women (ten participants) to observe

gender dynamics between genders. I served as the moderator and facilitator for the FGDs, while the research assistant I hired was the note-taker. FGD is a planned and guided group discussion to examine a specific phenomenon or issue. In FGD, participants were encouraged to develop thoughts and to facilitate discussion amongst themselves, which can lead to consolidated, better, or even new ideas (O'Leary, 2017).

Moreover, it was essential not to misrepresent the study participants and guarantee that the research did not further harm disaster survivors or place any additional burden on those who were there to aid the survivors. Bustinza et al. (2021) suggest triangulation, where researchers make use of multiple sources and methods. Triangulation involves corroborating evidence to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2013). I triangulated data from the written documents through key informant interviews (KII) of elders, community leaders (both Indigenous and non-indigenous), social workers, and community development officers who were directly involved during the post-disaster recovery in the community. Questions vary depending on the responses of the Sama Badjao interviewees and the documents appraised. To validate the data, I invited 11 Sama Badjao informants and translators to check the preliminary findings and interpretations before wrapping up the fieldwork.

4.3.2 Secondary Data

I collected and analyzed secondary data to complement the primary data. These documents include published (research reports produced by scholars and universities; books of various authors, handbooks, theses, magazines, and newspapers; journal databases, online libraries, and websites; and public records and statistics from Philippine government offices, historical/archival documents, etc.) and unpublished data sources (minutes of meetings, unpublished research reports, restricted financial reports, project proposals, undergraduate and graduate theses, and from scholars and research workers, NGOs) related to the Sama Badjao. I assessed the credibility of the documents by following O'Leary's planning process for document/textual analysis (O'Leary, 2017). Table 1 presents the details of the data collected throughout fieldwork.

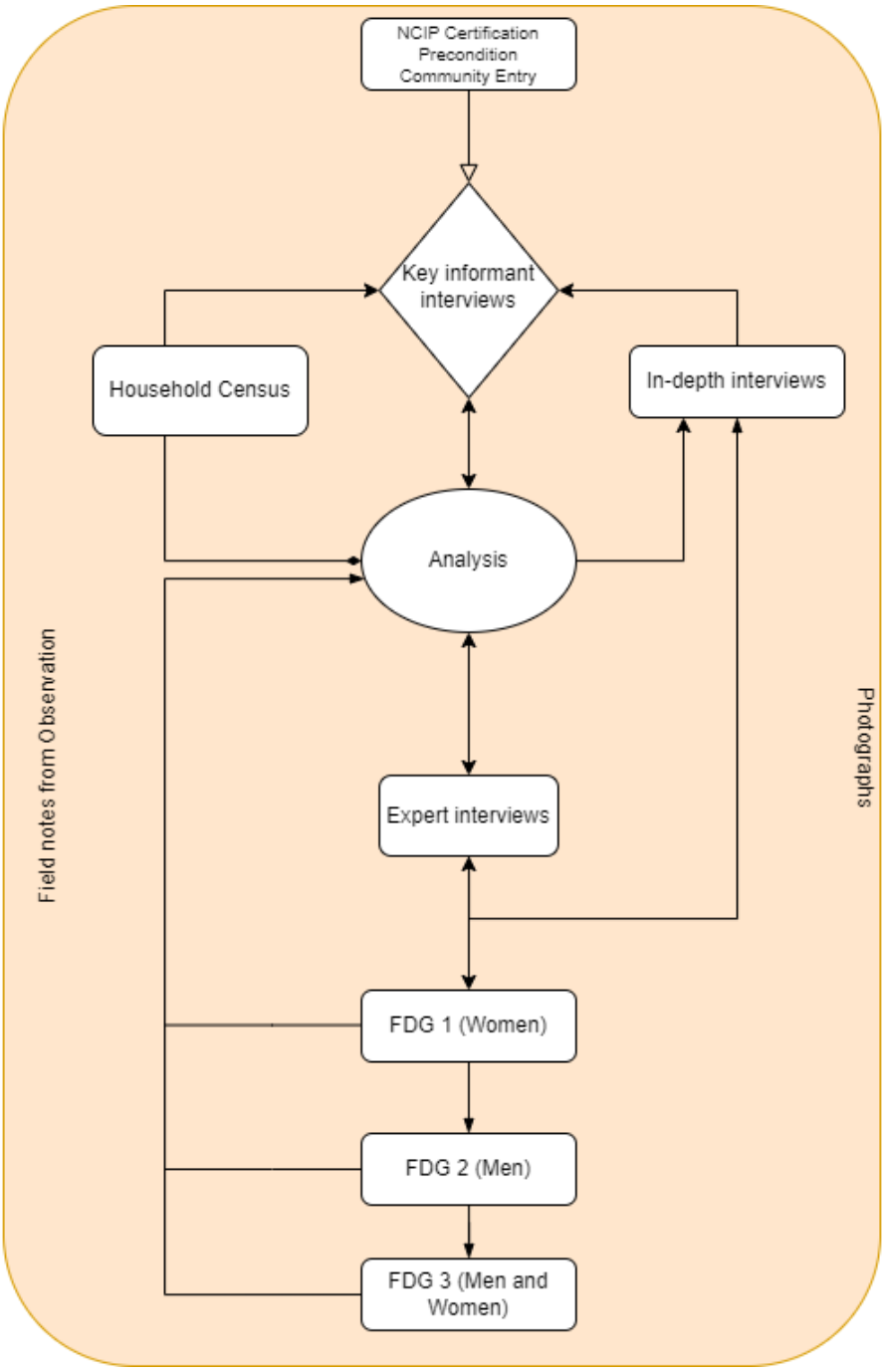


Figure 4. The connection of the data gathering methods used

Source: Author, 2021

Table 1. Types of data collected

Type of data	Details
Documents -12 Online -22 Printed	-Information about Sama Badjao communities after typhoons, such as Haiyan and Rai -Financial information about the municipality disbursement of funding for super typhoon Rai relief and rehabilitation -technical reports from research projects and proposals in the area -National laws and municipal policies
181 Household census[29]	-Household census within the Sama Badjao community, including those not recognized by them but claiming to be Sama (Half Sama/half Bisaya).
31 Sama Badjao semi-structured interviews	-Semi-structured interviews with the Sama Badjao who lost their homes - I ensured that Sama Badjao, who are Roman Catholic, ancestral worshipping (*Pangkat/Mboh*), Born Again Christianity (BAC), both gender (couples), were well represented. Some participants practiced the BAC faith, but due to their inactivity within the Church and participation in their parents' traditions, they switched back to *Mboh* faith. -At least the husband is around listening, or I can ask him for verification.
28 Expert interviews	-Sama Badjao elders, *Panlima* and representatives, Sama Badjao health workers (SBHWs), municipal employees, village officials, mayor's office, municipal DRRM head and staff, DSWD employees, public school teachers and Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) coordinator, community development workers, community college dean, NCIP head and staff
56 Unstructured/informal interviews	-Informal interviews with the experts above as I go back and forth to their offices -Non-indigenous residents within the municipality and other neighboring towns, fisherfolks, barangay health worker (BHWs), sari-sari store owners, family members who interacted with informants,

[29]The total household in this census does not serve as the official number of households and total number of residents in the Sama Badjao community. Itinerant families who were visiting before and after the Super-Typhoon were included as a household during fieldwork, including those who have left for *Magosaha* with intention of return, and couples or families who planned to build a separate house or have started to construct their own house. However, individuals who did not express their intention to return with their family members and have been away for a month were excluded from household composition.

	transient Sama Badjao and those who traveled to Semporna, Sama Badjao from other settlements
3 FGDs	-FGD with women (8 participants), FGD with men (7 participants), and both men and women (10 participants)
2 municipal meetings	-Attended a meeting with the fire department offering the coastal village of the municipality first aid training -Meeting for the Indigenous People's Day facilitated by an NGO in cooperating with the Department of Education (DepEd) (elementary and high schools), municipal office, and Sama Badjao leaders
7 municipal events	-Junior high school and elementary graduation, nutrition month culmination, San Juan Day, village and municipal fiestas, Indigenous community health profiling, feeding program for a month (2x a week), Indigenous day
Fieldnotes	Notes from my observations and my personal understanding of activities I attended
Photos	Everyday life in the community and the municipality

4.4 Data Analysis

From the conceptualization stage to fieldwork, I performed the iterative process of updating key concepts and theoretical considerations to keep pace with the empirical data. Quantitative data from the household census were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while I managed all the qualitative data using the ATLAS.ti software. Qualitative software, like ATLAS.ti, allows researchers to analyze qualitative datasets systematically and transparently with openness. One can query data or ask questions and find answers that remain or are hidden as the analysis goes deeper (Friese, 2019). However, Friese (2019) highlights that ATLAS.ti does not analyze data but serves as a tool for supporting the qualitative data analysis process. This means one needs to use data analysis techniques to command the software through coding, which makes sense for each data segment.

To examine how Super Typhoon Rai affected the life of the semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao community, I followed Braun and Clark's reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023). The thematic analysis involves coding and generating themes for analyzing qualitative datasets and producing patterns of analytic 'themes'-with a theme capturing a pattern of meaning across the data (Braun et al., 2023). Braun & Clarke (2019) best describe thematic analysis as theoretically flexible as a generic method; specific iterations of thematic analysis encode particular paradigmatic and epistemological assumptions about meaningful knowledge production. Thus, their theoretical flexibility is more or less constrained. The reflexive thematic analysis approach reflects the values of a qualitative paradigm, centering researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on and engagement with data (Braun et al., 2023; Braun & Clarke, 2019).

In doing a reflexive thematic analysis, Braun et al. (2023) first suggested familiarizing with the data by reading and re-reading. I entered notes and memos into Atlas.ti software, anything related to the research questions and possible nuances. Second was coding-codes are signs that a theme or something interesting has been found in the datasets. It could be large, overlapping sociological categories or discrete behavioral observations with meaning. Reflexive thematic analysis could be combined with elements such as analysis that was (initially) grounded in the data, but existing theoretical concepts and literature deepened the analytic interpretation (Braun et al., 2023). I used a combination of deductive and inductive coding (Saldaña, 2013) in exploring the datasets. I prepared codes relevant to the research questions but added new codes that emerged from the data and iterated these coding techniques as the analysis deepened. The third step was initial theme generation. Codes were then refined through rounds of coding cycles and transformed into a set of categories until familiarity with the data was reached, leading to a pattern of themes (Madden, 2017). I grouped and regrouped similar codes to identify potential patterns of shared meaning or concept related to the research question. Next was reviewing and developing themes. Madden (2017) wrote that themes could be "a large sociological category, a group behavior, individual behavior, an aspect of the physical setting, or an observation of a mood or feeling (p. 143)." I analytically reviewed and reworked meaningful patterns from the initial themes in the dataset. The fifth step was

another round of refining, defining, and naming themes. In this phase, I wrote short theme definitions to capture each theme's scope and core concept. Creswell (2013) considered this a cultural interpretation where the researcher relies on the participants' views from an insider (emic) perspective, reports them in verbatim quotes, and then synthesizes the data by filtering it through the researcher's etic scientific perspective. Lastly, the entire result was written, including the final refinement and assessment of the overall analysis (Braun et al., 2023).

To identify the role of gender, indigeneity, and religion in the recovery capacity of Sama Badjao after Rai, I adapted Boonzaier's (2019) decolonial intersectional analysis. After the reflexive thematic analysis, I began analyzing decolonial, intersectional power. Then, the next step was articulating resistance. This examined how Sama Badjao's stories articulate resistance to counteract their imposed positionalities and how they were represented as people on the periphery. Lastly, multiple and situated narratives were written to bring out the voices of Sama Badjao after Super Typhoon Rai (Boonzaier, 2019).

4.5 Positionality

Doing ethnography in vulnerable populations requires an immense sense of self-reflection (reflexivity), a critical stance on the researcher's own biases (positionality) (Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018). This includes an honest, introspective examination of whether investigating vulnerable communities' practices can lead to a deterioration of their livelihood (the no-harm principle, which I explain further in the next section).

I understand that differences between the researcher and the research community could cause barriers to communication and interpretation. Still, it can also encourage participants to articulate social dynamics that might be assumed to be understood by an insider researcher (Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018). Positionality is multifaceted and changes depending on who we work with and under what circumstances. Hence, a researcher can be an outsider (etic perspective) and an insider (emic perspective) at the same time (Merriam et al., 2001). For instance, I introduced myself as a researcher during an expert interview, while as a student during in-depth interviews with Sama Badjaos and non-indigenous residents. I withheld any prior knowledge I possessed, depending on whom

I spoke to. But with the Sama Badjao, because of my everyday interaction with them, I took advantage of my curiosity and cultural ignorance by positioning myself as a student learning their culture.

As Pacheco-Vega and Parizeau (2018) indicate, positions are fundamentally relevant in ethnography. Positionality locates the researcher, participants, and research site within a system of knowledge production where there is a cohesive understanding of the need for scholarly engagement that benefits the community under study. I acknowledged that I am privileged compared to my research participants. Moreover, I am from the dominant in-group, with my background being Bisaya (non-indigenous) which makes me insider to the local Philippine political and social landscape. However, it makes me an outsider to the Sama Badjao worldviews. This means my educational level, social and historical identity, underlying belief systems, political opinions, or other biases might potentially influence how I understand and interpret the social phenomenon I am investigating, the reality of the Sama Badjao, or their lived experiences. –

I addressed this dual positionality through reflexive and engaged ethnographic practice. Personal and social background can create boundaries; therefore, exerting effort to connect with marginalized communities, such as stepping outside the bounds of our own exclusive identities, is vital. It may be difficult, but it is paramount to minimize any potential inconvenience so that they can be deeply involved in research and knowledge production (Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018). During fieldwork, I bracketed out my assumptions and personal biases and unlearned the lifestyle I grew up with. As mentioned in Chapter 4.2.2, my relationship with informants and the community evolved from academic to friendship. My personal space gradually amalgamated into the communal Sama Badjao space. I learned basic Sinama, bought and wore batik-inspired t-shirts, and participated in their Indigenous rituals. Somehow, it gave me rich information and a more profound understanding and appreciation of their culture. I also commensurate the interviewee's personal background (e.g., religion) with the translator so they could express their responses openly and without judgment. Daily logs in my Google Calendar, field notes/journal, and data collection inventory reminded me of my research questions and to keep a healthy balance between personal and academic life. Madden (2017) highlights that an emic point of view is part of the story, but researchers must not forget to maintain some

sense of 'outsider' despite familiarizing their participants. Researchers should never lose sight of their own etic perspectives and the driving questions that brought them to the field in the first place.

Madden (2017) continues to elucidate that finding a relationship between the researcher's (outsider) and participant's (insider) perspectives is not only a matter of balance but more of a synthesis to explain particular human phenomena from a broader canvas. During data analysis, I revisited my logs and field notes to remind myself of my own experiences in the aftermath of the super typhoon and my own prejudices/biases, and to decrease my influence on the result. I repeatedly pulled over my data collection inventory for my participants' feelings, non-verbal cues, and other factors that may help me revisit their lived experiences.

Danley et al. (2021) agree with Pacheco-Ve and Parizeau (2018) that most research in post-disaster contexts, as well as with Indigenous communities, is exploitative (Smith, 2012). This reminded me of Spivak's (1988) essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She ingeniously concluded that subalterns (Other) cannot speak, leaving them voiceless. Intellectuals, in the name of research and development, believed they could speak on behalf of the 'Other.' Hence, scholars call for research that prioritizes listening to and representing vulnerable communities (representation). It must center on community experiences rather than centering evaluations of policy or innovation. Lastly, it must directly impact the community it serves (Danley et al., 2021; Pacheco-Vega & Parizeau, 2018; Smith, 2012).

4.6 Research Limitations

I acknowledged that this research is limited to post-disaster experiences of the Indigenous Sama Badjao community in the Philippines. Initially, I planned to live in the *Baybayon* area since this was where most of the damaged houses were concentrated. Yet I realized they were not fully rebuilt and partially reconstructed by temporary materials such as tarpaulin and salvaged galvanized iron. Moreover, from December 2021 to March 2022, the weather in the province was terrible due to the '*Amihan season* (Northeast monsoon),' which brought massive rain. So, when it rained, all Sama Badjao family members ran to their relatives who could offer better shelter and comfort during cold rainy nights.

Furthermore, stilt houses comprised two to three families, with or without a partition. I could not concentrate or comfortably work at night doing academic activities such as partial analysis, writing, and reading. As a result, I rented an apartment that was a five-minute walk from the Sama Badjao community. I also used this apartment as an ad hoc office with the research assistant, informants, and translators.

As mentioned in the previous section, my ethnicity differed from the research participants, and I could not speak the Sinama language. Although the interviews were conducted in Cebuano, there might be a probability of lost information in translation and interpretation. Hence, I carefully identified my positionality as a researcher and laid out self-reflections to be transparent on how far I have influenced and approached the research. Considering the level of subjectivity and cultural bias of qualitative research, Saldana (2013) argues that no two people most likely interpret a passage of text the same way. Likewise, no two people most likely interpret a visual image similarly. Each of us brings our background experiences, values system, and disciplinary expertise to the visual processing and, thus, our personal reactions, reflections, and refractions.

The findings of this research were context-specific in the Philippines and only applicable to the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, because each Sama Badjao community differed due to external factors. This signifies that results may not apply to Sama Badjao in other parts of Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, due to differences in geography, governance, etc. In the end, qualitative research aims not to generalize facts but to ascribe the particular and the specific from one case to another (Creswell, 2013).

Moreover, doing ethnographic research is an ethical commitment from the very outset, and all phases of research and writing. Researchers must deal with the responsibilities and obligations of forming close human contacts and contracts (Madden, 2017). I received feedback and advice from old colleagues in our province that the Certification Precondition from NCIP might take time, so I immediately secured it after the consultative meeting with my supervisory team. NCIP ensured that I abide by their ethical guidelines (Section 59 of IPRA) by signing an affidavit of the undertaking. Meanwhile, in the summer of 2021, we learned the guidelines of the University of Bonn's research ethics through a seminar-workshop as part of our doctoral course. Part of it was

planning our field research as well as familiarizing ourselves with specific procedures and formalities to be considered before we departed. I submitted ethical clearance to the Research Ethics Committee of the Center for Development Research (ZEF) before going to the field on October 10, 2021, and got the approval on November 25, 2021.

Pacheco et al. (2018) suggest approaching study participants engagingly. This can be done by providing information about the research project, its objectives, and the policy rationale underlying the investigations. I informed all the people involved in my study about my background and my research, as well as their participation. From the household census to in-depth interviews and FGDs, those with literacy were asked to sign a written consent form highlighting their voluntary participation and right to withdrawal. For cases where participants (vulnerable adults) could not read a consent form, I asked for oral and written consent (with a thumbmark sign) together with a representative (family member, friend, or someone else) as a witness. Meanwhile, I also asked for oral consent during observation and when taking photographs.

To minimize risk to the entire community, I used pseudonyms and/or omitted any information/characteristics that might obviously identify a participant in my study. I also censored any sensitive or controversial information (e.g., name, place, event, etc.) from quotations.

4.7 Conclusion

This study employed an ethnographic research design to explore the post-disaster experiences of the Sama Badjao after Super Typhoon Rai. I gathered data by using both a quantitative method through a household census and qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, expert interviews, FGDs, participant observation, field notes, documents, and photographs. Quantitative data, such as the household census was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data underwent reflexive thematic analysis to identify recurring themes in the experiences of the Sama Badjao before, during, and after the typhoon, as well as their struggles in seeking relief and rehabilitation assistance. Additionally, I applied a decolonial intersectional

analysis to examine the impact of gender, indigeneity, and religion on the recovery capacity of the Sama Badjao after Rai.

This methodology ensures a rich understanding of the combination of local and Indigenous knowledge on disaster preparation, planning, and relief operations. Additionally, it captured the othering experienced by Sama Badjao within the disaster recovery and rehabilitation program and how they navigated and counteracted these social challenges and environmental risks, considering the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in the Philippines.

The findings of this research are specific to the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, Philippines, as each community varies due to external factors such as vulnerability and exposure to hazards. This indicates that the results cannot be generalized to other sea-oriented Indigenous communities in insular Southeast Asia due to differences in geography, governance structures, and access to social and institutional support. While the aim of this study is not to achieve generalizability, it does attribute specific cases to one another. Furthermore, it relies heavily on the transparency of my methodology, my involvement with the host and Indigenous communities, and my biases and prejudices through constant self-reflection, declaration of my positionality, and ethical consideration of 'harming no one.' Free, Prior and Informed Consent was carefully implemented for both host and Indigenous communities, ensuring the anonymity of the interviewees involved and the confidentiality of sensitive information, following university ethical procedures and NCIP guidelines.

The next three chapters illustrate the empirical findings of this study. I relate them to the research questions and theories, emphasizing the key themes that emerged from the data. Chapter 5 expounds on the impacts of extreme weather events such as Super Typhoon Rai, detailing the Sama Badjao community's pre-, during-, and post-disaster experiences. Chapter 6 explores the structural discrimination faced by the Sama Badjao and their struggles in contesting for relief and rehabilitation assistance. On the other hand, Chapter 7 examines the resilience and resistance of the Sama Badjao against othering using a decolonial intersectional lens.

Chapter 5 Impact of Extreme Weather Events on Semi-sedentary Indigenous Communities

5.1 Introduction

There is a strong scientific consensus that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are causing climate change, thereby contributing to stronger typhoons due to higher sea surface temperatures and higher subsurface sea temperatures (Flannery, 2006; Holden & Marshall, 2018; Mei et al., 2015; Mei & Xie, 2016). These stronger typhoons carry more moisture, track differently, move faster, and will be aggravated by sea level rise, one of the most certain consequences of climate change (Holden & Marshall, 2018). Takagi & Esteban (2016) predict an increase in the mean maximum tropical cyclone wind speed of between 2% and 11% by the end of the century, in association with more profound low pressures in the core of these systems.

"The strengthened typhoon intensity poses heightened threats to human society," wrote Mei et al. (2015, p. 4). Extreme weather disturbances alone are so catastrophic that they can kill more people than the largest terrorist attack (Flannery, 2006). However, Bankoff (2001) pointed out that the only difference is that these large catastrophes happened in the 'Other' world. Bankoff (2001, p. 24) further explains, "The disproportionate incidence of disasters in the non-Western world is not simply a question of geography. It is also a matter of demographic difference, exacerbated in more recent centuries by the unequal terms of international trade, that renders the inhabitants of less developed countries more likely to die from hazards than those in more developed ones."

Conceivably, the most challenging impact of climate change on Indigenous peoples is how it disrupts traditional knowledge systems, often based on ecological connections and tied to place. When their ancestral domains change, then the knowledge associated with it perishes. Their perceptions of how things function is interrupted by seasonal changes brought by climate change, mainly when these changes affect the ecological and cultural cues that have historically determined when to engage in harvesting, fishing,

and/or other cultural rituals (Nursey-Bray et al., 2022). For the Sama Badjao, their maritime lifestyle and livelihoods expose them to the impacts of climate change. In the longer term, the expected increased frequency, intensity, and unpredictability of weather may impact travel patterns and cause increased damage to housing and property in the coastal areas, especially in the Coral Triangle[30] region (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2009).

This chapter outlines the disaster risk management practices of the Sama Badjao in preparing, responding to, and managing the impacts of Super Typhoon Rai. The findings reveal how they prepare for a super typhoon, describe their conditions while it made landfall, and examine their coping mechanisms and situation right after the storm. The chapter concludes that the Sama Badjao community has combined DRR practices along with their Indigenous knowledge to minimize risks from the typhoon aftermath. However, limitations in predicting the storm's intensity and miscommunication delayed the evacuation of some households, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive and effective risk communication in DRRM.

5.2 Super Typhoon Rai Information Access Among the Sama Badjao

On December 14, 2021, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) announced that a severe tropical storm named Rai (with a local name Odette) had entered the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) (NDRRMC, 2021). On a televised briefing on the same day, NDRRMC forecasted over 10,000 villages in the Visayas and Mindanao, and some parts of Southern Luzon were within the projected path of Rai. It rapidly intensified as it approached the vicinity of Dinagat Islands and Siargao Island, the northeastern tip of Mindanao. It has maximum sustained winds of 165 km/h near the center, gustiness of up to 205 km/h, and a central pressure of 950 hPa. Typhoon signal warnings had also been issued to local governments in Northern Luzon, as their areas were also expected to experience heavy rains due to Rai.

[30] The Coral Triangle is a region rich with biodiversity that stretches across six countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste).

Before the typhoon landed on December 16, the councilors in Barangay Dolho announced the incoming typhoon in the coastal areas and compared it to Haiyan. Words spread fast, and everyone in the Sama Badjao community was aware of Rai and was advised to take necessary precautions, such as securing houses and preemptive evacuation. *"All people here are talking about this typhoon. The Bisaya councilors also came to us and announced about Odette*[31] (Semi-structured interview, 50 yrs old, Sama Badjao male)*."*

Additionally, households with television kept themselves updated on the weather conditions and forecasts by watching the news. Those with mobile phones received timely text message alerts from the NDRRMC once Typhoon Rai entered their geographic area. In the Philippines, the public received emergency messages through the 'Emergency Cell Broadcast System' (ECBS) since 2015. Established under Republic Act No. 10639, this nationwide early warning system enables near real-time delivery of emergency and informational messages, including rainfall and storm warnings, the possibility of flooding and landslides, and evacuation directives. These alerts also warn the public of earthquakes, tsunamis, and other hazards. Those Sama Badjao who do not have access to any media devices, such as mobile phones or televisions were informed personally by their relatives

According to the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management's (MDRRMC) damage report by typhoon Rai as of January 19, 2022, there were 866 total families affected in Barangay Dolho and 141 families evacuated with zero casualties. Figure 5 presents the timeline of the DRR activities of the Sama Badjao before, during, and after Rai landed.

[31] Local name of Super Typhoon Rai.

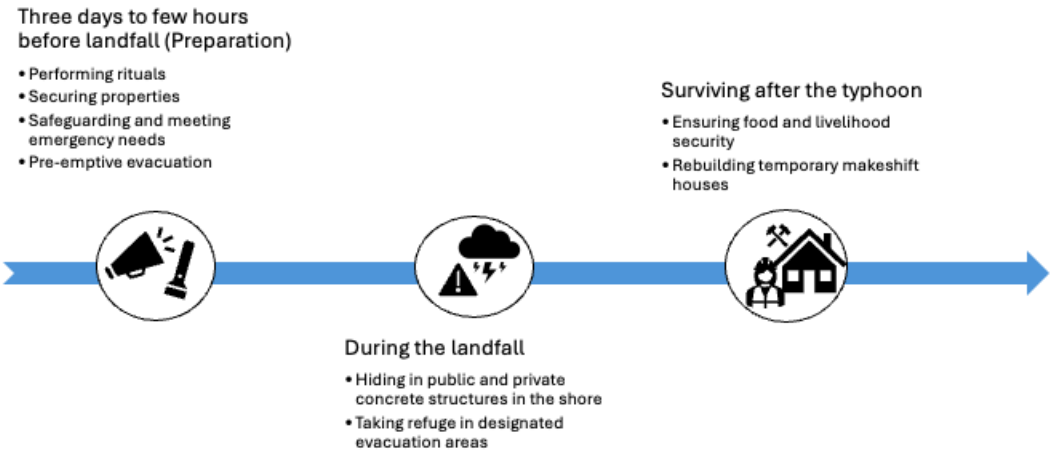


Figure 5. Timeline of the disaster preparedness plan of the Sama Badjao community

Source: Author, 2023

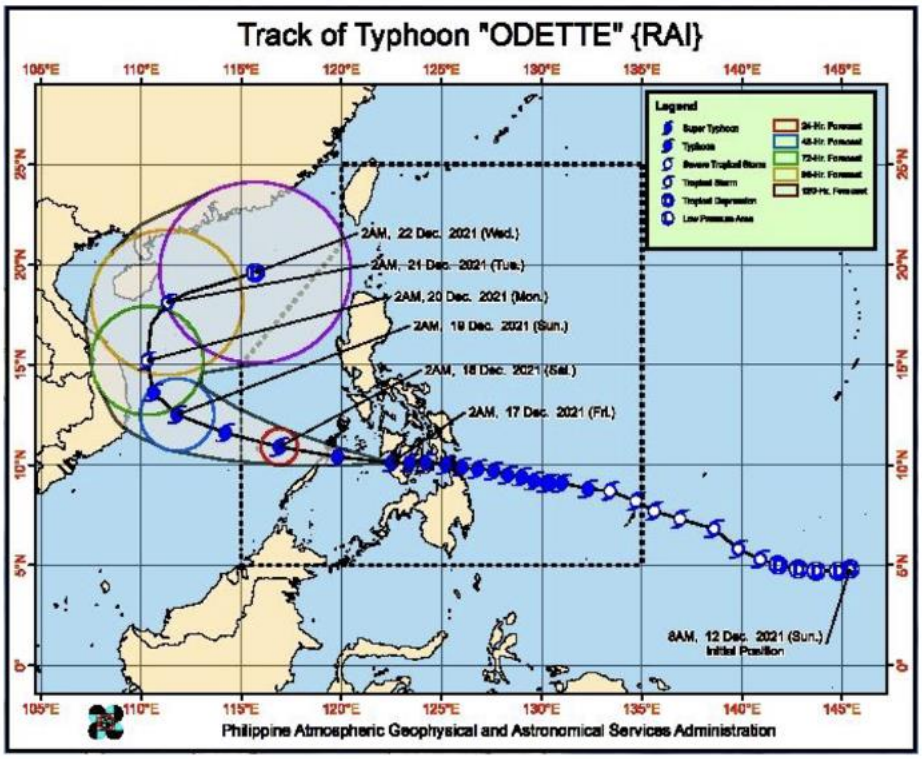
5.3 Preparation Before the Landfall

Disaster preparedness encompasses two primary objectives. The initial aim is to enable individuals to avert imminent disaster threats. The subsequent objective is to establish comprehensive plans, allocate necessary resources, and implement effective mechanisms to ensure that affected populations receive sufficient assistance. Yet despite mitigation measures, it is assumed that some people and property are vulnerable to disasters and that agencies have to deal with the disaster's impact (Twigg, 2004).

Figure 6 shows the pathway of Super Typhoon Rai. It landed in Padre Burgos, Southern Leyte, with Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal (TCWS) 4 (with potential impacts of significant to severe threat to lives and properties).[32] The municipality of Padre Burgos is approximately 57 km away from Bato, Leyte.

[32] Typhoon-force winds (Beaufort 12) or 118-184 km/h (64-99 kt, 32.7-51.2 m/s)

Literature indicates that women from low-income families primarily bear the responsibility for domestic roles due to a culturally dominant division of labor that often excludes them from disaster planning and management (Ashraf et al., 2015). Similarly, the preparations of the Sama Badjao before Rai struck were divided according to their well-defined gender norms. However, the Sama Badjao women participated in all aspects of their DRR activities. To exemplify the activities undertaken by the Sama Badjao in disaster preparedness, I have organized the following description into four themes: Performing rituals for divine protection, securing homes and material possessions, addressing family emergency needs, and facilitating early evacuation.



Typhoon "ODETTE" Landfalls:

1:30 PM, 16 December 2021 in Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte
3:10 PM, 16 December 2021 in Cagdianao, Dinagat Islands
4:50 PM, 16 December 2021 in Liloan, Southern Leyte
5:40 PM, 16 December 2021 in Padre Burgos, Southern Leyte
6:30 PM, 16 December 2021 in Pres Carlos Garcia, Bohol
7:30 PM, 16 December 2021 in Bien Unido, Bohol
10:00 PM, 16 December 2021 in Carcar, Cebu
12:00 AM, 17 December 2021 in La Libertad, Negros Oriental
5:00 PM: 17 December 2021 in Roxas, Palawan.

Figure 6. Timeline of Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) and the areas it traversed

Source: NDRRMC, 2021; PAGASA, 2021

5.3.1 Performing Rituals for Divine Protection

When I asked about their Indigenous rituals against hazards such as typhoons, the Sama Badjao informants shared that they have none or do not remember since their elders conducted the rites. I referred to their elders for rituals, and they explained that these were associated with healing from diseases or illnesses, thanksgiving, veneration of their ancestors, weddings, and burials. Aside from performing rituals, their *Mboh* elders[33] have '*Tawal*' (power) wherein they can foresee impending threats through dreams or *'tilimad'on* or *pangitain'* (omen) (*sa sama atao mag panginda/*ability to foresee).

Figure 7. Kamanyan, in a bowl placed on the Baul

Source: Author, 2022

[33] Botignollo (1995) refers to Mboh elders as the djinn bearers. The spirit that makes a Sama Badjao sacred or gives them supernatural power and religious functions.

A few days before the typhoon, one of the elders performed '*Magkamanyan*[34]*'* to drive away bad spirits that cause harm to the community, protect them from the erratic behavior of nature, especially the sea, and attract good omens. The *Magkamanyan* ritual comprised '*Kamanyan* (incense)' and '*Bohe*' (water). Figure 7 shows the *Kamanyan* on the '*Baul.*' The *Baul* represents *Mboh*, where the elders stored their essential belongings. The *Kamanyan* was placed in the smaller container called '*Tugtugan*' while the *Bohe* was poured into the bigger bowl. After the '*Tangas*' (burning up the *kamanyan* and letting it smoke), the people who attended the ritual must drink the water. The *Tangas* was a way of communicating with their spirit ancestors for protection and thanksgiving.

Based on several interviews, the Sama Badjao believed that typhoons are a form of punishment for '*ajama*' (widely known misbehavior, e.g. drinking, gambling, wearing of revealing clothes, disrespecting traditions, etc.). Likewise, people in certain countries, such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Haiti, attribute disasters as retribution for their sins (Gianisa & Le, 2017; O'Connell et al., 2017). In the Sama Badjao tradition, *Tuhan* gives the punishment; hence, throughout the typhoon, they also seek protection and help from him through *'Janji.*' *Tuhan* is a Malay word for Lord, which means the supreme being of the Sama Badjao (Bottignolo, 1999). Mauro explained that *Janji* is like how the Christians say their '*pangadyi* (prayer).' The *Janji* can be done individually or as a group with or without *Magkamanyan* (Figure 8).

During Rai, the interviewees did the *Janji* individually in their house and the evacuation center while sitting, especially those who experienced traumatic events, as discuss in the next section. Jumala (2018), however, described *Janji* as a pact that is part of their *Pag-Mboh* rituals and intended to renew the old agreement. The *Janji* is accompanied by the '*pangayu ngayu* (plea)' of those present in the ritual (Jumala, 2018). According to Charito, *"We celebrated Mboh Pai yearly before. We stopped performing it when I was newly married; I still didn't have kids at that time. I have three kids now, and we haven't done it until today because people here do not follow the elders anymore* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 2)*."* Since the Sama Badjao community

[34] Also spelt as kamangyan. Kamanyan is used for banishing bad spirits and as communication to the ancestors by offering smoke.

in Bato, Leyte stopped celebrating their yearly *Pag-Mboh* many years ago[35], it seems like the *Janji* ritual has survived and is also performed together with their other rituals.[36]

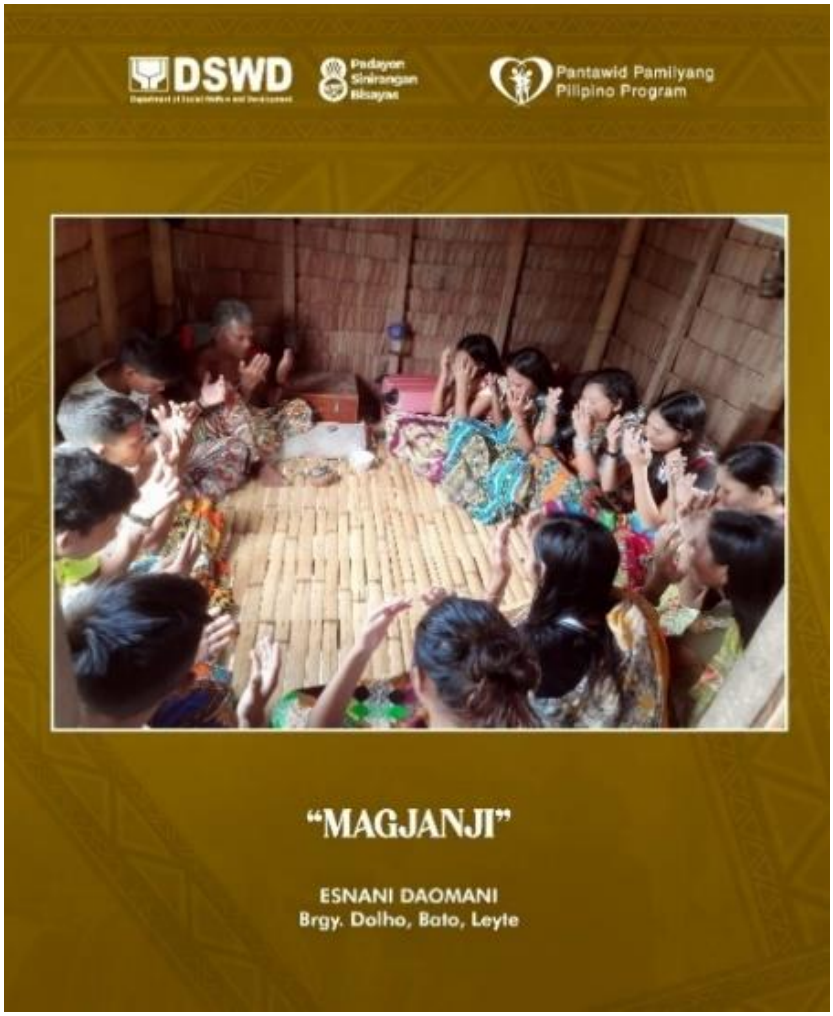


Figure 8. Performing Janji participated by family members

Source: Esnani Daomani uploaded on DSWD Facebook page for Indigenous Peoples Mobile Photography, 2022

[35] It is usual for the Sama Badjao to attribute time to their life experiences instead of the exact date or year. They also marry at young age of 13-19 years old. According to my informant, the Sama Badjaos do not linger on the past. They tend to forget things or events that have happened since they concentrated on thinking about the present.
[36] See Bottignolo (1999).

5.3.2 Securing Houses and Other Material Properties

For the Sama Badjao, securing their houses is part of their daily routine, regardless of the weather conditions. In the *Baybayon* area, where most '*Pangkat'*[37] resided, the households have stilt houses built according to their tradition. The Sama Badjao, alternatively called *Mboh* religion and the believers as *Pangkat*. Their homes are made of organic materials like bamboo, nipa/anahaw, plywood, and lumber (Figure 9). It is a 1-room hut with 2-floor bamboo planks, inside and underneath a bamboo slat called '*lantay.*' Interestingly, in Sama Badjao tradition, it is considered a separate household when a divided room has its own door for exit/entrance. Making any improvements for aesthetic purposes is prohibited because it would anger the spirits and cause illness to the family members. Interviewees shared that even a simple typhoon may damage their houses, how much more a super typhoon, so they prepared tremendously.

Figure 9. Sama Badjao houses in Baybayon during low tide

Source: Author, 2021

[37] The meaning of *Pangkat* should not be confused in the Tagalog language meaning group. At first, it was a mystery to me how the Sama Badjao *Mboh* followers refer to them as *Pangkat*. In Sinama language, it refers to ancestors, especially invoked in the traditional Sama religion.

Before Rai landed, men were responsible for ensuring the safety of the house and other possessions, such as pump boats, engines, and other machinery. They used available materials to protect their homes, such as tying their roofs to the walls and placing heavy objects on the roof, such as tires and containers filled with water. This prevented the roof from being blown away by strong winds. The added weight helped secure the roof, reduced the risk of significant damage to the structure, and provided better protection for the people during the typhoon. This reflects their resourcefulness and traditional skills in safeguarding their homes, even in peri-urban spaces. Unfortunately, their preparation was insufficient due to the nature of their housing materials and their exposure to the typhoon track. The interviewees below recalled how they kept their properties safe:

> *My husband has already placed heavy objects on our roof, such as tires and tied ropes around the house, even though there is no typhoon yet. We are prepared for any bad weather. Many of us here take care of our houses to avoid the hassle of buying new materials* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

> *I put heavy things in my house, like big containers filled with water, to withstand the typhoons. However, it got totally destroyed because Odette (Rai) was so strong. My house was even blown away* (Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao).

One of the essential properties in the Sama Badjao households is a pump boat (Figure 10), a double outrigger canoe powered by a small gasoline or diesel engine, and a smaller version operated by a paddle (without an engine). The Sama Badjao take pride in their pump boats, which are part of their identity as sea people. What makes the Badjao boats unique is their butterfly-like outrigger beams (*Katig*), which offer more stability, efficiency, and speed.[38] The Sama Badjao claim that the unequal length of the two outriggers means only one side touching the sea surface increases the boat's speed because it reduces water resistance.

[38] Part of the traditional event celebrated by the Badjao is boat racing, a communal gathering grounded from their maritime traditions.

Figure 10. A Sama Badjao man painting a pump boat on the shore

Source: Author, 2022

Figure 11. Mangrove trees connected to Tabok, a safe mooring space for pump boats during bad weather

Source: Author, 2022

As figure 11 shows, the Sama Badjao fishermen moored their pump boats in the mangrove area, which divided *Tabok* and *Baybayon*. No pump boats owned by the Sama Badjaos were missing or damaged by Rai. Pump boats are crucial to the lives of Sama Badjao culturally, socially, and economically. It is their source of livelihood, access to vast marine resources, mobility/transportation, and protection during typhoons and coastal flooding. For those who have decided not to evacuate initially, they parked their pump boats in between houses as their escape plan. One of the interviewees narrated:

> *My husband helped us evacuate the kids and went to the elementary school. However, he decided to be with my mother. She was grieving at that time; my father had recently died, and she wished to follow him [in death] by staying in the house. My husband and my brother's family stayed with my mother. If something terrible happens, they can take our pump boat, which is moored outside her house* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, Sama Badjao female).

5.3.3 Safeguarding and Meeting Family Emergency Needs

Women in the household bought essential items and food in the market, cooked meals early in the afternoon in advance, and packed them for dinner. This was to ensure that family members, especially kids, had full meals wherever they were, either in the evacuation center or in their own homes in the midst of the typhoon. During in-depth interviews, the Sama Badjaos admitted that they were generally fearful, particularly the women, because of their parents' past and negative experiences in the southern Philippines with piracy and ethnic conflicts. They tended to be easily scared or anxious about what they saw on television or social media. Two Sama Badjao women recalled how horrified they were upon learning about the upcoming super typhoon:

> *We knew about Odette from the news. We were afraid because we thought we were going to die. We went around noon to the wet market to buy food for dinner. We cooked dinner in advance* (Semi-structured interview, 22-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

> *Just the same, we cooked and brought food and drinking water for the kids. I was afraid and surprised when I heard the news. I was worried our houses might get damaged and we do not have money for repairs… We prioritized*

> *packing food so we wouldn't get hungry at night. We brought rice, [canned] sardines, dried fish, and snacks for the kids* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

In most plans, the primary priority was to protect the lives of the vulnerable members of the family, especially those households with children and the elderly. Then, meeting their emergency needs, mainly medical care (first aid kit), food, a secure evacuation shelter, and clothing. Based on their gender roles, the women assumed the reproductive tasks of packing the clothes and their essential items and documents. They wrapped papers in plastic bags and placed them in the basket with their clothes. They mentioned that evacuating and carrying items during a strong typhoon was brutal. They could not take everything with them, only light items like clothes they could wear for a few days. What was left was damaged and thrown away, such as muddy clothes, household items, and appliances like televisions and washing machines.

Before the super typhoon, some households had started to develop material culture such as electricity, home appliances such as washing machines, televisions, refrigerators, CD players, and karaoke, primarily intended for communal use of the *Kampung* within the *Baybayon* and *Tabok*. The Sama Badjao has a close kinship system through their '*Kampung*,' which means a village inhabited by extended kin. It may also mean clans or alliances of related families who regularly tied up at a moorage when their sea mobility was high. Based on my observation, the community has three *Kampung*, each led by the *Panlima*.

Saat (2003) argues that the Sama Bajau in Kota Belud in Sabah, Malaysia, for example, during the colonial period, are worthy of being considered cultural equals for proving themselves capable of creating and advancing material culture. They adapted quickly to the new social system brought in by the British North Borneo Chartered Company. They have developed skills like padi plantation, cattle and horse breeding due to their strong foundation of material culture. Nevertheless, disasters, like extreme weather, possibly restricted the development of the material culture of the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, for they could only save whatever they could bring to the evacuation center. The narratives below described their preparations:

> *My wife packed and prepared our clothes. Upon hearing the news, our kids were already preparing, too. Meanwhile, I was also looking for a safe place for us to stay (*Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao).
>
> *I took our essential documents such as birth certificates and IDs, our clothes, the kids, and their mat for sleeping to the elementary school [designated evacuation center for the Sama Badjao]. We [family members] helped each other* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

The Sama Badjao households, composed of two to four multi-family groups (three generations), worked as a team to fully secure each member and essential property for their livelihood. According to Twigg (2004), the need to protect livelihood assets affects how people with low socio-economic status respond to disaster warnings, often influencing their willingness or ability to take action. The protection of household assets is primarily a matter for individual households at present. Disaster preparedness and response agencies have not given much thought to it, being concerned with saving lives and relieving human suffering. Some shelters and safe places are designed to take animals, and people often take their most precious possessions to shelters (Twigg, 2004). In the case of the Sama Badjao people, the most valued possessions they brought with them to their evacuation areas were their clothes, jewelry, mats, and identification documents. At the same time, the men would risk their lives for those they could not bring to a safer place, such as pump boats, engines, and others which I will further discuss in Chapter 5.4.

5.3.4 Early Evacuation Before the Landfall

On December 15, 2021, Rai gained strength and became a typhoon. It had maximum sustained winds of 120 km/h near the center and gustiness of up to 150 km/h, raising TCWS 1 (minimal to a minor threat to lives and properties)[39] to several areas in Visayas and Mindanao. The PAGASA forecasted heavy to torrential rains in areas on Rai's path and moderate to heavy rains elsewhere near the typhoon's band. The next day, it immediately upgraded to TCWS 5 (extreme threat to life and property). A considerable number of Sama

[39]Strong winds (Beaufort 6-7) or 39-61 km/h (22-33 kt, 10.8-17.1 m/s)

Badjaos evacuated in the morning for fear of storm surge, and another batch followed in the afternoon. The Sama Badjao were among the first people who evacuated hours before the typhoon landed. Women, elders, sickly, and children were evacuated first, together with their clothes, important documents, and food for dinner. Men returned to their community to monitor houses, personal properties, and pump boats they could not bring inland.

The interviewees reported evacuating to Dolho Elementary School (approx. 700m), the gymnasium (approx. 300m), and the municipal terminal (approx. 400m) (Figure 12). One father recounted the time he evacuated his family:

> *I evacuated my family to the elementary school in the afternoon. The water was not that high at that time… We did not evacuate early because we were waiting for the Barangay Officials to send us the transport service vehicle or motorcycle. We were carrying many things, and many people were also waiting for a service, but we did not stay long; I had to bring my family to safety, so we just walked our way... I was terrified and worried. I was nervous for this sea to grow [storm surge], and this galvanized iron got blown away… eventually, the water grew up to leg high, but my family had left when this happened, around 4 pm* (Semi-structured interview, 42-year-old, male Sama Badjao).

Figure 12. Mapping the public spaces where the Sama Badjao evacuate during extreme weather events

Source: Google Earth visualized by the author, 2022

During Rai, the SBHWs in Bato, Leyte, have shown their leadership skills due to their knowledge of emergency planning and preparation. They guided other Sama Badjao

women in relaying warning signs, updating on the typhoon, and preparing for evacuation. They led the evacuation of the majority of the Sama Badjao to the elementary school in the early afternoon. Many have followed through, especially the vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and the sick. Families who left the *Baybayon* area a few hours before the landfall have subsequently gone to the elementary school because of the SBHWs:

> *It was not just passing by! It was very strong. We were in my aunt's house; imagine if we didn't leave, that coconut fell onto the roof [pointing to the chopped-off coconut tree]. The wind was already extreme when we ran out. People from the barangay came and told us to transfer somewhere safer because of the intense wind. We said, "Bahala mo! [It's up to you all]" to those who believed that Rai was just passing by. I can't afford it. We went to the school; we went to our leader [health workers], and just in case whatever happened there, we were together. I was too nervous thinking about the kids. I was vomiting because of overthinking. We screamed because a tall tree fell into our classroom* (Semi-structured interview, 37-years-old, Sama Badjao male).

Due to the cultural nature of Sama Badjao, who were tight-knit and clustered together, especially in times of uncertainty, they followed their leaders, such as the SBHWs, who they felt would bring them a sense of security and belonging. Hence, SBHWs earned the respect and recognition from both the Sama Badjao and the host community. During disasters and emergencies in the Philippines, the BHWs are the frontliners as they personally know the people in the community through their resident profile list. The BHW program in the Philippines expanded the reach of healthcare and other medical services to communities. The BHWs are female-trained volunteers who perform various health-promoting and health-educating tasks and provide primary healthcare services within their communities (Baliola et al., 2024). As BHWs on the ground, their job extended beyond delivering primary healthcare services at the community level.

The SBHWs became female leaders because of their leadership skills, knowledge, and connections with the LGU and NGOs. This supports Bottignolo (1999), who asserts that several leaders could command respect not for their age or possessing *Djin* spirits but for some personal qualities, such as knowledge, morality, and dynamism. They are not necessarily the *Panlima*; they become leaders because the people turn to them and remain leaders as long as they have considered them useful.

Moreover, Twigg (2004) asserts that people at risk make rational choices about protecting themselves from disaster. Personal and collective experience play a significant part in performing immediate preemptive actions. Generally, households with children and elderly are most likely to evacuate during disasters. However, evacuation behavior is affected by several factors, such as socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, vehicles, income, etc.), risk-related factors, and capacity-related factors (Lim et al., 2013).

5.4 Bracing During the Typhoon's Landfall

This theme discusses the experiences of the Sama Badjao, who stayed on the coast to guard their properties, and those who misinterpreted Rai's path and underestimated its strength. All of these factors contributed to poor decision-making, such as staying in the community and delaying their evacuation until the typhoon's landfall, exposing them to severe wind, rain, and hazardous debris.

5.4.1 Facing the Typhoon's Havoc on the Coast

During landfall, several men risked staying in the community to guard their properties like the house, pump boats and engines, compressors, clothes, and other household items. They kept an eye on their belongings and parts of the house blown away after the typhoon. Many residents salvage any useful debris or items, whether they own them or not, for rebuilding their homes. The men first sent the women, elders, and children to the elementary school, and then they returned to their homes. When it was too dangerous, they hid in the public toilet to take refuge or on their Bisaya neighbor's porch:

> *I went to my neighbor's. We stayed nearby [Badjao community] and helped each other. We individually cooked dinner. I was watching the outdoors, like what would happen to my house. But then, the tide went up, and I could not stay there. Then I went to our barangay captain's house because we're no longer allowed to go back and forth outside. I waited until early morning to*

> *recheck my house* (Semi-structured interview, 42-year-old, male Sama Badjao).
>
> *We own things we can never bring to the evacuation center, like pump boats. We hid in the public CR [Comfort room or communal toilet]. The water was 'leg deep' high. I saw our roof flew. I left our heavy things [compressor] in the house. I was overconfident not to evacuate early. There was so much garbage filed up in the CR. This post fell. Coconut trees were falling, too. I could still see because it was a bright night, and we had flashlights. We observed the wind and its direction. If it stops, we check the houses outside and then return to the CR. We catch up with my family as soon as possible in the morning* (Semi-structured interview, 64-year-old, male Sama Badjao).

Part of the DRR practices to reduce risk in *Baybayon* by Sama Badjao men were observing the direction of the wind and avoiding concrete walls and bulky furniture. These courageous and daring men have been expert divers fishing the sea since adolescence and were familiar with how unforgiving the sea is. Makondo & Thomas (2018) remark that there is nothing new about climate change for Indigenous communities since the climate has constantly changed. These communities have coping and adaptation knowledge that has been transmitted from one generation to the next. However, what is new to them are the rates and variabilities of change, including the magnitude of the associated impacts. Climate change may impact travel patterns and cause increased damage to houses and property in the coastal zone (Stacey et al., 2018). Nowadays, extreme weather events are growing progressively more destructive and unpredictable. Although typhoons rapidly lose power as they move inland, they can cause massive amounts of damage to coastal areas, with a fully developed typhoon releasing the energy equivalent of an atomic bomb, and they move in an unpredictable manner that can be difficult to track (Holden & Marshall, 2018). Rai, for example, intensified from a 'tropical storm' to a 'super typhoon' within hours. After landfall, it traversed some areas not previously prone to typhoons (NDRRMC, 2021).

Indeed, several semi-structured and unstructured interviews reported '*Kompyansa* (overconfidence)', making them underestimate Rai. They misinterpreted the strength comparison of the incoming typhoon with Haiyan in 2013. Regarding wind gustiness, Haiyan was more substantial, but it made landfall in Tacloban City, which is approximately 150 km away from Bato, Leyte. Based on observation, people were also lenient with Rai

because if it was weaker than Haiyan, they might survive Rai too without uprooting their houses. People who initially stayed in the area evacuated to their Bisaya neighbor, called Mario. Several Sama Badjao took refuge in his house because it was made of concrete materials. Mario's house has several small-scale businesses outside the Sama Badjao community, where many people in the area patronize them. Below are the narratives of the Sama Badjaos who braved to evacuate during the typhoon's landfall:

> *We evacuated around 5:30 pm during Odette. I was too confident then; they said it was intense, but we thought we could handle it. The water grew, and the wind became dangerous because of the galvanized iron flying. It was already raining hard, but the strong wind started around 5:30. At 6:00 pm, the typhoon suddenly intensified. Then it stopped around 9:30 pm-10:00 pm…I wasn't afraid at first of Odette. I never thought Odette was more dangerous because they said Yolanda (Haiyan) was stronger. However, Odette was stronger because almost all the houses here were knocked down. What we realized was Haiyan did not make landfall here. The people here said we could handle the wind, unlike Yolanda, which is considered terrible. But it wasn't, it was the other way around. Odette was stronger because it directly hit here. I just simply thought it was the same as before when Yolanda came. I placed containers full of water, but it still lifted the house…. We ran to Mario's house. They let us in, but I feared concrete walls would fall on us just in case the house would collapsed. They have bulky furniture inside as well. If their home was built with wood, then I wouldn't worry about getting pinned down with it compared to concrete bricks. Many Badjaos stayed outside on the porch (*Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao).

> *It was just me, sister, mother, and my grandparents. My father was in another city that day. We ran at night... We thought it was just the same during Yolanda, so we decided to stay. Our house wasn't destroyed during Yolanda. Every time there was a strong typhoon, my father was always away. We decided to run because the water was already high, and our house started to collapse. The only thing that's left is our floor. My mother could only run slowly, and our roof was about to fall on us. We went to Mario's house. We were soaking wet, and we had no dry clothes with us. Although nobody got hurt, I caught a fever, and they [owner of the house] gave me medicine because I couldn't breathe properly* (Semi-structured interview, 20-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

Those who underestimated Rai and got stranded on the coast reported relying on a Higher Being. The Sama Badjao men prayed to God (those who are Christian) and *Tuhan* (those who are *Mboh* followers through *Janji)* for the storm to stop and to be spared from harm. Notions of the efficacy of prayers and the intercession of divine protection, together with

a sense of calculated assessment of odds, encourage a sense of risk-taking behaviors among people (Bankoff, 2007). Wilkinson (2015) adds that resilience is more than just overcoming the loss of material aspects during and after an emergency situation. She further argues that faith helped in resilience's personal and psychological elements. Faith allows people to accept a tragedy because disaster can occur despite the best efforts of human and divine intervention (Bankoff, 2007), for example, seeing their homes collapse or blown away. Twigg (2004) notes that people with low socio-economic status delay evacuation by holding on to assets and household items. A household may perceive the risk of evacuation as losing control of its assets and resources as more devastating than the hazard risk, especially where warnings are frequent but do not necessarily lead to disaster.

5.4.2 Taking Refuge in the Evacuation Center

Public buildings and spaces are often designated as evacuation centers during calamities. In Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan, schools have been designed explicitly as shelter facilities and as community evacuation centers for typhoons, tsunamis, floods, and other calamities (Shaw et al., 2012). Similarly, the Philippines used schools as evacuation areas, ranging from daycare centers to full universities. The country recorded 28,083 evacuation centers as of 2019. Of these, 63% are schools; the rest are multi-purpose halls, gymnasiums, covered courts, municipal halls, churches, and health centers (Lacerna, 2023). The Barangay Officials in Dolho assigned the elementary school to the Sama Badjao community as their temporary shelter whenever there is a strong typhoon, e.g., Haiyan and Rai. During Rai, the Sama Badjaos, who had sheltered in the school, felt unsafe and worried because coconut trees surrounded them, and a few steps away was the Bato River, which was at risk of overflowing. A coconut tree fell in the classroom and damaged the roof, causing rainwater to flood the floor. They recalled:

> *We moved to another room because a tree fell on our roof. I was terrified, and my body trembled. Our kids were with us: My two nephews and another kid, her younger brother [pointing to the person behind me]. It was very dark, but we brought flashlights. I was exhausted at that time. I sat while sleeping because there were a lot of people. I couldn't sleep properly, but what's important is to secure my children so they can sleep comfortably.*

> *Then I sat like this (showing how she slept that night), and I was very worn out because I was sleepless* (Semi-structured interview, 34 years old, Sama Badjao female).

> *These two coconut trees snapped and then fell into these rooms right in the school… they [Badjaos] sprinted outside, asking for help. They thought they were going to die. I told them to get inside, but they joined with the others to the other room* (School caretaker, 70 years old, Bisaya male).

The Philippine DepEd generally advocates for avoiding schools as emergency shelters except in extreme circumstances when areas have no other structurally safe building capable of surviving a major hazard (Tsioulou et al., 2021). In 2024, DepEd requested the LGUs across the country to refrain from using public schools as evacuation centers during typhoons and other calamities to prevent prolonged on-site class disruptions. Various groups, particularly in the education sector, have called on the government to invest in climate-resilient education infrastructures for schools, which are among the most vulnerable to disasters (Servallos, 2024). I asked one of the public school teachers for her opinion about turning schools into evacuation centers:

> *The elders and the adults who got formal education cleaned the school, but unfortunately, most of the adults who evacuated didn't. For me, I don't have any problem turning classrooms into evacuation centers because they are public buildings. I didn't own them, but the government… if they[evacuees] won't destroy our things and trash the school. The LGU should be liable to government properties like schools if they use them as evacuation centers. There should be a [Memoranum of Agreement] MOA so we can claim funds for immediate repairs if something happens, like damage to our properties. For example, if someone evacuates here, we, the teachers, can also prepare and keep our things. If our lamps get damaged, we can repair them instantly or at least have the evacuees clean our toilets after using them. At least there is proper communication and protocol. We have several damaged tables, probably because the children stomped on them* (Unstructured interview, 40-year-old, public school teacher).

During my observation after calamities and in other municipalities, I noticed the same scenario that created conflict between teachers and the evacuees because of the damages, lost school items, and improper waste disposal caused by the latter. All of these were left to the teachers' responsibilities so they could resume classes as soon as possible. However, it could be inferred that families might have cleaned and treated the classrooms fairly while others did not; all negative actions were generalized to all evacuees.

In the study of Tsioulou et al. (2021) in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines, their school surveys revealed that when evacuees leave school buildings for alternative shelters or return home, school facilities are left damaged and have no dedicated repair budget. Moreover, although solid waste management protocols are in place in schools, extensive cleaning is still necessary to return to a normal state, and students and teachers are relied upon to undertake this before education can resume. This increases the burden on education staff and delays the resumption of teaching (Tsioulou et al., 2021). In a similar study by Kawasaki et al. (2021) in Japan, the parents/guardians and teachers believed there was a discrepancy between shelter capacity and the actual situation. These include a lack of information and ill-preparedness of several school facilities and personnel for disasters, which are some of the problems. Based on the knowledge and experiences from previous disasters, they responded that there was inadequate management, and evacuees faced difficulty living comfortably in the shelters.

During Rai, another group of Sama Badjaos, about four households, went to the public gymnasium. Many of them reported being uncomfortable and unsafe while staying there. They felt exposed, cold, and unwell because they were soaking wet, as well as the things they had brought. The ground was also a little flooded, so they could not rest, especially the elders. When the roof was blown away (Figure 13), they had to look for another place to take shelter:

> *We were crying because the gym[nasium] was damaged. We transferred to the counselor's house because someone fetched us. They lived right across the gym. When the wind got stronger, we ran to their house. It was already dark, so we knocked on the door and asked for help because the rain and wind were powerful. They let us in, and someone said the house might collapse because the typhoon had intensified. There were many of us, and the house was packed. We couldn't sleep; we were just praying* (Semi-structured interview, 20-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

Figure 13. The gymnasium roof, where the Sama Badjao evacuated, came off during Super Typhoon Rai

Source: Author, 2022

The lessons from Rai show a need for practical and pragmatic solutions applicable to the most disadvantaged communities as they adapt to future climate shocks. While the pressure in emergency operations is to deliver quickly and massively, taking a longer-term view is vital and ensuring help for the most vulnerable is sustainable (Goegele, 2022). Amid Rai's destruction, there was a significantly lower number of casualties, which can be credited to the pre-emptive measures undertaken by the government authorities in cooperation with the affected communities (OCHA, 2022).

5.5 Surviving After the Typhoon

This theme elucidates the gender roles and Indigenous coping strategies of the Sama Badjao as they continue to thrive in *Baybayon.* I described how they overcame their precarious condition for the first few days after Rai ravaged the central Visayas.

5.5.1 Ensuring Prompt Relief and Livelihood Diversification

The day after the storm, they all returned to their houses as soon as the sun rose. Women were responsible for looking for things they could save from their wrecked dwellings, such as documents, household items, and clothes. They spent their time cleaning, keeping things, washing clothes, and tending to family members. Meanwhile, the men looked for items and reusable materials to repair their houses and any debris like drifted wood, bamboo, and galvanized irons while providing basic needs for the family. They went over to the wreckage, which was a little dangerous and caused by some interviewees getting wounded either in the feet or in the lower leg in scraping for drifted materials from the typhoon.

Some households lent money or pawned gold jewelry to repair their houses immediately. Since fishing was not possible a few days after Rai, the men who stayed in the community focused on building, painting, or repairing pump boats. Close kinship ties have promoted social bonds during critical events such as surviving disasters. When men returned to fishing from other areas, fishermen shared their catch with their kin. In return, family members within their kin also shared their food with the clan. The surplus was distributed to the clan when there was an oversupply of fish from a productive fishing expedition. It creates a flowing system of give-and-take, favors, and obligations in times of need or during family emergencies. For instance, a couple of male teenagers and children are on standby at night until 2:00 am in a *lantay* under their stilt houses (Figure 14). They were waiting for a fish surplus from their relatives who fished in the sea. Then, they sold their share in the market or for their own family's consumption. A small profit of as little as €1 went a long way, so that they could go to school with pocket money for meals or buying school supplies.

Figure 14. Children in the lantay are patiently waiting at night to get their share of surplus fish

Source: Author, 2022

The opportunities in the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, were only limited to fishing, which was male dominated. Yet, women in the family did the marketing activities of the catch as the men rested and prepared to sleep through the morning. From the in-depth interviews, I found out that men believed that women should handle matters related to household finances. Most of the time, men's lives were spent either on the sea or the streets while the women were left at home. The wives knew their daily expenditures, fishing-vending capital, and the needs of each family member. When income from fishing was abundant, numerous women had access to capital as their husbands gave them their income, which allowed their wives to sell food, snacks, and tropical fruits. At the same time, elders weaved traditional mats to sell within and to other Sama Badjao communities after Rai. Although it was a short-lived or unstable small-scale business, it earned little income to get through the day. This helped the community recover slowly as their economic activities depended on their fishing livelihood.

With the decline of fish and other marine resources and the changes in their lifestyle due to ecology, house-dwelling, and acculturation, fewer Sama Badjao women spend less time at sea than before. Men would not let women get involved in their fishing activities as they perceived it as a tough job. *"Around 10-15 minutes. We can hold our breath for longer because we are used to it. We've been [spear]fishing since we were kids. The women don't; it's forbidden for them. When it comes to fishing, we feel sorry for them because, well, they are women* (Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao)*."* These factors may also explain the increasingly male-oriented fisheries in Sama Badjao culture. The Sama women in Indonesia, for instance, have acquired a variety of reasons to stay at home in the village, including efforts to keep their children in elementary school, mass-mediated ideas of feminine beauty that persuade them to avoid sun and wind exposure, and popular Islamic ideals that unmarried women, especially of higher social strata, should not stray far from home (Gaynor, 2010).

In both traditional Philippine and Sama Badjao societies, women are expected to behave and take care of the family, although the latter women are influential and enjoy status and power in their community (Máñez & Pauwelussen, 2016; Sather, 1997). Although their customary law and traditions claim to embody principles of gender equality, Sama Badjao men control females from when they reach puberty until the menopausal stage through restriction and sexual segregation (Morrison, 1995). Yet, there are still recent studies that show women helped in feeding the family either by subsistence means or by earning their own money while taking care of the children and doing household chores, for example, by traditional weaving, collecting shellfish and other marine species, harvesting and drying tasks in seaweed farming, and others engaged in service labor (Máñez & Pauwelussen, 2016; E. R. Navarro, 2015; Stacey et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, the other Sama Badjaos, such as teenagers, children,[40] and women, temporarily left Bato, Leyte, for a few days to supplement their income by vending or begging in the urban streets of their neighboring cities. When they returned, they did initial repairs and cleaned the household of around three families. Mostly, they get tired of saving and washing the entire household's muddy clothes, which takes them two to three days. Ashraf et al. (2015) note that women living in coastal areas face more difficulties due to

[40] Unfortunately, this could affect classes of those school children and teenagers.

the complexity of the atmosphere, and their activities are not adequately recognized in disaster planning and management. While the findings of this study agree that the underlying cultural, social, and economic patterns lead to the low socio-economic status of women and thereby generate their specific vulnerability to disasters, nonetheless, in the case of the Sama Badjao, the women were part of the planning and management in the household and community since they remained inland while the men were fishing at the sea or vending in the streets. At the same time, women perpetuate certain traditions, particularly marital income-generating traditions, such as weaving, ensuring their transmission to subsequent generations, and communal relief during disasters.

5.5.2 Building Temporary Makeshift Shelters

Those who lost their houses approached their relatives to seek temporary shelter, especially during rainy nights. Children scattered to each of their aunties/uncles or grandparents. A Sama Badjao widow, named Liza, living with her grandson, pointed to her ruined home. I asked her why she had not started repairing her house. Liza replied, *"I don't have money. My husband is long dead, so no one is supporting me. I can't afford to take out a loan since I don't have a job* (Unstructured interview, 69-year-old Sama Badjao female)*."*

Figure 15. Typical temporary makeshift Kubo-Kubo in the community made of scrapped galvanized iron, woods, bamboo, and plastic tarpaulin

Source: Author, 2022

The most affected households (comprising 14%) were headed by either separated or widowed women. The limited employment opportunities for women in a fishing community may have explained this. They either relied on their children's monetary support for daily subsistence or mendicancy. In the meantime, Liza lived with her son, who has a family of four. His son also lost his house and made a makeshift house out of tarpaulin, which they called '*Kubo-Kubo*[41]' or shacks (Figure 15). Although their social bond was strong and helped them make ends meet, the issue after Rai was everyone was affected by the typhoon, and they distributed whatever resources they had within their *Kampung*. Complex emergencies and natural disasters have a differentiated impact on men and women, often affecting the realization of rights. Since being female is strongly linked to being poor, unless poverty is reduced, the increase in disasters and extreme weather events linked with climate change is likely to affect women more than men (Ashraf et al., 2015).

[41] This is a reference to their temporary or unfinished *"Kubo"* Filipino traditional houses or hut made of nipa, bamboo, and wood.

The *Kubo-Kubo* provided the Sama Badjao shelter at night during fine weather while they gazed at the sky and heavenly bodies. During bad weather, they ran and squeezed into their closest relatives' houses, which could offer better comfort from the rain. "*We sleep here with my family and the family of my son. We are staying at my nephew's house because it hasn't been damaged. We are three families, and we sleep in this one room all together, side by side. We made a shack, but we eat here and sleep at night* (Semi-structured interview, 70-year-old, male Sama Badjao)*."*

Those uncomfortable relying on their relatives opted to temporarily stay on their pump boats as they waited to move for their *Kubo-Kubo*. The pump boats served as an extension of their household. Although it could only house a few family members at night, it was a space where they could store their personal property and have their meals as a complete family.

Others with no first-degree relatives found refuge on their Bisaya neighbor's porch: *"My parents are not here; they are in Cebu. My siblings are in Bohol. My wife's family is in Surigao. We have relatives here from my father's side, whom we can always seek shelter to at least to sleep. But you know about us, we are a big family. Every house here has more than one family, and we were abashed to move in. We opted to stay on the porch with the billiard table. I asked permission properly from the owner. We stayed there for two weeks. We cooked and slept there for two weeks* (Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao)*."* After slowly rebuilding their *Kubo-Kubo*, they finally moved to their temporary shelter by reusing the materials from their ruined house. They did not have walls yet, so they slept in their *lantay*. They hoped to finish it gradually by buying one or two bamboos every Sunday.

Various Sama Badjaos shared that it took them longer to buy shelter reconstruction materials because of the low income from fishing. One of the interviewees has lost all interest in having an ideal dwelling place and planning on rebuilding the simplest traditional stilt house for his family. He asserts, *"At the end of the day, it's still the same. Even if you build your house well, it still gets damaged* (semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao)*."* Bankoff (2007) argues that a simple nipa palm and bamboo hut provides evidence of cultural adaptation from constant environmental threats. The design of these homes shows how Indigenous society took notice of seismic and

meteorological hazards. The simple nipa palm and bamboo hut might get easily destroyed, but it is worth noting that it is easier to rebuild when damaged and less likely to injure people during storms or earthquakes than concrete houses.

5.6 Conclusion

Drawing from the results of this chapter, I demonstrated the experiences of the Sama Badjao before, during, and after Super Typhoon Rai hit the Philippines. Findings revealed that media and mobile phones, along with formal face-to-face announcements from the barangay LGU, played an important role in risk information dissemination. Households with televisions stayed informed about weather conditions and forecasts by watching the news and shared this information with relatives who did not have mobile phones or televisions. The Sama Badjao are aware of the basic emergency planning practices and applied them to minimize their risk from the typhoon. For instance, they have the necessary knowledge of emergency preparation and planning before typhoons, warning signs, and familiarity with the vagaries of tropical climate. This suggests that the integration of the Indigenous community in the local government through the Sama Badjao health workers facilitated the safety of the community before the typhoon landed and by applying their Indigenous knowledge of wind and rain direction, especially the Sama-Badjao fishermen who stayed on the shore. The community has well-defined gender roles and complements each other's responsibilities during an emergency. Women looked after their dependent family members and evacuated early in elementary school farther from the sea. Unfortunately, the elementary school is close to the Bato River, which is at risk of overflowing from heavy rainfall and storm surge, as confirmed by the Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazard (NOAH) (see Appendix 3). Meanwhile, the men stayed on the shore to oversee their material possessions, such as their houses, engines, and pump boats.

Nonetheless, miscommunication occurred because the Barangay Officials announced the upcoming typhoon by comparing it to Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, where the ground zero was in Tacloban City (approximately 150km away from Bato,

Leyte), leading the other Sama Badjaos households to misjudge its impact and delay their evacuation. This implies that their Indigenous knowledge could not predict the intensity of a typhoon. Therefore, it has significantly affected their decision-making process and compromised the safety of their family members. Those who delayed their evacuation have found shelter in their Bisaya neighbors who opened their homes to the Sama Badjao and helped each other.

Despite the Sama Badjao community's vulnerability from displacement after Rai, kinship ties provided immediate relief to their family members who were seriously affected by the typhoon, and their makeshift houses allowed them to continue to thrive in Bato, Leyte. They were able to diversify their livelihood and slowly rebuilt their homes. However, their recovery took longer than expected due to the intensity of the damage to the community while income from fishing was declining.

These findings have important implications for improving the local and Indigenous emergency planning, preparation, and rapid relief operations. Firstly, the importance of clear communication in relaying updates to the Indigenous community related to typhoons. Secondly, the mapping of hazard-prone zones in the community in order to identify a safer evacuation center or areas. Thirdly, the importance of land-tenure security and sustainable livelihood diversification for immediate recovery of affected households.

Chapter 6 Social Exclusion of Sama Badjao and Their Challenges in Accessing Relief and Rehabilitation Assistance

6.1 Introduction

Since the Philippine Martial Law in the 1970s, many Sama Badjao have migrated to inland areas, reaching the peri-urban and urban regions of central and northern Philippines. Interestingly, they maintain their connection to the sea by residing in coasts. Their lifestyle transformation from sea-based to land-based has disrupted their Indigenous way of coping with environmental challenges. In the past, when faced with severe tropical depressions, they would sail to other areas or nearby islands and return to their mooring areas or the reefs once the weather has normalized (Nimmo, 2001). For those Sama Badjao who have chosen a semi-sedentary lifestyle, this situation confines them under the jurisdiction of the local government. At the moment, there is no national law in the Philippines to uphold the welfare and right to return of individuals displaced by typhoons, other disasters, and armed conflict, often in combination with these factors that the Sama Badjao are facing.

This chapter examines the relief and rehabilitation programs after Super Typhoon Rai. The programs assessed in this study were relief goods, cash aid, shelter reconstruction materials, and DRRM laws. Drawing from fieldwork, I contend that the Sama Badjao experienced structural discrimination before and exacerbated after Super Typhoon Rai. I argue that disasters have a more significant impact on the Sama Badjao because of structural discrimination, making them 'Other.' One of the elements of structural discrimination is cultural discrimination. Culture is a critical context through which people experience disasters, develop adaptive strategies, and process external aid and support. It is crucial that values and beliefs are respected and leveraged to maximize disaster response effectiveness. However, the scarcity of resources in disaster response often reflects pre-existing biases, discrimination, and inherent disparities (Rahmani et al., 2022). In an intermixed society due to migration, the dominant group tends to value and distinguish themselves from Others whom they devalue (Staszak, 2008). This means that marginalized communities who

already face systemic disadvantages suffer disproportionately when disasters strike. I elucidate the othering of the Sama Badjao after Super Typhoon Rai due to their exclusion from response and rehabilitation resources. I also explore how they navigate and overcome these patterns of cultural discrimination. I follow Burn's (2008) supposition that cultural discrimination, although unintentional, may motivate the exclusion of individuals who deviate from established social and legal norms. These are in the form of social attitudes and everyday practices that marginalize a group. I assert that historical and social factors and coloniality led to the otherness of the Sama Badjao before and after Super Typhoon Rai. Recovery efforts were slower, and many have faced challenges accessing relief and shelter reconstruction assistance.

Meanwhile, the most common mechanism for institutionalizing group-based differences is policies or laws restricting access to communal resources by out-groups, thereby hoarding those resources for in-groups. Disasters aggravated their condition due to one-size-fits-all policies and trapped them in a vicious cycle of social inequality and vulnerability. The second element of structural discrimination is institutional discrimination. I follow Goldstein's (2013) claims that institutional discrimination results from the absence of appropriate practices or policies. In this chapter, I reflect on how the existing policies and programs that systematically reproduce inequality privilege dominant society and other influential groups while excluding Indigenous communities due to bureaucratic processes and lack of funding, together with the persistence of colonial practices.

However, I assert that Sama Badjao living in urban and peri-urban areas are not always victims of disasters, for they adapt to the changes of their environment, for instance, doing *Magosaha* from sea to streets. *Magosaha* in the Sama Badjao tradition means to wander in search of livelihood. Nevertheless, coloniality has discredited the importance of their Indigenous knowledge and culture, leading to patterns of discrimination since they do not fit the modernist norms in mainstream society. In the theory of othering, colonization allowed the West to export its values and have them acknowledged almost everywhere through efficient processes of cultural integration. Western categories of identity and otherness, transmitted through the universalist claims of religion and scientific knowledge

and forcibly imposed through colonization, have thus become pertinent far beyond the boundaries of the West (Staszak, 2008).

The following section explores the othering experienced by the Sama Badjao community within the government's disaster recovery and rehabilitation program. The themes were divided into sections under cultural discrimination and institutional discrimination. These two concepts interact or overlap, which sum up the structural discrimination experienced by the Sama Badjao. The findings of this chapter demonstrate that the relief and rehabilitation efforts exposed the deep-rooted structural discrimination against the Sama Badjao, stressing the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive policies.

6.2 Cultural Discrimination Compounded by Semi-sedentary Lifestyle

This theme discussed the othering experienced by the Sama Badjao through cultural discrimination, resulting in their slower recovery. This refers to the cultural discrimination that distinguished the Sama Badjao (Them) from the non-indigenous peoples (Us) through systems of categorization, unequal treatment, stereotypes, and social paradigms. It motivated the exclusion of the community from shelter reconstruction materials and other forms of aid, for they challenged and deviated from the established tradition of a sedentary or land-based lifestyle in a modernizing post-colonial Philippines. Although the Sama Badjao community has been living in Bato, Leyte province, since the 1980s, non-indigenous peoples continue to perceive them as outsiders due to practicing their traditions, which are considered 'primitive.' I identified three patterns of cultural discrimination shaped by historical and social factors rooted in coloniality. These were nomadic identity, misrepresentation of their Indigenous religion, and known perception as welfare dependents. I also presented how they navigated to overcome these challenges.

6.2.1 Ingrained Nomadic Identity

Based on the census I conducted two months after the super typhoon, there were 666 Sama Badjao individuals in the community out of the 805 persons affected by Rai, according to NCIP. This means that within three months after the typhoon, they experienced massive mobility, possibly linked to delays in financial assistance and fewer livelihood options. Many Sama Badjao moved to other municipalities outside the region, such as Cebu, Bohol, Surigao, Zamboanga, and Batangas, for economic activities after Super Typhoon Rai (Figure 16).

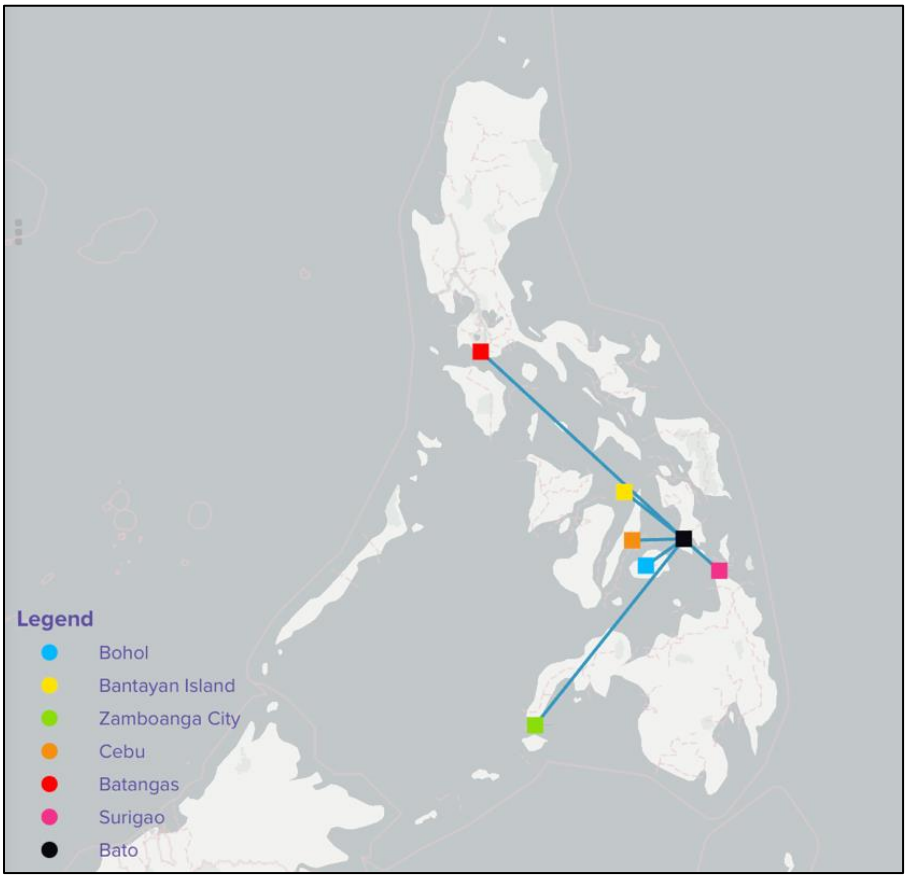


Figure 16. Location of the Sama Badjao communities with an active connection with the community in Bato, Leyte[42]

Source: Author, 2022

[42] https://embed.kumu.io/e54e5bf5e3f9e082c40b22107c4eeef8

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviewees mentioned frequenting their relatives in other Sama Badjao communities in Isabel, Leyte, Palawan, General Santos City, and Semporna in Sabah, Malaysia. According to the literature, inter-ethnic conflict, socio-economic conditions in their ancestral domain, armed conflict in Mindanao (Macalandag, 2021), and border control (Amazona, 2018) are a few of the key factors for the diaspora of the Sama Badjaos. Moreover, a pull factor, *Magosaha,* can draw them to other places (Macalandag, 2021). In Nimmo's (2001) book, "Magosaha: An Ethnography of the Tawi-Tawi Sama Dilaut," he describes the complexity of *Magosaha* as not only simply seeking a livelihood. He interpreted it as "best be defined as wanderlust conditioned by a lifetime of travel, as well as a very real necessity to continuously search the seas for sustenance (Nimmo, 2001, p. 1)."

From the narratives of the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, I have identified two additional pull factors that draw them to other places: 1) the abundance of fishing grounds and 2) the presence of their relatives in an area. It was said that rich fishing grounds surrounding the Visayas region constituted the reason for their settlement in the central Philippines (Uy & Neri, 1979). Trini narrated her personal experience with *Magosaha* when she was young:

> *We moved to Dolho when I was in Grade 1. This was where my parents, our kin, my aunt, and our elders made a living. But when I was in Grade 2, we moved again to Cebu because my father was fishing there… In Sama Badjao's life, the whole family moves to a place where fishing is abundant. Then we built stilt houses and abandoned them once we moved to another place. When I was in Grade 4, my father's fishing venture brought us to Coron, Palawan. We consisted of five Balutu*[43]*. We lived for four days in the boats while mooring in the shallow sea. We asked my father's boss*[44] *if we could build stilt houses on the shore. We only lived there, and I studied there for a year because we'd heard they would use the shoreline for it was a [white sand] beach. So, we moved to Agutaya, Palawan. We only stayed there for eight months since our elders didn't like our spot because it was far from the market and residents, making selling our fish hard. Our fishing*

[43] The Sama Badjao in Dolho, Bato, Leyte referred their houseboats as *Balutu* or *Baroto*. Nimmo described Balutu with a permanently attached house structure called *kubu* (house). The *kubu* has an open door at either end with plaited palm frond covers used at night or during inclement weather (Nimmo, 1990).

[44] They called a person as Boss who offered them verbal contract to buy their fish and sell it to the market (middlemen). It could also be a person who spent money for their fishing expenses, food, gasoline, etc in today's context.

> *brought us next to Mindoro for one year. That's where I also got married to my now husband. We planned to return to Bato a few months later because we missed our kin. Aside from that, my elder aunt already left us for Bato for the same reason* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 1).

From an outsider's point of view, the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, are considered small-scale fishermen, unlike Sopher's (1977, p 218) description of sea nomads as "sea hunters and gatherers." Nevertheless, I observed that *Magosaha* extended to more land-based sustenance, such as begging and street vending. If the catch from fishing was poor, male family members alternatively sell face towels and fashion accessories and trade defective gadgets and broken gold jewelry throughout the region. Many Sama Badjao dispersed across the nearby islands in Bohol and Cebu, sometimes to Batangas or Manila to sell and trade. I asked a group of young Sama Badjao vendors why they had to keep traveling when they could just rent a place to display their items for sale. They shared, *"That's the way we are. Plus, we do not have competitors, unlike in the marketplace."* They do not have to pay rent and go directly to the buyers, and evade after-sales problems. This finding supports Sopher (1977), who states that the Sama Badjao prefer to move from one location to another with less competition from better-organized traders and fishermen. Those who practiced *Magosaha* in Bato, Leyte are men, while women are discouraged from doing so as they considered it a risky livelihood. Women are also traditionally perceived as the homekeepers and carers while men are away. Men go in pairs or small groups, never alone. They communicate with other groups through mobile phones or visit their relatives in other Sama Badjao communities in the country about the ideal places they have been, have not explored, how to travel there, and where to avoid. Depending on their destination, they travel within a week or up to a few months. The men return to Bato when they save money, miss family members, or attend important family occasions.

Because of *Magosaha*, the host village council and the development officers admitted that they find tracking the Sama Badjao residents difficult, especially those who settled on the shoreline. There were instances when some Sama Badjao would deny receiving assistance, although they already received it, or asked for aid, even though they are not registered in Bato, Leyte. Some are both registered in the municipality and other places under a different name. The mobility of the Sama Badjao was considered a challenge

in building trust with the LGU during disasters. Nevertheless, the SBHW shared that they updated their community profiling yearly, except during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2000 to 2022.

Historically, in the early modern period, official images of nomadism are mostly portrayed negatively in Western literature. This phenomenon stems from the perception that nomadic groups were increasingly seen as threatening sedentary society (Toninato, 2018). They are labelled as 'masterless men,' often blamed for carrying disease, criminality, and social unrest (Beier, 1985, p. 6). Like other boat-dwelling communities in Southeast Asia discussed in Chapter 2.2, the boat people of Southeast China, also called Tanka or Dan, have been represented negatively by the growing power of Western imperialism in China after the Opium Wars.[45] Prior to these so-called wars, the Tanka were perceived more positively than the land-based Chinese. This reflected changing power relations in the colonial process. The floating town in Guangzhou was relationally marginalized from an external perspective, rendered insignificant, dependent, and vulnerable compared to the vast mainland. As Western influence in China grew, the perception of the Tanka shifted. The Tanka boat people and their floating towns, which once played a significant role in Western understandings of Guangzhou, began to be seen as peripheral. This change coincided with Guangzhou's physical and conceptual 'mainlanding[46]' in the Western mindset. Westerners moved to the distant and surrounding islands. Consequently, the river and its boat-dwelling communities lost their centrality in Western city views, becoming marginalized elements rather than integral parts of Guangzhou's identity (Lin & Su, 2024).

[45] The Opium Wars in the mid-19th Century were a critical juncture in modern Chinese history. The first Opium War was fought between China and Great Britain from 1839 to 1842. In the second Opium War, from 1856 to 1860, a weakened China fought both Great Britain and France. China lost both wars. See more https://asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/opium-wars-china#:~:text=The%20Opium%20Wars%20in%20the,China%20lost%20both%20wars.

[46] The concept of relocating the inhabitants from islands or remote areas to the mainland for better economic activities, access to services, or in response to environmental threats.

Figure 17. Newly reconstructed stilt house in Baybayon area

Source: Author, 2022

Although the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte received aid through relief goods from various actors such as NGOs and government offices, their vulnerability remains high due to the structural conditions of their houses and their exposure from vagaries of tropical climate. This pushes vulnerable groups within the Sama Badjao community, such as older adults, widows, and children, to beg in the streets for shelter reconstruction. A 69-year-old Sama widow proudly showed me her newly reconstructed house (Figure 17): *"I asked [for money] in Maasin and Sogod [neighboring towns]. We sleep in the terminal together with my neighbors. We traveled back home either every Friday or Saturday afternoon. I earned more than a thousand [€16] every week. My house now has 15 galvanized iron sheets* (Semi-structured Interview, 69-year-old, female Sama Badjao)*."*

Begging, especially among women and children, has evolved into an economic activity to support themselves and a strategy to recover from disasters since labor employment is elusive with the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte. Charito shared her unfortunate experiences when applying for a job, "*It's hard to find a job even as a cashier, although I'm a high school graduate. When they found out in my biodata that I'm Badjao because I always put Badjao in the 'can speak language section with Badjao and Bisaya', then they'll say, 'Ah! not her because she's Badjao.' Then the people here [Sama Badjao community] will say, 'Charito can't even get a job; how about us?'* (Unstructured Interview, Sama Badjao informant 2)."

The most affected household heads are women, widows, single parents, and elders with grandchildren. After Rai, most of them heavily relied on their kin for their basic needs and shelter, cramming into their houses. Since help in the *Kampung* was limited because most of them lost their homes, these vulnerable groups resorted to begging so they could buy materials for their house reconstruction. When they camped in other towns to beg, charitable entities donated food packs and relief goods to them, aside from money. It can be implied that the Sama Badjao were resilient through diversifying their economic activities through *Magosaha*. Yet, this also put them in a difficult situation where their residency in Bato, Leyte, was put into question when claiming aid, as they were perceived as 'nomads' often seen everywhere in public.

6.2.2 Misrepresentation of Pangkat Indigenous Religion

The conflicting narratives surrounding the Sama Badjao's religion contribute to the widespread misconception among residents of the host and neighboring municipalities. The Sama Badjao are considered Muslim or people without religion, often referring to them with pejorative names as Moros/Moklos or unbaptized. These terms, used by non-indigenous residents, are considered derogatory by the Sama Badjao.

This result aligns with Aoyama's (2014) findings that the perception of an unbaptized person indicating no religion may evoke attributes of primitiveness. Furthermore, being mistakenly identified as Moros in a Christian society can imply subordination. Charito

expressed what it feels like to be called Moros, stating, *"For us, it means the lowest class of people. It hurts when they call us Moros* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 2)." This illustrates the distinction between non-indigenous and Indigenous residents in the area.

Aldrich (2012) claims that social differences may reinforce traditional social practices of the superior group, leading to the exclusion of the peripheral or marginalized groups after a disaster. In his study in Tamil Nadu, the Uur Panchayats (caste councils) were tasked with distributing aid in communities after the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. Unfortunately, they excluded widows, Dalits (untouchables), Muslims, and other marginal groups. The Uur Panchayats were effectively connected to outside aid, but the survivors in those villages who were not members and had no connections received little help. The exclusion drowns them further on the margins of society, unable to benefit directly from the tremendous amount of aid from domestic and international sources.

For the Sama Badjaos, their socially constructed identities as 'unbaptized,' Moros, and beggars widened the gap between the host community and the Indigenous community after the typhoon. The pejorative words 'Moro' and 'Moklo' can be traced back to the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. The Spaniards attributed Moro to the Muslims in Mindanao, implying to the Moors they fought on the Iberian Peninsula. It was a means for the Spanish colonial government to cast Muslims in Mindanao as the subordinate 'Other' (Franco, 2016). Meanwhile, the term Moklo, depending on the context, is a Cebuano slang that means naive but can also be a pejorative term for Filipino Muslims. Among Visayans, they used it as a common way to scare the children if they misbehave, "The Moklo will come and take them."

There were unfortunate historical incidents that heightened the mutual distrust between the Christian and Muslim Filipinos. During the Spanish colonial era, Filipino Muslims turned to piracy as a result of their displacement from the political and economic dominance they once enjoyed in the maritime waters of Southeast Asia. The end of the Indigenous maritime trade forced the economies of the Muslim Sultanates to switch to slave trade and piracy due to demand in the West and China, an uncontrollable and rapid impact of globalizing forces. Their targets were usually Indigenous women from Christian communities in Visayas, Luzon, and the Indigenous peoples in some parts of northern

Mindanao (Non, 1993; Warren, 2007). This troubled relationship continued into the present day, causing economic neglect in Mindanao and resulting in the formation of separatist groups and communist insurgencies, as discussed in Chapter 2.1. The so-called piracy and displacements during the colonial period shaped the present Muslim-Christian relations, which culminated in the 'Muslim-Christian Conflict' in the 1970s. These incidents are but the legacy of the piratical raids and slave trading that continue to haunt both the Muslim and Christian Filipinos (Non, 1993).

The Muslims in the Philippines have been the object of widespread prejudice and national neglect (Jumala, 2011) because of separatism, violent extremisms, and communist insurgency (A. M. Navarro et al., 2021). However, for the Muslim society, E. R. Navarro (2015) notes that the Islamized Sama Badjao are still seen as outsiders because of the incorporation of their traditional beliefs and practices. The Tausug called them *'Luwa'an*,' which literally means to spit out in Cebuano language. However, *Luwa'an* could also mean outcast or outsider, based on the context of how the Tausugs use it, which is offensive to Sama Badjao. Meanwhile, the land-based Sama (Mostly Islamized Sama, also called by the Tausug as Samal) called the Sama Badjao as *'Pala'u'* to live in a boat (Nimmo, 2001, p. 18).

Somehow, in another way, the Sama Badjao had been marginalized between the Christians and Muslims as supported by (Aoyama, 2016; Nimmo, 2001). Either way, there was no foundation to build on for preaching Islam or Christianity and good relations in advocating it to each neighboring counterpart. Although the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, were not Muslim, they were caught in between into this historical conflict.

The Christian non-indigenous residents in Bato, Leyte, have extrapolated this same phenomenon of othering to the Sama Badjaos living in urban areas, which has manifested during emergencies. In Southeast Asia, the general wisdom is that all Sama populations are Muslim (Saat, 2003). The result from document analysis further revealed that previous research and profiling in the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, in 2015-2018, showed data of households with Islamic faith (27.53%) and did not mention information

about their practice of ancestral worship. One of the social officers narrated her encounters with the Sama Badjao:

> *They gave us an envelope with their birth certificates, and we had to look for their names. After all, they didn't know their names either because they'd never been to school. We asked them why are you making a living here? They said it was because we followed our cousins who lived here. Then, her husband's middle name is the same as her last name. Aren't you wondering if it's true? Or there might be an error? They are Muslims, so cousins can get married. They keep on begging, many of them* (Unstructured interview, social worker).

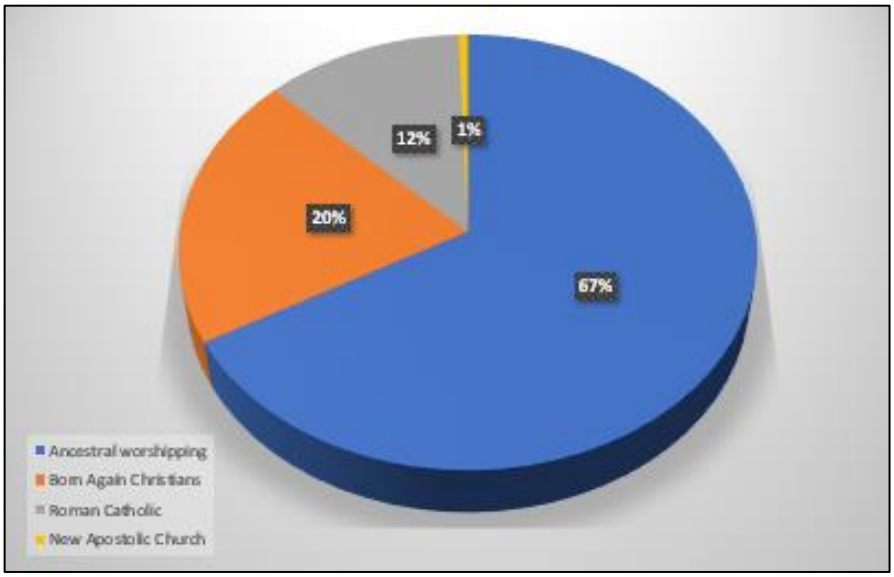


Figure 18. Distribution of Sama Badjao household heads based on their religious affiliation

Source: Household census conducted by the author, 2022

Nevertheless, the household census offered contradictory findings. The majority of households (66.85%) in the community practiced *Pag-Mboh/Pangkat* (ancestral worshipping), followed by Born Again Christians with 20.44%, Roman Catholics with 12.15%, and New Apostolic Church with 0.55% followers (Figure 18). The findings contrast with the social workers and Saat (2003), who inferred that the Sama Badjao considered themselves Muslims, despite not practicing all basic Islamic teachings. Therefore, I agree with Nimmo (2001) that perhaps the primary distinction between Sama

Badjao and the other Sama is that some of them have not fully embraced Islam. Additionally, this research supports that the more the Sama Badjao dwell inland, the more they adapt to the dominant religion in the area (Maglana, 2016; Nimmo, 2001).

Figure 19. A Sama Badjao elderly (at the center) begging in the municipality of Sogod, a neighboring town of Bato, Leyte

Source: Author, 2022

The Sama Badjao adapted to the dominant religion in Bato, Leyte, which is Christianity. Aside from that, the *Pangkat* have adapted to Christian practices such as fiestas and Christmas traditions, which include caroling (*Mamasko*) and asking for donations since they perceived the Christians as generous givers, especially during these special celebrations. During the Christmas season, they started 'mangayo[47]' as early as September/November until January (Figure 19). Nevertheless, this was interpreted as mendicancy among non-Indigenous residents, although it cannot be denied that it has evolved into begging, particularly among the elderly. Since Rai happened in December,

[47] Bisaya word which literally means to ask for something. In this context, it means the Sama-Bajau asking for money. They never used the word "manglimos" which means begging in English. They also shared that they practiced mangayo during Fiestas in Bato and the neighboring municipalities.

they also received food packs and relief goods aside from money while caroling and begging. Sandra described their *Mamasko* routine:

> *We do caroling during Christmas. Yes, people sometimes give us rice, money, or noodles. We go anywhere, like Hilongos, Matalom, Maasin, Tacloban, and Ormoc [cities and municipalities in the Eastern Visayas region]. We also do 'mamasko' during the pit señor celebration in January. We go carolings after Halloween in November until pit señor celebration. Some won't return immediately and stay around these towns, but for us, we go home everyday after mamasko. The others remained there for five days and then go home to rest. Then, after 1-2 days, they return and mamasko. Before, they apprehended those who asked for money because people could get annoyed. So, I usually do not go caroling to areas where many people ask for money. But we do only mamasko during Christmas. We do not ask for money if Christmas and pit senior are over* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 4).

Despite the religious disparity between the Sama Badjao Christians and *Pangkat*, the BAC Church, which was massively damaged by the typhoon, also called the '*Goodjao*' church, has become a communal place where other faith-based religious organizations, other NGOs, researchers, government staff, and visitors meet, gather, communicate, and distribute food packs, hygiene kits, and even other secular events which is a good reservoir of social capital. The Sama Badjao were well-connected to religious organizations, i.e., Roman Catholic and Born-Again Christian denominations and other faith-based NGOs. Several local and faith-based NGOs, such as Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Philippines, Josemaria Escriva Foundation, and ERMF Philippines, initiated interventions that promote education, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), capability-building training, and coastal rehabilitation programs while strengthening the partnership between the local government and Sama Badjao.

The intervention programs, such as participatory needs assessment of a social worker and medical missions of missionaries connected to ERMF, resulted in a partnership between EMRF itself and the Sama Badjao community to promote longer-term development in the area that started in 2016. This collaboration led them to begin attending meetings and collaborating with the LGU. Yet, most decision-making processes follow a top-down approach to integrate them into a wider society and promote sustainable livelihood. EMRF connected the Sama Badjao community to other civil societies in the municipality and their neighboring villages through a coastal clean-up drive, part of the

more expansive coastal rehabilitation project, in partnership with the LGU. These civil societies also volunteered to evacuate the residents in the coastal areas during Super Typhoon Rai. However, their priorities were half Sama Badjao-Bisaya and Bisaya members who married to Sama Badjao. These findings agree that the work of faith-based organizations typically has a positive ripple effect on people and communities who are not even followers of their respective congregations (Rivera, 2018). Nonetheless, I caution religious organizations present in the community about the imminent demise of *PagMboh* rituals among the younger generation. I agree with Aoyama (2014) that conversion to the dominant religion is a form of adaptation, which I will explore further in the next chapter (Chapter 7). Nevertheless, I observed that the third-generation Sama Badjao Christians no longer practice the *Mboh* rituals due to their strict adherence to their Christian faith.

6.2.3 Perception as Welfare Dependents

Perceived welfare dependence attributed to the indigeneity of the Sama Badjao is an indication of cultural discrimination. The presence of civil societies, charitable people, and LGU with their dole-out help and the projects implemented by the NGOs over to the Sama Badjao community created a negative impression of them as welfare dependents. The non-indigenous residents perceived the Sama Badjao as highly favored because of their indigeneity. Additionally, these residents perceived the Sama Badjao as 'special' because they received more aid than others, which they thought was unfair treatment. One of the village workers said:

> *Before the typhoon [Rai], their area was very clean. Because of their weekly cleaning program with the [development officer]. They gave 15 kg of rice to those who cleaned their place. Aside from that, they have their own CRs [Comfort Rooms]. Prior to that, their area was dirty, but Sir [development officer] asked them to clean, and they would receive rice in return. Now, they are back to their dirty surroundings because they no longer receive rice in exchange for cleaning. No matter what we do, that's how they are* (Unstructured interview, non-indigenous barangay worker*).*

Meanwhile, a resident who also lost her home in Rai shared how hard life was after the typhoon, *"We can't plant anything here because the sea comes in [during high tide]. NGOs*

such as Edmund Rice [ERMF] have been here for a long time, but they only focus on the Badjao, and we are left envious. Before, ADRA also focused only on the Badjao, but they included the Bisaya as well, although it was just for the children. It was only for feeding programs for malnourished children (Unstructured interview, non-indigenous resident)."

Barangay Dolho is situated along the coast, which makes it susceptible to rising sea levels and coastal flooding. Residents find maintaining and growing crops challenging due to saltwater intrusion, soil quality, severe wind, and other factors. Due to various development programs implemented in the community, several non-indigenous residents admitted being *"maglaway lamang mi (drool)"* out of envy of the Sama Badjao. In the same manner, a study about the migrant Indigenous community in the Eastern Visayas region called *Mamanwas* reported conflict with non-indigenous residents due to perceived favoritism over non-indigenous residents. Some residents subjected them to verbal harassment based on their skin color, hair, and other physical characteristics (Cuaton & Su, 2023). I also noticed this when conducting the household census because I distributed hand sanitizers and masks to the respondents during the scheduled interview. Those residents who saw me asked for their share, but I told them this was only limited to interviewees. Another incident was when non-indigenous children asked for bread when they saw I allocated snacks to the Sama Badjao in the covered court.

Since it was known that the community receives help from several NGOs, the Sama Badjaos were mostly excluded from the budget of the LGU, especially after the typhoon when the funding received by the municipality was limited:

> *We are just following the listing from the barangay. The Badjaos were not included. There's just too many of them. They will exhaust everything [referring to the food packs] there. I can only say for us; I don't know about others because many may have given food packs to them. That's when I learned about it: they didn't receive food packs from us after someone complained to me. I really didn't know... because some gave directly to the barangay, like NGOs. Several private individuals who genuinely wanted to help, there are such people* (Unstructured interview, social worker).

This ushers the assumption that considering the limited funding and resources, the government passed their accountability with the Sama Badjao to other actors such as NGOs, civil societies, and religious organizations. The Sama Badjao informants also supported this during unstructured interviews because the EMRF promotes long-term

development programs in the community by strengthening their ties with the LGU and other civil societies. Bankoff, in his interview, said that people adapt through mutual assistance, especially when the state is very weak. The Philippines has not been a particularly centralized strong state since time immemorial. The nearest to having one was during the American colonial period (1898–1946), but still not that strong. It was a sub-contractual state where the communities had to look after themselves (Curato et al., 2015, p. 210). This is an example of interdependence where the LGU needed assistance, the Sama Badjao community members lacked the decision-making power and resources, and the NGOs had funding but no authority in an area. Interdependence transpires when residents, organizations or government authorities cannot achieve something independently and must collaborate to accomplish their goals (Light, 2023).

Trini admitted her confusion about distributing the aid to the Sama Badjao community. During the negotiation period, they were supposed only to receive galvanized iron sheets, but unfortunately, it did not materialize due to funding issues:

> *They said it [monetary aid] will be released this upcoming week. My colleagues and I were not included… As for the Badjao, they said we would only receive galvanized iron sheets. The NCIP came and donated rice and other goods. The Bisaya are nosy [about the aid the Sama Badjao receives], although they have banks [savings bank accounts]. If there is a livelihood program in the barangay, the Badjao should be included. They say the Badjaos are not clean! Then they should teach us first how to clean our surroundings. Our concern is that when there are livelihood programs, sometimes there are about 30 Bisaya or 20 beneficiaries, but only 1 or 2 Badjaos are included. If another livelihood program comes [in the future], the Badjao should also be counted in so that more of us can benefit, not just sit and wait for a chance* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 1).

The LGU admitted that there were instances where they were unaware of the aid given to the community due to a lack of coordination by NGOs and other civil societies. They went directly to the community without notifying the barangay council, municipal office, and NCIP, thereby bypassing the NCIP Administrative Order No. 1 Series of 2012 protocol. On the contrary, the Sama Badjao community preferred NGOs to come directly to them since they distrusted the LGUs. Because of the participation of the SBHW in meetings and activities in the barangay, they are aware of the available resources intended for those affected by Typhoon Rai. They questioned the authorities in charge of the distribution of

resources and who decided who to include or exclude. Unfortunately, the ten galvanized iron sheets the residents were initially informed to receive during the post-disaster assessment fell into false promises. Hence, they kept following up and convinced the barangay to include at least a few affected Sama Badjaos in monetary aid and livelihood options. They perceived that the Bisaya were prying at the Sama Badjaos because they received funding for projects and donations from NGOs.

The Sama Badjao believed that the Bisaya residents were economically better than them because they had bank accounts. However, according to the Financial Inclusion Survey conducted in 2021, 34.3 million Filipino adults do not own any type of formal account (in a bank, e-money issuer, Non-stock Savings and Loan Association, cooperative, or microfinance institution). Moreover, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2024) recorded 21.7 percent of poverty incidences among families in Leyte province in 2023. This means that about one in every five families in the province was poor. This percentage represents the proportion of families whose income falls below the poverty threshold, meaning they have insufficient resources to meet basic food and non-food needs.

There were efforts to challenge the negative perceptions and address the root causes of welfare dependency, essential to promote the sustainability of the Indigenous community as well as their inclusion to build mutual trust in their host community and the other way around. A public school teacher who was deeply involved with the Sama Badjao community hopes to make them independent from dole-out help through education by increasing school admission of the next-generation Sama Badjao:

> *First, my opinion is that the enrollment of the Badjao will increase if we encourage them to send their children to school and support them. Not in the sense of giving them things but teaching them how to earn a living. 'Don't give them fish. Teach them how to fish,' so to speak. Teaching them how to fish has a long-term impact as they can sustain themselves. For example, if you create a project where they make mats, there should also be a market for their crafts so they will have buyers. This way, they can earn and send their children to school. Maybe they can't buy rice, have nothing to eat, and just agree to eat Champorado [chocolate rice porridge] and beg. They do that because they have no money. We need to teach them how to make a living. If we just give them things, they will just rely on it. We need to teach them livelihood skills to survive and then continually guide them, not just leave them...* (Unstructured interview, public school teacher)

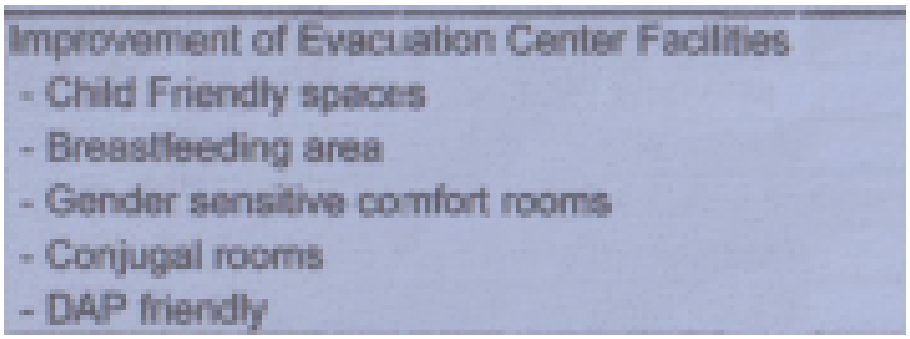
The othering of non-indigenous peoples and LGUs stems from a lack of awareness and distrust about the Sama Badjao community, perpetuating stereotypes and marginalization. The perception and importance given to land-based settlers over sea-based lifestyles, rendering them primitive and underdeveloped, discredit their maritime, fishing, diving, trading, boat building, weaving, and other skills. The findings of this study agree with decolonial scholars (Bouteldja, 2014; Lugones, 2016; Maldonado-Torres & Cavooris, 2017; Passada, 2019) about how colonial structures and mindsets remain embedded in contemporary institutions and relationships.

6.3 Institutional Discrimination Perpetuated by Non-inclusive Policies

This section examined the institutional discrimination influenced by cultural discrimination mentioned previously. It consisted of bureaucratic rules, regulations, and other policies that excluded the Sama Badjao from resources and opportunities for their immediate recovery after Rai. This section was divided into three sub-themes: Non-inclusive DRRM program, underrepresentation in local government, and threat of displacement.

6.3.1 Non-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Programs

As examined in Chapter 2, two significant laws safeguarded Filipinos from climate change hazards and impacts. Upon analyzing these laws, both the Climate Change Act of 2009 and the DRRM Act of 2010 failed to mention the Indigenous peoples, although the country is home to 176 Indigenous communities. Although the DRRM Act of 2010 recognized Indigenous knowledge systems, it did not acknowledge the Indigenous communities and only mentioned the former.



Improvement of Evacuation Center Facilities

- Child-friendly spaces
- Breastfeeding areas
- Gender sensitive comfort rooms
- Conjugal rooms
- DAP (Disabled persons) friendly

Figure 20. Excerpt from the MDRRM plan

Source: MDRRM Plan, 2019

The DRRM Act of 2010 is the country's foremost legal instrument and guiding policy framework, driving the momentum of DRRM across various governance levels. Regarding institutional arrangements, NDRRMC is the highest decision-making body, comprising members from different departments, government agencies, LGUs, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector. The architecture of DRRM consists of multi-tiered bodies, forming the DRRM office in every region, province, city, and municipality, and Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC), which is responsible for operations requiring vertical coordination, as mandated by the DRRM Act (UNDRR, 2019). Similarly, the MDRRM plan in Bato, Leyte, was enacted in 2019 and did not mention the Indigenous community in its related programs, projects, and activities (Figure 20). This suggests that the existing laws are likewise tailored to serve and protect the general public and have trickled down to the ground level. It defeats its purpose of being a bottom-up approach because of the failure to acknowledge the Indigenous knowledge of the Sama Badjao. Their valuable contribution of Indigenous

knowledge may serve as a crucial source of information about changes in the sea and maritime ecosystem, the effects of climate change on sea-oriented communities, Indigenous DRR and adaptation strategies, and may have been a suitable venue for an inclusive DRR. For this reason, Lofts & Kenny (2012) criticize the policymakers for failing to engage with local communities and grassroots organizations on mainstreaming climate change and risk management. There was noticeably inadequate consultation with the 'Other' marginalized sections of the society, such as the Indigenous peoples, farmers, fisherfolk, urban poor, women, and youth.

The enactment of CCA strategies and DRR programs follows the blueprint of Western knowledge. Disguised as modernity and more effective, it introduced unfamiliar ways and approaches to the Sama Badjao as they migrated into urban space. The five SBHWs and *Panlima* have attended DRR seminars. However, Trini said, *"We could not entirely roll it out in the community because we did not understand the whole thing and were embarrassed to ask. The others did not understand it at all* (Unstructured Interview, Sama-Bajau informant 1)*."* The one-way knowledge transfer may likely reinforce discourses about Sama Badjao's lack of (un)critical thinking skills due to their subjective assumption as inferiors, dependency, and illiteracy, which may stem from language barriers and ontological differences. In some way, it has marginalized their Indigenous knowledge and tradition as outdated and primitive. This contrasted with the leadership portrayed by the SBHWs during their pre-emptive evacuation and their influence with other women to prepare during emergency crises outlined in Chapter 5.

Regarding preemptive evacuation measures during Super Typhoon Rai, the host barangay council assigned the nearby elementary school as the Sama Badjao community's evacuation center. As explained in Chapter 5.4, not all Sama Badjao went there due to its proximity to the river and underestimating the strength of Rai. Despite the controversy regarding the suitability of school buildings, they are often designated as emergency evacuation shelters, aid distribution centers, and temporary accommodations during disasters (Tsioulou et al., 2021). Experts suggest conducting geographical mapping by considering the river system. Such evacuation centers must be far from the river system because of the risk of flooding if a river overflows (Lacerna, 2023). While using existing schools seems an obvious solution for temporary shelter needs, if not carefully planned, it

can have negative consequences for the physical safety and well-being of the evacuees, for children's right to education, and for protecting education sector investments (Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety, 2017). One of the public school teachers narrated:

> *When the Badjaos evacuated, they also left damage in the classrooms. So, our principal got angry because the barangay won't pay for the repairs. Next time, we will create MOA between the school and barangay officials stating that the barangay will repair any damages by making the classrooms an evacuation center…The school was filthy, but so far, the Badjaos who used my classroom cleaned it after they left because they knew I would be furious if they trashed it. If it's just me, I won't let anyone use it as evacuation, but I don't have any choice at that time but to open my classroom… The elders and their Hari [Chieftain] stayed in my classroom. But the other rooms were so filthy. They really need supervision, not only instructing them what to do. You must be there when you give instructions on what they must do. They will clean if you are there, keeping an eye on them. If you won't supervise and just say you have to do this and that after using the classroom, they will just say yes without actually doing it* (Unstructured interview, public school teacher).

The use of the Bisayan word 'Hari,' which means king, to refer to the *Panlima* signified the unfamiliarity of the non-indigenous to the Indigenous political structure of the Sama Badjao. The perceived need for supervision as a form of paternalistic intervention with them for cleanliness and order justifies their 'Otherness.' It demarcates dialectical relationships between 'hygienic and unhygienic,' 'lazy and responsible,' and 'conformist and non-conformist.' Scott (2009, p. 3) refers to this kind of subjugation as "the cultural and administrative process of 'internal colonialism' that characterizes the formation of most modern Western nation-states." Saat (2003) postulates that the Sama Badjao cultural status may have suffered from being a sea nomadic people for centuries. With that, they were often considered as practically uncivilized among dominant or land-based societies.

The staff from the public elementary school reported that the Sama Badjaos always take refuge in the classrooms except for the typhoon Megi (local name Agaton[48]) in April

[48]The typhoon brought heavy rains, violent winds, floods (flash floods) in low-lying areas and catch basins, and rain-induced landslides. It had maximum sustained wind of 65 kilometres (40 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 80 kph (49 mph). It caused 214 deaths and 132 missing coming from landslides and floods, mass evacuation and internal displacement of the affected population, and severe damage to shelter, infrastructure, and livelihood, together with other water and health infrastructures in affected provinces. See more: https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-tropical-storm-agaton-dref-operation-ndeg-mdrph046-final-report

2022, four months after Rai. At that period, the school was newly cleaned up and renovated from Rai's damage. Hence, the barangay council opened other public buildings, such as the Daycare Center and Multipurpose Hall, to evacuees. The staff from the elementary school explained why the school was closed as an evacuation center:

> *Because of their mess, look at their houses there; they're filthy, and this school has turned into that. I refused to let them in during Agaton. There were probably four families; then there were many children, which was worse. I didn't open the school because I was the one who was entrusted here; I'm the one who cleans every day. The Moros? They don't clean; they just leave…we just help each other, together with the teachers (Unstructured interview, elementary school staff).*

Many Sama Badjaos who needed to evacuate preferred to go to the municipal terminal because they could stay there as long as they wanted without asking the authority's permission. The public terminals were, for them, a space where they could take shelter not only during emergency situations but also during their economic activities, either vending or begging.

Going back after the super typhoon Rai, the Sama Badjao community received immediate relief goods from the local government unit, other government offices, religious organizations, and NGOs. Government staff who were part of the validating team went house-to-house to document households with totally and partially damaged houses and insinuate to offer galvanized iron sheets. Nevertheless, none of the Sama Badjao households received any shelter r econstruction materials. "At first, *it made us happy so we could repair our house. They gave us a ticket as proof that we qualify for this aid. Until now, I kept the ticket but haven't received anything. Yes, we received rice and relief goods but no galvanized iron sheets (*Semi-structured interview, 34 years old, female*)*." Upon clarification with the LGU, the people who gave the ticket were not from the municipality but from the National Housing Authority (NHA) provincial office. Unfortunately, they ran out of funds, so not everyone, including the entire Sama Badjao community, received shelter reconstruction materials. The municipal officer shared why none of them did not qualify for the shelter reconstruction aid:

> *The Badjaos were not included because [Brgy] Dolho is large [village]. If we allocate these to them, these [The galvanized iron] will only cover the Badjao community alone, and nothing will go to the Bisaya. Their houses get easily destroyed in the community because they are not sturdy.*

> *Even before the typhoon, their houses got damaged, but much more so during Odette, which was very strong, definitely got crushed (*Unstructured interview, Municipal officer).

A month later, the disbursement for the cash assistance was rolled out. Each household received ₱1,000 (ca €17) per family member above 13 years old, with a maximum of ₱5,000 (ca €86). Interviews from municipal officials revealed that the Bato municipality received limited funding from the national government:

> *How can we distribute ₱9 million [€145,000]? For now, we prioritized helping those households whose houses were totally destroyed because not everyone can receive assistance due to this problem. Some people are complaining, saying that the funds have been corrupted. I'm having a headache working out for augmentation to the national government to address this issue…. The report [in the national government] was incorrect... we should have received ₱48 million or almost ₱50 million [€809,000], but we only got ₱9 million for now (*Unstructured interview, municipal officer).

Initially, they found it challenging to start distributing the cash assistance since it might translate into favoritism to those chosen as eligible for the first disbursement. Indeed, none of the Sama Badjao got selected as initial beneficiaries during the first cash out. The council in the host community had difficulty verifying the Sama Badjao households who officially reside in the municipality, considering their mobility on the shoreline and if the super typhoon destroyed their houses or was already destroyed/damaged beforehand. The LGU's lack of an efficient mechanism for tracking Sama Badjao families and distrust led to the initial exclusion of affected households from the first cash assistance disbursement and the total exclusion of shelter reconstruction subsidy. "*We have difficulties tracing the Badjaos since many kept moving to other places. The others deny receiving aid despite receiving it. The others claimed they did not receive anything despite no registration in the village. Others are registered twice under different names (*Unstructured interview, local village official)."

It can thus be suggested that the Sama Badjao make the system work according to their own cultural expectations of mutual aid and shared resources. I contend that the concept of *Kampung* is not bound by space. Even living far apart, each clan looks out for its family members and finds a way for each household to get the same assistance. In this

instance, all households part of the *Kampung* receive compensation or their portion of relief goods, regardless of whether they are registered or not, or have temporarily migrated to other Sama Badjao communities where there is a possibility of unexpected return in Bato, Leyte. This also indicates that they have a good knowledge of how the system works and how they can make it work to their own ends, which is a communal sense of responsibility.

During the initial disbursement in January 2022, 15 Sama Badjao households from the *Baybayon* made it to the list with the negotiation of SBHW. This required the SBHW to exercise careful judgment in deciding which households were most in need of immediate cash aid. According to Trini, they would not have made efforts running around to follow up if, in the first place, none of the staff who conducted the post-disaster assessment stated anything about cash assistance and shelter reconstruction materials. Unlike previous disasters like Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013,[49] they did not expect shelter subsidy aid, as no such information was communicated for their damaged houses. According to the head of the Barangay Affairs, the initial funding they received was ₱9million (ca €154,805), which was not enough considering the damage that the municipality experienced from Rai.

In Barangay Dolho alone, 814 houses were damaged by Rai and out of these were 140 Sama Badjao stilt houses. In the entire municipality of Bato, 9,767 homes were destroyed. Hence, the requested amount for the cash assistance was almost ₱50 million (ca €800,000). With the persistent efforts and will of the SBHW, tenured Sama Badjao households qualified for the second disbursement. Only the household head could file the application. The second disbursement was further delayed four months after the typhoon because they had to request additional funds again, including all affected Sama Badjao households. On April 22, 2022, the 2nd disbursement for ₱5,000 (ca €86) flat rate was released. Sama Badjao residents struggled to recover from the super typhoon because fishing was not profitable enough for all their affected kin.

[49]Super Typhoon Haiyan is one of the strongest and most destructive typhoons recorded. As per NDRRMC's (2014b) assessment, 6,300 people were killed by Haiyan, a further 1,062 were missing, and 28,688 were injured. 93.68% of the total number of deaths, 94.72% of missing, and 91.28% of injured came from the Eastern Visayas region. A total of 3.4 million families and more than 16 million persons were affected and displaced, among them are the migrant indigenous communities. The economic impact was estimated at nearly $13 billion.

According to the Bisaya and Badjao health workers, a household is eligible for cash assistance if they resided in the barangay when the typhoon struck. The requirements for cash assistance from DSWD were: 1. Certificate of Eligibility 2. Valid indentification 3. Certificate of Indigency 4. General Intake Sheets 1 and 2 (DSWD Forms). Two requirements, such as the certificate of eligibility and indigency, are endorsed by the barangay LGU. During the application process, the SBHWs and two Sama Badjao senior high school students volunteered to assist the qualified Sama Badjao household heads in filling out the DSWD forms and claiming cash assistance. Each volunteer stationed at each table beside the municipal employees to cater to the Sama Badjao applicants who are falling in line (Figure 21).

Figure 21. A female Sama Badjao household head (sitting in her colorful skirt) claiming her cash assistance while one of the SBHWs is standing ready to assist her

Source: Author, 2022

Many Sama Badjao men in *Magosaha* returned to Dolho, although two households did not receive cash because one household head was away caring for a family member on another island. The other Sama Badjao household head has accepted a 3-month contract to construct a pump boat. While attending to his visitors from another island, he came out and said, "*I was really disappointed about it. Look at my house, it's totally damaged. Had they given immediate shelter or cash assistance, I wouldn't have gone to Bohol [another island] to get a deal to build a pump boat and lived there for months. I don't understand why they won't allow my niece to file the application for me. They can just give the money to her on my behalf since they personally know her, and she works in the barangay LGU (*Unstructured interview, 34-year-old, Sama Badjao male)."

The municipal office relied upon the barangay because they did not know personally the residents and their conditions after the storm. Then the barangay relied on the assigned BHWs per area in the village. Bureaucratic processes such as limited funding, residency tenure (through identification documents), birth registration of the household heads, and housing, land, and property problems confront various stakeholders working with the Sama Badjao community after Super Typhoon Rai.

Aside from having no Indigenous communities native to Leyte province, funding was also one of the main reasons for having no NCIP Provincial Branch in Region 8. For now, the agency accessible to the Sama Badjao is the DSWD. Moreover, several local NGOs initiated interventions that promoted WASH while strengthening the partnership between the local government and Sama Badjao. They complement the works of the DSWD and NCIP, yet issues related to tolerance of cultural differences, funding deadlines, project timelines, and lack of coordination with NCIP are prevalent. Although the intention is good, I argue that changing certain aspects of Indigenous communities that have been around since time immemorial would take time. Interventions that result in cultural or behavioral change should start internally and not with external actors to acknowledge their right to self-determination. Although the Sama Badjao received assistance such as relief goods from various actors such as NGOs and government offices, it did not improve their vulnerable conditions but encouraged dependency. Disasters like this reified socially constructed 'Badjao' identities as mendicants and dole/welfare dependents.

6.3.2 Underrepresentation in the Local Government

Both cultural and institutional discrimination often reinforce each other, leading to the systematic exclusion of certain groups from political power and decision-making. Because the *Panlima* in *Baybayon* travel frequently, they have representatives for both settlements. *Panlima* is earned through succession by a male heir. According to Bert, currently, the *Panlima* has a weaker influence within the whole community, unless during weddings, performing rituals, and other traditions. He said, *"I felt like they had lost respect for Panlima, unlike before. People are no longer satisfied with settling disputes by arbitration through the Panlima.… Another instance is when a Panlima reprimands a Badjao for what we consider an unlawful act, but they will just ignore the warning (*Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 3)*."* This may likely be due to their integration into the LGU, along with the authority of the elected village officials. Nonetheless, the *Panlima* protects their own kin and acts as an arbitrator whenever there's familial conflict. If conflict is not resolved, they escalate it to the barangay chairperson. However, the barangay council does not want to interfere with Sama Badjao-related disputes since they have their own justice system to follow. At present, the municipal and barangay-level local governments are more recognized in the community.

Since non-indigenous people cannot understand the Sinama language, there is a sort of language barrier between the Badjao and Bisaya communities. Based on my observations during meetings and seminars, Sama Badjao chieftains are not articulate enough in the Bisaya language to convey their thoughts and social grievances during meetings and seminars, whenever there was an opportunity to meet government officials. Nevertheless, the SBHWs became the representatives and liaisons between the host village, LGU, NGOs, and other concerned institutions over *Panlima*. Because *Panlima* could not read and write and are not confident in the Cebuano language, they also relied on the SBHWs. Nonetheless, the *Panlima* has the authority and decision-making power in any internal matters concerning the community. The SBHWs job as health workers connected them to the host community in facilitating the health and welfare of the community, especially children and pregnant mothers.

Meanwhile, none of the government officials/employees or development workers working with the Sama Badjao community speak the Sinama language. Meetings, seminars, and events intended for the Sama Badjao were held in the Cebuano language. A local NGO working in the community since 2016 has been implementing development projects such as WASH, capability-building training, and coastal rehabilitation in the area with the partnership of the local government and government agencies. From then on, Sama Badjao leaders and chieftains attended meetings and collaborated with the mainstream municipal activities. Yet, as other actors dictate, they only follow what they think is best for them.

Although the IPRA law upholds the recognition, protection, and promotion of the rights of Indigenous communities/people and guarantees that they are well represented in the policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, 1997), the lack of political voice of Indigenous peoples in the majoritarian decisions is non-existent (Macalandag, 2021). Additionally, their representation and participation in decision-making in the municipal government bodies, in general, were minimal. From observation, some activities acknowledge the existence of the Sama Badjao community. For example, the registered Sama Badjao exercised their right to vote for the national election on May 9, 2022, and the celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day on August 26, 2022. However, these do not automatically translate to their inclusion politically. Historically, they have been a highly fragmented people with no overall political unity because of their sea mobility, and they have held no land except for small burial islands (Sather, 2006; Toohey, 2005). None are sufficiently integrated or large enough to exist as an independent political entity or internal organization (Bottignolo, 1999).

Table 2 presents the educational attainment of the Sama Badjao household in Bato, Leyte. Based on the census, 55% of the household heads had no formal education, 31.49% had elementary education, and 9.94% had reached high school level. Due to a large percentage of illiteracy in the community, as well as the absence of a political arena or platform for them to voice out their concerns and access resources for recovery, they remained at the margins of mainstream society.

Table 2. Sama Badjao household heads' educational attainment

Educational attainment	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	100	55
Elementary level	57	31.49
High school level	18	9.94
College level	4	2.21
Post-graduate level	1	0.55
Kindergarten level	1	0.55
Total	180	100

Source: Household census conducted by the author, 2022

The Sama Badjao, as stakeholders without the same capacity, organization, and status as other stakeholders, were prone to manipulation by stronger actors. Most Sama Badjao did not demand assistance but were very thankful for whatever they would get from outsiders. In the first place, it was the employees from the validating team and the regional municipal team who mentioned that they would get help with money and shelter reconstruction materials. So right to aid are what they are fighting for.

6.3.3 Persistent Threat of Displacement

For decades, the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, has faced threats of displacement due to housing, land, and property issues. A private claimant has secured a portion of land on the coast next to the *Tabok s*ettlement, cutting down mangrove trees and fencing off the area. Super Typhoon Rai has heightened their vulnerability to land insecurity issues and potential displacement by destroying 140 out of 156 stilt houses along the coast, according to the NCIP. During my first few weeks in the area, the Sama Badjao people were watchful and wary of me. Because two weeks prior to the typhoon, private individuals had surveyed and measured the shoreline down to the coast. Throughout my stay, they faced harassment twice from unknown individuals who threatened the community with possible forced

eviction. The barangay council acknowledged that many claimants disregard courtesy, directly encroaching on the area without prior consultation from the municipal authority.

Interviews revealed that there were offers for the community to be relocated to the inner area of the municipality, but they constantly declined. The Sama Badjao, especially the *Pangkat*, have forged an intimate relationship with the seas and islands for a thousand years of historical sea nomadism. They built stilt houses extending over the shoreline to conform to the contemporary world. It is their only way to maintain their connection with the maritime world (Stacey et al., 2018).

Although the Sama Badjao in the Philippines were granted citizenship and protection in 1997 through Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the IPRA of 1997,[50] there has been no national law in the Philippines to uphold the welfare and right to return of people displaced by typhoons, other disasters, as well as armed conflict, or often by a combination of these factors (Morden, 2014). Moreover, historically, the Sama Badjao held no land or other property ashore except for small burial islands, and they are a highly fragmented people with no overall political unity (Toohey, 2005). Thus, Macalandag (2009) challenges the inclusiveness of IPRA based on the applicability of its land-based territorial concepts concerning the Sama Badjao. Macalandag (2021) and Tagliacozzo (2009) are also critical of the formal recognition by the Philippine government of the Sama Badjao as Indigenous peoples. This criticism manifests through the government's initiatives aimed at fostering inclusion and welfare for the Sama Badjao, which unfortunately have led to ongoing tensions due to the lack of acknowledgment of their socio-cultural complexities. For instance, the government commissioned a housing program in Tawi-Tawi province, building 90 units for the Sama Badjao in 2013. Unfortunately, in the municipality of Bongao, the Sama Badjao hesitated to relocate because the architectural design and layout of the units were unsuitable for their cultural identity (E. R. Navarro, 2015). Similarly, during my field visit to the Sama Badjao village in Alaska Mambaling, Cebu City, which has strong kinship ties with the Sama Badjao in

[50]Specifically, the law ensures that all indigenous peoples exercise the following: the right to ancestral domains, the right to self-governance and empowerment, social justice and human rights, and cultural integrity. Along with the law is the creation of the National Commission of Indigenous People (NCIP), the agency responsible for promoting and protecting the rights, interests, and well-being of the indigenous communities in the Philippines according to their beliefs, traditions, customs, and institutions (Republic of the Philippines, 1997).

Bato, Leyte, received quad houses (Figure 22) from Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI).

Figure 22. Quad houses in Sama Badjao settlement in Alaska Mambaling, Cebu City

Source: Author, 2022

The quad houses were far removed from the customs and traditions of the Sama Badjao. Thus, many have returned to living in stilt houses closer to the sea, albeit built on piles of garbage due to inadequate waste disposal and management[51].

See et al. (2024) and Macalandag (2021) believe that these rhetorical policies on multicultural recognition and modernist approaches to housing are not a guarantee for automatic translation into inclusive institutional and individual subjectivities. In the case of the Sama Badjao in Barangay Marvel, Isabel, Leyte, the community moved to the mangrove-protected area after Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 washed out their stilt houses next to the municipal public market. The justification was through the controversial DRR measure 'no-build zone policy'[52] after Haiyan, and later the expansion of the city boulevard. Spivak (1988) posits that the development phase of the subaltern is complicated by the imperialist project implemented by the dominant intellectuals. Through the discourse of development planning, the DRRM program (frequency and intensity of typhoons), and public health and security (safety and sanitation of urban and rural areas), they justify the dubious integration and settlement of the Sama Badjao. The aspiration of development through modernist, neoliberal policy and plans for resettlement of the Indigenous peoples undermines the claimed inclusivist goals of the government (Macalandag, 2021). This could push the Sama Badjao out of their fishing areas, suggesting their continuous mobility or permanent sedentary through modification of their sea-based identity.

For these reasons, the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, were worried about the fate of their community; hence, they did not wait for any outsiders' help in marking up their dwelling place by impaling bamboo to mark their dwelling space and rebuilding their *Kubo-Kubo*. Trini and Maria kept asking me questions I did not have concrete answers to: What would happen to them? Where will they go? What I was sure of at that time was that the area was considered foreshore land, which means public land (Figure 23). The

[51] See https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-news/2022/10/17/2217297/85-tons-trash-hauled-badjao-community

[52] The 'No-Build Zone' (NBZ) policy, declared by the national government under former president Benigno Aquino, Jr. banned dwellings within a 40-meter prohibited zone from coastlines.

Presidential Decree, otherwise known as 'The Water Code of the Philippines,' defined foreshore as the area between the highest and lowest tide, while the area of land measuring 20 meters landward from the interior limit of the shoreline is considered as the salvage zone/buffer zone. The salvage zone is classified as part of the public domain. It shall not be subjected to private appropriation, which means that public access to the salvage zone is guaranteed by law and public policy (EcoGov, 2004).

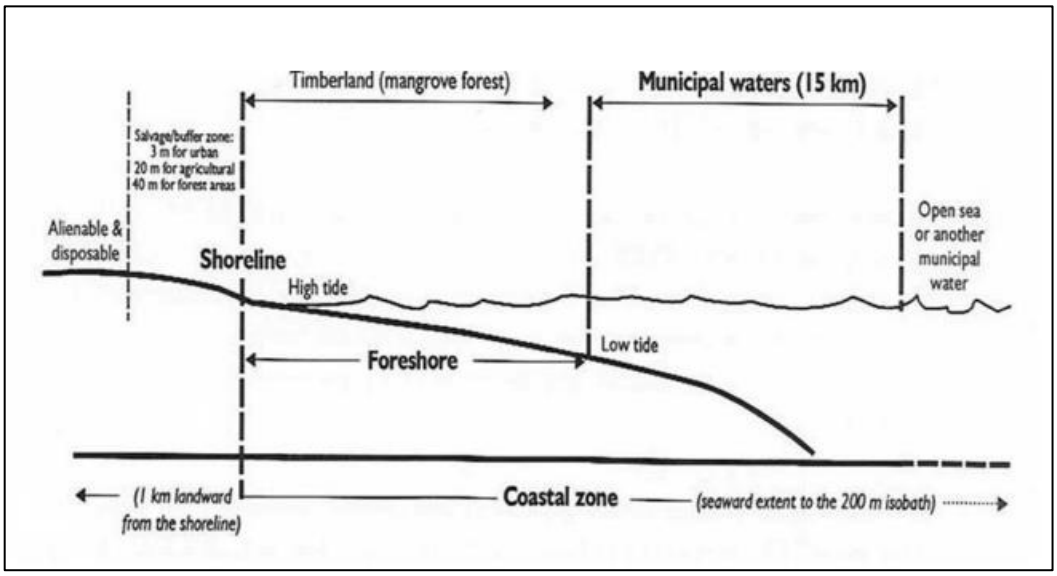


Figure 23. Diagram of a foreshore area and other features in a coastal zone

Source: EcoGov, 2004

Figure 24. Community during a regular high tide

Source: Author, 2022

The worry of the Sama Badjao eased as soon as the mangrove rehabilitation program, in partnership with the community, ERMF, LGU, government environment office, and civil societies commenced. Before I wrapped up fieldwork, five families are actively constructing their houses on the shoreline. Residents of *Baybayon* who live closest to the sea are primarily new migrants related to the tenured Badjao residents in Bato. Figure 24 shows the high tide in the *Baybayon* community, where it is considered a regular day.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines the relief and rehabilitation programs following Rai. The findings revealed the structural discrimination faced by the Sama Badjao community, which has worsened their marginalization and perpetuated a cycle of vulnerability. The Sama Badjao's unique sea-based lifestyle and *Magosaha,* which can be a lifetime of travel in search of livelihood in the sea and extended in the urban streets, have been misinterpreted due to colonial practices that aimed to settle nomadic peoples and subjugate Indigenous communities through paternalistic interventions. This failure to address the cultural and socio-economic complexities of the Sama Badjao's lifestyle has resulted in their further exclusion and underrepresentation in rehabilitation and recovery efforts. The Sama Badjao, as one of the marginalized groups in society, lacks a platform to voice their concerns and influence policy decisions. Disaster relief programs inadequately addressed their traditional practices and needs tied to their *Pangkat* religion, as their identity continued to be misrepresented by policymakers and social and development officers. The experiences of the Sama Badjao and the limited funding and cultural awareness of the LGU and other development and social workers underscore the need for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to disaster management and recovery, where the voices of marginalized communities are actively sought, heard, and incorporated into policy-making processes.

Moreover, this study reinforces the importance of recognizing the complexities of traditional lifestyles in designing and implementing humanitarian and environmental policies. Institutional discrimination is often recurring and self-reinforcing, creating a continuous cycle of marginalization of communities through generations. Hence, a concerted effort must be made to address non-inclusive practices and create equitable opportunities for Indigenous communities, especially those who are vulnerable to climate change hazards. Addressing the structural inequities faced by the Sama Badjao requires a multifaceted approach that includes inclusive decision-making platforms, culturally sensitive policies, and reallocating resources to ensure that aid and recovery efforts do not discriminate.

It is essential to establish mechanisms facilitating their participation in decision-making to address discrimination and ensure they are well represented in DRRM initiatives

and long-term concerns in the community, such as land tenure security, livelihood, and employment concerns, etc. The community may consider forming a Sama Badjao Council to represent various actors in the area, including *Panlima*, elders, women, vendors, fisherfolk, and youth leaders. This council may serve as a platform for the Sama Badjao to articulate their needs and preserve their Indigenous traditions. An additional measure is the continued capacity-building and leadership training of the SBHWs since they already have connections to the LGU and other development actors, not to mention the trust and respect they gained from the Sama Badjao themselves as recognized leaders.

Chapter 7 Against the Tide: Resilience and Resistance through a Decolonial Intersectional Lens

7.1 Introduction

Several scholars argue that the impacts of disasters are experienced differentially through pre-existing hierarchies of race, class, and gender, and they often sharpen those relations of inequality (Gomez-Barries 2017; Nishime & Hester 2018). For instance, people with low income and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in homes that are more vulnerable to the impact of disasters than people with higher incomes. As a result, their disaster experience may involve less protection from disasters, more material losses, and perhaps more significant damage to or destruction of their homes (Johnson, 2017).

I take the case of the Sama Badjao Indigenous community, who, due to their sea-based lifestyle, live in the shores with informal tenure arrangements where risks from disasters are higher, particularly from extreme weather events. They lack recognized land rights and inadequate representation in political arenas and policy, rendering them disproportionately vulnerable to hazards. The case of the Sama Badjao offers a unique understanding of their social location in postcolonial Southeast Asia. Unlike the land-based upland Indigenous communities in the Philippines or Indigenous peoples in the Americas, the displaced Sama Badjaos in the urban areas do not have a right or, in general, do not claim a terrestrial ancestral domain. As discussed in Chapter 1.1, the Sama Badjao in the Philippines are maritime population living over an area of 2.25 million square kilometers of sea, coral reefs, and islands, stretching from the southern Philippines to the northwestern and eastern coasts of Borneo, southward to Sulawesi, and from there over much of eastern Indonesia (Sather 1993; 1997). Although they are automatically considered as Indigenous groups in the Philippines as per IPRA Law of 1997, they are still perceived as migrants whenever they go due to their landless ties.

The concept of modernization is the dialectic idea of the backwardness of the association of the Sama Badjao traditional boat living and sea mobility. The stigmatized status of present or former ‘sea nomads’ such as the Sama Badjao persists. In the recent decades in the Philippines, political violence and the displacement of the Sama Badjao by

other ethnic groups from the coral reefs they formerly relied on in the Sulu Archipelago for their livelihood have forced many to migrate to Sabah, where they have become part of a highly marginalized 'stateless' population, or to urban areas in the Philippines where they are present, often as a homeless, mendicant population (Sather, 2024).

Hence, this chapter ensues a decolonial turn that recognizes Indigenous ways of thinking and being that resist and challenge the legacy of colonialism in all its forms using an intersectionality lens. I follow Olsen's (2018) notion of intersectionality as an approach to describing and analyzing how different kinds of social identities work together and/or against each other. The intersectional focus is on the interplay of identities, as well as the multiple forms of power that either push or pull social identities. An intersectional approach to Indigenous studies highlights differences within an Indigenous group or community, not only the differences between Indigenous and non-indigenous. The relationship between religion, gender, and indigeneity is of particular interest in this chapter. It can illustrate how power structures and categorizations may be reinforced but also challenged and renegotiated in the realities of climate change and its impact on societies (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). By acknowledging the multiple issues that Indigenous communities face beyond those posed by climatic risks and hazards, research that is both decolonizing and intersectional can provide a more precise portrayal of the lived realities of the impact of climate change on Indigenous peoples (Johnson et al., 2021).

I adapted Boonzaier's (2019) decolonial intersectional analysis to explore the exclusion experienced by the Sama Badjao after the typhoon because of these intersecting social structures and other factors. Othering as a set of dynamics, processes, and structures engenders marginality and persistent inequality across human differences based on group identities. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone. Although the axes of difference that undergird these expressions of othering vary considerably and are deeply contextual, they contain a similar set of underlying dynamics (Powell & Menendian, 2016).

While social and political dimensions are now being addressed to a growing extent, issues of equity and intersectionality are largely absent from these climate change-induced disasters (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). This chapter analyses the intersection of religion,

gender, and indigeneity in the recovery capacity of Sama Badjao after Super Typhoon Rai. I situate their experiences within the historical context of exclusion and growing inequality shaped by the said social structures. It further aims to humanize (decolonize) those who continue to exist (resiliency) and survive (adaptation) on the margins while explicitly advancing social justice (resistance).

This chapter is structured as follows: The next section deals with the pervasive dominant narratives as forms of 'othering' against the Indigenous community through stigmas and stereotypes. The discrimination manifests as two ethnic groups (Bisaya and Sama Badjao) interacting and competing with the scarcity of resources during emergencies, e.g., evacuation during the typhoon and receiving aid. Then, the following section highlights how they resist dominant narratives, counteract their imposed identities, and challenge the representation of the 'Badjao' in the periphery. Finally, the conclusion offers insights for developing inclusive disaster recovery and rehabilitation programs and addressing long-term community concerns through an intersectional approach.

7.2 Dominant Narratives of the Sama Badjao after Typhoon

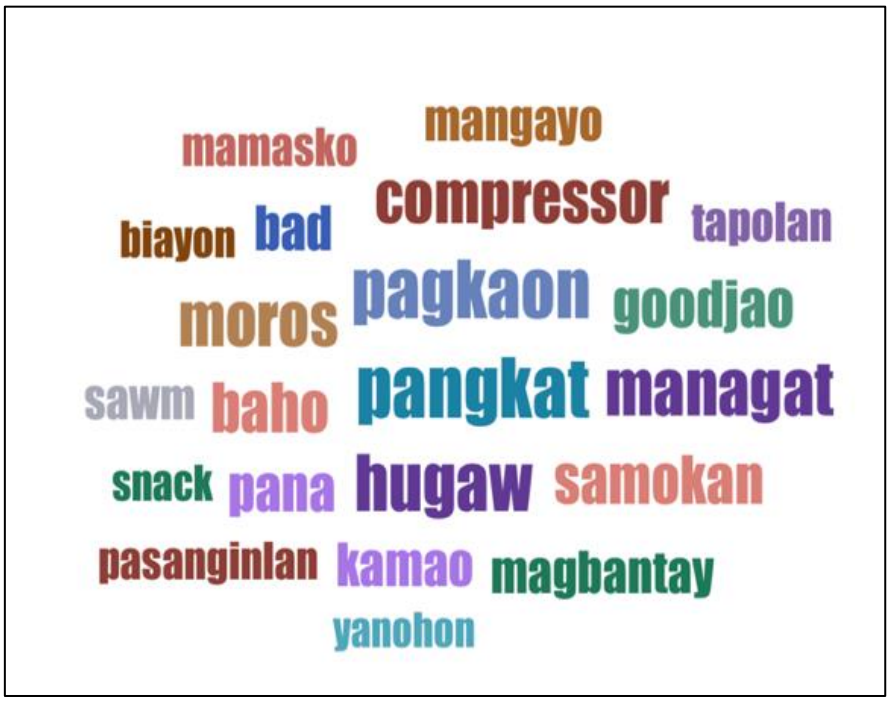
This theme uncovers how the 'Others' are shaped by power and privilege. I asked analytical questions about what lived experiences were implicated in the Sama Badjaos and how the social contexts and structures, such as religion, indigeneity, and gender, have formed public narratives about them. I present these narratives in the form of 'dehumanizing' otherings, such as stereotypes and stigmas surrounding their situation during the emergency crisis.

7.2.1 Predominant Stereotypes

Figure 25 shows the socially constructed identities that shape the current narratives of the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, after disasters. The top identities that emerged were Moros, people with no religion and consistently associated with food and snacks, *hugaw* (dirty), *baho* (stinky), *mangayo(ay)* (mendicant), *samokan* (annoying). These all led to negative

stereotypes where the Sama Badjao were treated as ignorant and ridiculed for practicing their rituals and traditions, even before the disasters and exacerbated post-Rai due to their increased visibility in public as mendicants. Despite all these, they were still recognized as fishermen, particularly spear fishers and divers.

Data from the FGD revealed that discrimination manifested as two ethnicities (Bisaya and Sama Badjao) interacted together during emergency situations. There was a collision of cultures due to extreme weather events and scarcity of resources. The unstructured interviews of the municipal development and social welfare office showed that they were aware of these stereotypes against the Sama Badjaos, so their solution was spatial segregation. For example, the Sama Badjaos were sheltered in the elementary school during the evacuation. Then, they have exclusive or separate events or public activities with dole-out help/snacks to increase their participation. Yet it seems like dole-out help from the government and private organizations has resulted in negative stereotypes against the Badjaos.



Pangkat (not an official religion) Pagkaon (food) Snack Hugaw (dirty) Managat (fishermen) Moros Compressor Baho (stinky) Samokan (annoying) Goodjao Pana (spearfish) Bad	Kamao (to know) Magbantay (caretaker) Mangayo (to ask for something) Mamasko (to ask for money during Christmas) Sawm (swim/dive) Tapolan (Lazy) Pasanginlan (blamed) Biayon (ridicule) Yanohon (treated plainly, simply or ignorant)

Figure 25. Word frequency of the socially constructed identities of the Badjaos

Source: Author via Atlas.ti, 2024

The participants from the FGD relived their encounters with non-indigenous peoples upon their evacuation:

> *Participant 1: When we passed through, the children and adults said we would evacuate to get food from the school. They said we were only after with the food.*

Participant 2: They think of us like children. In their minds, we went there because of the food. They didn't know we evacuated there to be safe.
Participants 3 & 6: We didn't go to the school. They [Bisaya] only cared about us because they thought we only wanted to get the food. Just because we are Badjao, they looked down and insulted us (FGD, women).

The non-indigenous peoples perceived that the Sama Badjao were primarily motivated by food whenever they went out in the public space. Since they flocked as a group, they were also considered an annoyance and disturbance due to their use of the Sinama language, which alienated the Bisaya around them. On the contrary, the participants remarked in the same way towards the non-indigenous peoples in public events, realizing the similarity of their feelings towards each other. Only yet, the Sama Badjao were single-handedly perceived negatively. The participants of the FGD remarked that they were not included in cash-for-work programs of the government before and after the typhoon because of the indifference to the Sama Badjao. However, during election periods, they are visible in the municipality as valued voters:

Participant 1: There was a cash-for-work [program], but only for the Bisaya. We were not included. It was from DOLE-TUPAD[53] and Tingog [Party List][54].
Researcher: What was the job for?
Participants 2 and 3: People sweep the streets and clean the surroundings for 15 days.
Participant 1: It was only for the Bisaya because they thought we were annoying and would cause a disturbance. Because you know, we always flock together and talk simultaneously, but they didn't treat us like that during elections. They fed us and had us take a bath [everyone laughed].
Participant 4: Because we were used to gather as a group and talk with each other in Sinama [language].
All [Simultaneously: Noise. Loud.
Participant 1: They [Bisaya] think that we are gossiping against them.
Participant 5: They also found it uncomfortable, but we felt the same way between the Bisaya and Badjao. Many Bisaya also formed groups when talking with each other. Then we got bothered by them. They said the Badjaos were nuisance, but they even caused more nuisance when they [Bisaya] were together (FGD, women).

[53] The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in the Philippines established the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) as a community-based program designed to offer temporary employment to those adversely affected by the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) during COVID-19 pandemic and other crisis.
[54] A political organization with party-list representation in the House of Representatives of the Philippines that serves the interest of Eastern Visayans. They focus on issues affecting the countryside or rural areas in general. "Tingog" came from the Waray language which means "voice".

Likewise, in the study of Jumala (2011) and Macalandag (2021), other municipalities in the Philippines, including the general public, had also labelled the Sama Badjao as 'eyesores' due to mendicancy and sleeping/camping in public places. While in the municipality of Bato, the Badjaos perceived themselves as second-class citizens, for they were considered the least priority during disasters (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic and Super-Typhoon Rai) because they are not native to the area. So far, there are no native Indigenous communities in the Eastern Visayas region, and the locals are the Bisaya. Although the Sama Badjao can generally exercise claims to territorial rights like the *Orang Laut* in Malaysia and other land-based Indigenous peoples in the Philippines, what puts the Sama Badjao in a complex situation is they were genuinely landless (Boutry et al., 2024).

Being treated as migrants wherever they are, for having no ties to a traditional land or territory makes them more vulnerable during disasters. After Rai, they were blamed by the school personnel for the lost and destroyed items in the classrooms, for instance, missing face masks, damaged doors and decorations, messy chairs, and broken tables, which might be due to the severe impact of the typhoon. Several informants also affirmed that the Sama Badjaos were always the primary suspects whenever something terrible happened in the community, such as theft, burglary, stealing, shoplifting, etc. Similarly, during Haiyan (locally called Yolanda) in 2013, a baseless rumor spread about the Sama Badjao in the region, sowing fear and hysteria among those living on the coast and spreading further in upland areas. Fabricated stories spread through text messages containing fake details about the Sama Badjaos coming from the sea and raiding houses. If pursued, they would run away and disappear back into the sea. Typhoon survivors who believed the story bought a type of bamboo called '*Bagakay*' and sharpened the tip to fence it around their houses, protecting their selves and properties at night. When I visited my hometown three days after Haiyan, I witnessed the fearmongering about the Sama Badjaos, who allegedly looted houses and killed people in search of food, which never happened.

Facebook user 1: What was your unforgettable experience during Haiyan? The Badjao
Facebook user 2: Because of Haiyan, we watched out for the Badjao every night. It turned out it wasn't true. Are you a victim too?
Facebook user 3: It feels good to stroll along the Boulevard now that the Badjao, who used to beg from people eating, strolling, or getting some fresh air, are no longer present

Figure 26. Facebook search on people's memorable experiences after super-typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)

Source: Facebook, 2023

In the age of social media (e.g., Facebook) in the Philippines, memories of Haiyan were associated with fake news posted about the Sama Badjao as one of the unforgettable moments among Bisayas (Figure 26). Upon conversation with the Sama Badjao in Bato, they admitted that they were used to these false accusations and ignored any rumors as long as the non-indigenous residents would not harm them. In my informal conversation with one of the Sama Badjao residents in the community, I asked him about untrue hearsay surrounding them. He said: *"They think we are inferior, but as far as I understand, our*

blood is all the same. You have your own tribes (ethnic groups), like Bisaya, Ilonggo, Tagalog, Waray, and the [native] Americans. We also have our tribes too, the Tausug, Badjao, and those other tribes from Mindanao (Unstructured interview, 45-year-old, male Sama Badjao)."

7.2.2 Persistent Stigmas

The stereotypes mentioned in the previously are interrelated leading to stigmas. Narratives about poor hygiene and sanitation have become prominent after the typhoon because the garbage in the area piled up after the storm. In 2016, a portion of the stream running through the community was reclaimed to build a bridge connecting Brgy. Dolho to the public market. During Rai, the stream hauled the trash from the upland areas to the Sama Badjao community (Figures 27 and 28). Additionally, the waves pushed back most of the garbage thrown in the sea and those that were buried under the sand to the coast after the typhoon and during high tide. Interviews revealed that the LGU was responsible for proper waste disposal. Yet, no one would like to apply for the garbage collector position in this area. Also, the municipal garbage collectors would not go far in this place since dump trucks could not enter the narrow alleyways.

This rippled to the reified concerns of cultural norms regarding proper hygiene and sanitation wherein the Sama Badjao was ridiculed and stigmatized for being unclean. One of the Sama Badjao women in our FGD session expressed frustration. Despite their best efforts to keep the evacuation center clean, they were still collectively judged as dirty, *"But it's all the same; there were no good results. Nothing good comes out. Two classrooms were dirty. Four classrooms were clean, yet [they see] everything was dirty. Most of us sometimes are different, but regarding dirt, it seems like all of us are the same to them."* Women are stereotyped as being responsible for cleaning their houses and surroundings because they stay home more than men. Hence, the Sama Badjao women were blamed for any mess and piles of garbage in their surroundings. Through a gender perspective, the domestic and care work remains undervalued and invisible, wherein the community environment adds to their responsibilities (double burden). The gendered division of tasks

and spaces leads to differences in the way women handle time due to the difficulties inherent in reconciling the various agendas they must juggle (González-Arias, et. al., 2024).

Although the Sama Badjao is a tight-nit and homogenous community, I witnessed firsthand how hygiene varies in each household. Factors I observed differ depending on the number of members in their homes, educational attainment, religious affiliation, mobility pattern, and access to clean water and functional toilets, which could be explored in another study. It should be noted that some of these factors are not part of the Sama Badjao culture as seafaring people. As an Indigenous community, they all rely on nature (the seas and islands) for their daily needs at no cost.

Figure 27. Garbage scattered on the shore early in the morning
Source: Author, 2022

Figure 28. Garbage piling up at the end of the reclaimed stream

Source: Author, 2021

However, living in urban space has exposed them to the outside influence of capitalizing resources. Those who deviated from the Pangkat religion have embraced a land-based lifestyle to some extent, acquiring the 'basic needs' which influenced their hygienic norms and personal representation. One of the participants from the FGD has elucidated how far their problems with garbage disposal have reached into a discussion of expelling them from the area: "*Some of our neighbors wanted us to be driven away because they say we are full of mess (trash and garbage). But they can't get rid of us easily because there are many of us living here* (FGD women, participant 1)."

On the other hand, when Charito, Trini, and I visited the Sama Badjao community in Isabel, Leyte, we went to the town center to look for a place to stay. We received comments from non-indigenous residents about how unrecognizable my informants were as Sama Badjaos. It seemed like they were in disbelief at how good and clean they looked while wearing fashionable clothes and accessories. The lady who owned the apartment we stayed in was also surprised by how my informants spoke fluently in Cebuano. These encounters show the prejudice of the non-indigenous to the Sama Badjao and how they are out of touch with the Sama Badjao's changing culture. In Macalandag's (2003, p 64) words, the *"non-Bajaos treated the Badjaos on a daily basis as if they are from another world."*

This is the same case with the Bajo communities in eastern Indonesia, where they were treated as subordinates to the dominant land-based ethnic groups, which can be attributed to early colonial observers. Wherever the Bajos were found, they were considered 'non-native' or 'newcomers' despite being present in Sulawesi since the mid-13th Century (Nolde, 2021). Similarly, the migrant Indigenous communities in Leyte, Philippines, called *Mamanwas*, faced discrimination of varying types after Haiyan. Cuaton & Su (2020) assume these could be because of their distinctive skin color, hairstyle, physical features, Indigenous language, beliefs, customs, and practices. Alongside this, their local-indigenous knowledge and practices on DRR were also subjected to societal discrimination. Cuaton & Su (2020) further argue that although the *Mamanwas* have come a long way in terms of integrating and being accepted by locals, they are still subjected to various types of discrimination that may affect their willingness as well as interest in sharing their local-indigenous knowledge, not just on DRR, to non-indigenous, government and non-government agencies as well as people from the academe.

The stigmas surrounding the Sama Badjao as 'migrants,' 'outsiders,' 'unhygienic,' 'out of this world' are not isolated. Similar perceptions were also observed in other Indigenous peoples across Southeast Asia. The Sama Badjao's situation is worsened by gender roles, religion, and indigeneity, which intensify their social exclusion. It hinders them from accessing employment opportunities and livelihood recovery programs. The impacts of these marginalizations cause men to migrate due to a lack of alternative livelihoods in *Baybayon*, while women and youth have limited job opportunities and struggle to access resources. Because several men are mobile throughout the country and women and elders often beg in neighboring municipalities, they are viewed as migrants or outsiders by non-Indigenous people whenever they are in public.

7.3 Understanding the Struggles of Sama Badjao Women

Men and women face different risks and vulnerabilities during and after disasters. They bring different resources to prepare for and cope with disaster (Clifton & Gell, 2001). When gender is combined with other axes of oppression, such as religion and indigeneity, vulnerability is intensified for the most marginal groups in Indigenous societies. Findings revealed that socio-economic status, marital status, and age may also be contributing factors. What it means to be a Badjao woman is a daily struggle for survival, which highlights the systemic gender biases and the resulting vulnerabilities that women and children face in both daily life and crises.

7.3.1 Vulnerability to Illness Associated with their Damaged Houses and Care Work Duties

The Sama Badjao practice ancestral worship, alternatively called '*Pangkat*'[55] in the communities I explored, including in Isabel and Cebu, and so do the followers. In the Sinama language, *Pangkat* refers to ancestors, especially invoked in the traditional Sama religion. In this tradition, *Pangkat* women were exposed to illnesses after the typhoon due

[55] Throughout the manuscript, I refer to a person as Pangkat who practice ancestral worship or Pangkat. The same goes to a Sama Badjao who practice Christianity as Christian.

to '*Busung'* (divine retribution)[56] for being housekeepers who failed to make their homes comfortable for their family members, especially the elders. In the belief system of the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, the spirits of the ancestors and the dead are part of their households, so any damaged and neglected houses, parents, children, and family members, bad habits and deeds could cause these spirits to be restless and curse the person they often saw in the house. This means that at least a member of the family, more often the left-behind women, should attend their homes to appease the spirit ancestors. With Rai damaging 90% of the houses in the community, more Pangkat women and elders were at risk of getting ill. I asked how the spirits strike a *Pangkat* woman with *Busung*:

> *I attended the Born-Again Christian mass once. I couldn't return the next time because my [deceased] mother would visit me in my dreams. If I tried to go to the mass, I felt like I couldn't walk. I was cursed the first time when I attended the mass. It was new for me to pray in the church, but I was prohibited from saying the prayers of the Born-Again Christian because I would be cursed. I'm not allowed to do it* (FGD, women, participant 5).

From the perspective of a Sama Badjao man, a *Pangkat* woman was tied to their house, which restricted their social activities within their kin inside the community. Unlike men, they could do whatever they wanted, even if it violated their moral obligation in the household since they were not directly affected by the curse of their angry ancestors. I asked a Pangkat male about his perception about *Busung:*

> *That's why if you belong to 'Pangkat, then you should be a Pangkat. Some even go crazy. I pity the women because men like us are stubborn. We always go out, drink outside and go home drunk. Then, the spirit ancestors blamed the parents, elders, or siblings who always stayed inside the house and always got sick. If you always stay at home, you always get struck by the dead ancestors. Most of them are women because they are always at home. They are always affected because they are what the spirits always see, like the ancestors* (Semi-structured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao*).*

Two female interviewees fell ill during the first few months after the typhoon because they were unable to repair their houses. Both experienced mobility issues and were unable to walk properly. Then, one of Trini's daughters also got sick when his uncle could not afford to repair his house in May 2022. Other illnesses that may be treatable with over-the-counter

[56] No direct translation to English but it is akin to karma in Hinduism/Buddhism or curse as a result of one's negative or inappropriate actions.

medication or consultation by healthcare professionals range from simple to complex symptoms, such as stomachaches, rashes, infected wounds, headaches, fever, paralysis, epilepsy, and psychosis, among others. These illnesses commonly occur in non-indigenous societies, but for the Sama Badjaos, these are construed as a curse by the dead ancestors who have been displeased with the living descendants (Jumala, 2018). With such conditions cursed by the ancestors, the Sama Badjaos in Bato, Leyte, found relief by satisfying the source of their anger and pledge of offerings through *'Pagsumangat.' Pagsumangat* is a Sama Badjao ritual where households offer food or items to appease the '*Sumanga*t (spirits)' and their spirit ancestors.

Additionally, the *Sumangat* of nature can cause illness in a Badjao. The *Sumangat* that frequently affect them are those closer to their dwelling place, such as the *Sumangat* of mangroves, massive rocks, the sea, and others. They believe everything in this world, including the inanimate, has *Sumangat* (Bottignolo, 1999). This caused them to be afraid and careful whenever they went near the mangrove trees, especially at night. They highly respect every living and nonliving creature under the sun and the sea.

In the case of Lea, a 70-year-old Sama Badjao widow, she could not walk due to numbness in her feet, which made her immobile for a while. She shared that she could now walk slowly but got tired quickly and experienced shortness of breath. She still needed the help of her grandson when going to the public market. Lea perceived that her deceased husband's spirit got angry and cursed her for not renovating their totally destroyed house after Rai. She was all alone living in her house after her husband died a few months ago, before the typhoon, while her daughter lived across her home with her family of three. Her daughter's home was also partially damaged after the typhoon. She explained how the *Busung* affects the women in the household and informed their capacity to recover:

> *I cannot leave the house unattended because the spirits would get angry. My legs down to my feet hurt more during cold weather. The spirits won't let me heal since it took longer to finish my house. If I sleep here (unfinished house) or in my daughter's house, and he (spirit of his deceased husband) would visit me, nah!!! He got unsettled and asked what happened to the house. Why did our daughter not repair the house? His father got angry; then I felt unwell. That's why my daughter is persevering to finish the house. I am old, and I have chores to do. I initially stayed in my daughter's house for about three months. She gradually renovated it with the help of her husband and my relatives. After Mamasko (caroling/begging), they go*

> *directly into the town to buy materials and ask her brother (referring to Charito) to make some repairs. They pity me, and sometimes they also help me. In return, I give those who repaired my house 1000 pesos. I don't beg, only my daughter. She went to Maasin, Baybay, and Tacloban (neighboring cities), together with other Badjaos in Bato."* (Unstructured interview, 70-year-old, female Sama Badjao)

For Lea, the cause of the *Busung* was the longer waiting time for the reconstruction of her house. The spirit of his departed loved ones, such as her dead husband, struck her with an illness that would only heal until the source of anger was fulfilled. That is why the Sama Badjao, especially the *Pangkat*, have to prioritize caring for the elders. Those buried in the cemetery visited the living and would punish them for not treating the elders well and question their living conditions, e.g., why they allowed the elders to get wet and cold during rainy days after Rai.

Lea's house still has a big hole in the roof and needs three galvanized iron and lumber to close the ceiling (Figure 29). Rainwater entered and would drench the entire floor, damaging the house's structure and integrity if frequently exposed to moisture. A Sama Badjao elder shared how *Busung* affects the family structure: "*If your husband is alive, the one who curses you can be your deceased mother or father. If your husband is dead, then he can curse you. The curse can also affect your children and grandchildren. Neglecting the curse will affect the entire family, which can sometimes cause death (*Unstructured interview, female Sama Badjao elder*)."* The *Busung* works by striking the living people staying in the household; it can be the living spouse, children, or grandchildren.

Figure 29. Unrepaired roof in the kitchen area due to lack of budget

Source: Author, 2021

The findings show that religious beliefs, such as the Sama Badjao's ancestral worship called *Pangkat*, intersect with gender and indigeneity and, interestingly, with marital status and age, influencing their post-disaster behaviors and coping mechanisms. To those who are *Pangkat,* their beliefs about the curses of their ancestor spirits and the *Sumangat* uniquely affect women's roles and decisions after a disaster. This implies that, regardless

of colonization, Indigenous traditions and beliefs, such as the Sama Badjao, may perpetuate women's struggles through illness, restriction of their movement, and care work. Meanwhile, Christian Sama Badjao women are free from the punishment of their ancestors but may be bound to the opportunities and limitations of Christian traditions. A Christian Sama Badjao elder explained that the *Busung* is comparable to the concept of *Gaba* (divine retribution) within Christian or folk Catholicism among Cebuano speakers and the broader Bisayan-belief system. According to Amper (2015) the fear of Gaba is fervent among Christian believers when someone shows disrespect for what is considered sacred, including objects, places, and people such as priests, churches, or relics.

7.3.2 Compromised Health and Nutrition of Breastfeeding Women and Children

Aside from the vulnerability of women's health to illnesses, another highlight of this theme is the struggle for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children during emergency crises. Their nutrition was heavily compromised because the relief goods distributed were mainly instant noodles, canned foods, coffee, and rice. They exhausted available resources by drinking and feeding the toddlers with diluted coffee, am/rice water, and relying on their Indigenous knowledge to get nutrition from soup through reef gleaning or subsisting on shellfish during low tide. During the FGD, they vented out their frustrations and brought back memories of their similar struggles during the lockdown related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

> *All (simultaneously): Lack of nutrients, no sugar, no milk for the children. We mainly received rice, canned foods, and coffee.*
> *Researcher: What did the kids take when there was no milk?*
> *Participant 5: Sometimes they drank coffee, sometimes we cooked rice porridge with lots of water. Babys took the am. It was like that for a week, also during (COVID-19) lockdown. We were sad about it. We rationed the food and the fish our family members had caught.*
> *Participant 8: We also collected shellfish for soup but were restricted from doing it during the lockdown* (FGD, women).

Unlike the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sama Badjao were allowed to explore the shores for subsistence after Rai. There was no point of lockdown or staying at home for the houses were destroyed. The narratives from FGD match those observed in earlier

studies of Máñez and Pauwelussen (2016) and Stacey et al. (2017), where Bajau Laut women engage in complementary subsistence and livelihood activities through collecting small mollusks and shells closer to the shore within marine protected areas in the waters of Sabah and Kalimantan. However, in Bato, Leyte, shellfish gatherings can be a competitive alternative source of food or livelihood for the Sama Badjao women because there are also Bisaya locals who are gathering. A Sama Badjao elder expressed: *"There is scarcity now because there are also many people like you (referring to me as Bisaya) who collect shells* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao male)*."* Despite their Indigenous knowledge, Sama Badjao women in Bato were at risk of food insecurity for eating meals twice a day, compared to working men such as fishermen. The fishermen have their own separate budgeted meals apart from the family, which was included in their capital for fishing in the sea. This suggests that disasters limit women and children from accessing healthy and traditional foods while the depletion of marine resources has prevented them from getting healthy alternatives.

When I asked about their daily activities, both men and women cooked for their meals. In the morning, the Badjao fishermen cooked their own food for everyone on board of the pump boat before they departed inland in the afternoon. At the same time, women cooked meals for the remaining family members inland. Children of both genders learned to cook from their parents, especially boys. At an early age, their fathers had already trained them to fish, and many had to drop out of school. Men mostly used to cook outside, while the women cooked meals inside their houses using butane, which reflected spatial sexual restriction and subordination.

They shared that, unlike the Bisaya, the Sama Badjaos only ate meals twice a day because they could not afford three meals per day. They eat breakfast in the morning, have coffee only or paired with biscuits or bread in the afternoon, or just nap without consuming anything, then have dinner late in the afternoon or early evening:

> *We combined our lunch with dinner around 3 pm. It's different for us, Moros. It's different from yours because sometimes you eat four times. We usually eat twice a day. That's just how it is* (Semi-structured interview, 45-year-old, male Sama Badjao).

I observed that some Sama Badjaos have appropriated the word *Moros* when referring to themselves, although many have taken offence when called as such. Generally, Filipino

households consume rice meal three times a day; it is not considered a proper meal without rice. But in Sama Badjao tradition, they eat meals twice daily; the staple diet is cassava, rice, fresh fish, and shells. First-generation and a few 2nd generations of *Pangkat* do not eat meat, only cassava, vegetables, fish, and other kinds of seafood. This practice is grounded in their *Pangkat* religion and shaped by their socio-economic status. With limited options for alternative income, they spent less on food and must share within their *Kampung*.

The findings in this section are consistent with the research on Inuit women, although framed within the impacts of climate change. They experience significantly greater food insecurity relative to men, skip meals for the children, and have the least access to traditional foods or healthy alternatives, especially in households headed by female solo parents. Inuit women also struggle to access paid employment more than men to supplement traditional economies (Williams, 2018).

On the other hand, the intersecting challenges faced by Sama Badjao women and children during emergency crises highlight a persistent inequity in food security and access to traditional and nutritious foods associated with their religious beliefs, particularly when compared to men. Despite their resilience and resourcefulness, such as utilizing Indigenous knowledge for sustenance, structural vulnerabilities exacerbated by disasters, marine resource depletion, and low socio-economic income restrict their ability to achieve food security. Again, these patterns align with other Indigenous women who face similar struggles under environmental and socio-economic pressures compromising their health and well-being.

7.4 Conveying the Counter-Narrative Against Socially Constructed Identities

Decolonial resistance in the Global South manifests in various forms. It may be through constructing their identities by reaffirming their identity in relation to their own 'Self,' ethnicity, culture, and language rather than comparing themselves to the non-indigenous people. This resistance against hegemonic cultural views, more often forced or justified as 'rationale,' has colonial roots, and the cycle continues until the present (Avilés-Irahola &

Youkhana, 2024). From the feminist perspective, the work of coloniality of gender does not only deal with colonization, exploitation, and gendered oppression but also involves attempts to overcome it (Lugones, 2016). Against the overwhelming 'dehumanizing' forms of othering, such as stigmas and stereotypes, this section explored how the Sama Badjao men and women talk against dominance to recognize how they counteracted their imposed positionalities and how they were represented as 'Badjao' on the periphery.

7.4.1 Resistance through Social Isolation and Non-Participation

It is essential to distinguish the nuances between social exclusion and social isolation. In this chapter, I follow the definition of 'social isolation' as the phenomenon of non-participation of either an individual or group in a society's mainstream institutions. Meanwhile, 'social exclusion' is defined in cases in which social isolation occurs for reasons beyond the control of those subjected to it (Barry, 1998, p. iv)

In other words, social isolation is either voluntary or involuntary, which the Sama Badjao had both experienced. They resisted through isolation and non-participation against 'dehumanizing' othering. Sama Badjao women stopped attending community events such as the yearly general assembly, fiesta celebration, and others did not evacuate to the assigned evacuation center and preferred to stay in public places such as public terminals. This result is in contrast to the public opinion and the literature (Bracamonte, 2005; Macalandag, 2021; E. R. Navarro, 2015; Panaguiton, 2011) that the Sama Badjao are known for their passive behavior in dealing with conflict and injustices.

I contend that their non-participation, which would result in their isolation migration, or evasion to another place, is their form of agency as Sama Badjao. A Sama Badjao has relations and social ties that offer access to resources from their *Kampung*, either within their community or other parts of the Philippines or in Semporna. One of the daughters of an elder in the Sama Badjao community explained the instances when they resisted attending activities because of food conflict and shaming:

> *We didn't attend the general assembly last year because of an issue with the food. We felt offended when it was implied that we only attended for the snacks. My child took some, but they were reprimanded, saying snacks*

> *should only be taken after the event. They said the children had no manners. We left early and didn't attend the subsequent assemblies anymore* (Unstructured interview, 40-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

As mentioned in Chapter 7.3.2, the Sama Badjao experienced food insecurity, especially during calamities. Yet, their *Kampung* is a refuge that allows them to survive disasters by food sharing or *Magosaha*-related activities. Although I do not intend to depoliticize their situation in this scenario, this makes the community independent from the State for many years since their settlement in the Bato, Leyte, around the 1980s. Because of their integration into the LGU and incorporation of the Sama Badjao women as village health workers that started in 2005, they were compelled to the rules and regulations of the host municipality yet encouraged to practice self-determination for being recognized as Indigenous Peoples by the IPRA law of 1997. Nonetheless, due to their perceived discrimination in the form of food shaming, their non-participation in public events has become a form of resistance against being subjected by the authorities. I assert that this reflects how the Sama Badjaos take back power and exercise their decision-making through non-participation in public events, particularly the women, since they oversee their community affairs.

However, non-participation may have caused negative perceptions against them in the public domain. For instance, the Sama Badjao fishermen have elucidated for not attending events concerning them, which stirs misconception for their laziness. They argue:

> *Male participant 1: We often can't attend meetings because of our fishing livelihood. Sometimes, we can attend but it means we won't have money to buy food the next day. Most of the time, that's how the men manage. Let's put it this way, if both of us, my wife and I, go to an event, then tomorrow we won't have anything to buy rice with.*
> *Male participant 2: Like now, this Monday evening, we're going fishing again. If we catch fish, we'll just leave it at home. Around 8 or 9 in the morning, sometimes my wife wakes me up and says, "Just eat because they've already prepared the food."*
> *Female participant 4: The men rarely get enough sleep because of fishing* (FGD men and women).

I admit I had difficulty organizing men to participate in FGDs due to the nature of their occupation. They were either in other towns or sleeping during the daytime for their next overnight fishing trip. I also observed during the daytime how loud the noises from the

karaoke and music playlists in the community, not to mention the noise of children playing or crying around, combined with the noise of family members doing their day-to-day business, while the fishermen were sleeping in the *Lantay*. Sleeping under the house on a hot, sunny day was the norm in the community (Figure 30).

Figure 30. Sama Badjao fishermen sleeping during daytime in the lantay under their stilt houses

Source: Author, 2021

It could be inferred that outsiders were unfamiliar with the Badjao culture, so they may often misinterpret sleeping men in broad daylight as indolence. Heikkilä (2022) argues that non-participation through non-cooperation aims to altercate societally relevant relationships through directed non-participation or acts of denial within the social, economic, and political spheres. It includes withdrawal from social institutions and political boycotts. For the Sama Badjao men, it left them with no choice not to participate due to economic reasons. In contrast, their wives who represented them in public events are boycotting the institutions that discriminated against them due to social etiquette and food shaming. According to Scott (2009) as early as pre-colonial times, some societies evaded subordination to achieve autonomous existence and avoid being subjects to the states and their agents. This resistance came to light after the creation of independent states after World War II. This has continued until the present, but for the Indigenous peoples, it may translate into self-determination.

On the other hand, resistance through non-cooperation can sometimes result in further catastrophes that may harm the Sama Badjao because of their economic and structural vulnerabilities. For instance, some of them evacuated and camped in the public terminal instead of the designated evacuation centers during tropical depressions, especially families with the elderly. As mentioned in the previous chapter (see Chapter 6.3.1), the region was struck by typhoon Agaton four months after Rai, and many have not yet recovered. Several households residing on the shores evacuated to the public terminal whenever the weather was terrible:

> *Interviewee: We stayed in the terminal and hid between the vehicles at night. When the wind was strong, the large buses protected us as barriers. It's good there because we can stay for a few days.*
> *Researcher: How about at the elementary school?*
> *Interviewee: The school isn't always open* (Unstructured interview, 80-year-old, male Sama Badjao)

While it was confirmed that the elementary school was unavailable as an evacuation center at that time, those who lived closer to the public terminal preferred to go there because of its proximity and accessibility. Large vehicles may have protected them from the wind, but these could not provide warmth at night, which might be uncomfortable for the children and the elderly. It may reflect resilience during precarious conditions, but it uncovers the

vulnerability of the Sama Badjao with stilt houses closer or built right on the seawater, primarily the new immigrants, than those who lived in the inner community.

According to Stevenson (2019) and Heikkila (2022), there is a superficially constructed discursive subject identity that raises an essential point in the debate on cultural non-participation, and that is essentially blaming the non-participating people. Active and broad cultural participation is associated with social privileges, such as higher education and occupations at the middle and top of the hierarchy. This immediately connects non-participation with underprivileged class positions (Heikkilä, 2022). Within modern societies, the lower one's status, the greater one's activities are monitored and judged (Stevenson, 2019). Those who can employ the least power are increasingly individualized and problematized, while power becomes more anonymous. The more one possesses power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual by rituals, written accounts, or visual reproductions that mark power accounts (Foucault, 1997). It is a process that is facilitated because of the extent to which those who can exert the greatest power in any given field can control the conditions of their own criticism and maintain their own advantage and privilege. This power extends to being able to write the identities of those who can exert less power. Thus, the cultural non-participant continues to be represented by cultural professionals as a person whose choices are implicitly assumed to be overly narrow, close-minded, and prone to a stubborn and unthinking dismissal of whole categories of cultural activity. The lack of knowledge, experience, openness, and/or willingness to learn that is represented as core components of the subject identity of the cultural non-participant presents theirs as a flawed subjectivity, problematizes their agency, and describes them as people who require the input of expert mediation in the form of cultural professionals to guide their leisure time choices (Stevenson, 2019).

In the case of the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, the Christianized Sama Badjao have slowly adapted to external influences of modernity, unlike the *Pangka*t, who maintain their tradition to appease their spirit ancestors. However, several factors have kept the community from isolation rooted in dehumanizing forms of othering. For the Sama Badjao men, their non-participation is understood as laziness. But in reality, they are driven by economic reasons, as they earn enough for their daily needs from fishing or vending with no time to attend social or capability-training activities. Meanwhile, the women were

pushed to isolate themselves due to perceived discrimination from their interactions with the non-indigenous and their inability to access resources from the State. Their isolation highlights their agency within their marginalization, somehow practiced for years but interpreted as passive actions in various literature and public opinion.

7.4.2 Keeping Households and Managing Community Affairs and Traditions

Through a decolonial intersectional approach, I situated the Sama Badjao women as housekeepers into the anti-hegemonic notions of femininity. I countered this by positioning the women within the discourses of good motherhood (Danto & Anatole, 2018; Maracle et al., 2020) by being the carer and manager of the house to fill in the absence of men. This is their way of contributing to their household because they understood the sacrifices of their husbands and the dangers of spearfishing or vending in different places in the Philippines. Because men were often away, the women managed the household, financial matters, and community affairs, for example, the SBHWs who renegotiated for their rights for monetary aid. However, the community was entirely excluded from receiving shelter reconstruction materials. Compared to men, the women also have plenty of time to attend capacity-building training sponsored by the LGU and NGOs, as explained in the previous section (Chapter 7.4.1).

I would consider the Sama Badjao as an independent and resourceful Indigenous community, and every member of the *Kampung* offered support to each other. The support ranges from childcare, fetching and sharing water for drinking, cooking, or washing, lending money, sharing food or fish catch with other households, or inviting relatives to eat together in a communal way. Every individual performed a task and was greatly appreciated, whether unpaid or paid. One of the participants from the FGD explained how women helped after the typhoon:

> *We rest and help each other; we are a big family. Our big challenge is fetching and carrying the water. In the Baybayon, we have a scarcity of water. In the tabok [Across] settlement, they have plenty of water resources [from their deep well pump]. Our husbands carry the water for us, but they are usually unavailable, so we do it ourselves, our siblings or the children. If the men won't fish or not vending, they won't help us clean and wash the*

laundry since they have other work to do, repair the house, or lift heavy things (FGD women, participant 4).

Each day, while the husbands were away from fishing or vending, the women in *Baybayon* walked to the two nearest deep well pumps from their homes and filled their water containers, which required multiple trips. Yet during high tide and extreme weather events, these two deep well pumps in the *Baybayon* were often contaminated with seawater, murky mud, and garbage (Figure 31). These may result in the residents suffering from amoebiasis, stomachaches, diarrhea, gastrointestinal problems, infections, and fever, among others, and may explain the illnesses they consider as *Busung*-inflicted, as discussed in the Chapter 7.3.1.

Figure 31. Sama Badjao women fetching water in one of the nearest deep well pumps in the community, low tide (left) and high tide (right)

Source: Author, 2022

Aside from household chores, the older women engaged themselves in traditional mat weaving, dressmaking, selling food (cassava, stir-fried noodles, hot dogs, seasonal fruits, etc.), attending meetings, seminars, workshops, and other affairs outside the community. I asked them to describe their day-to-day life as a woman, especially for the *Pangkat*:

> *I weave mats, sell fruits, look for cassava, cook, wash the laundry, and fetch water. But what's laborious is processing four to five kilograms of cassava. I process the cassava for three days; I wash, peel, grind, squeeze, and pack them after cooking*[57]*. Sometimes, I just lie here in the lantay after a tiresome grinding in the afternoon. Then I put sanlonpas*[58] *because my neck hurts from bending over. After processing everything, I just sit here and sell the panggi (cassava). I am not doing it right now because I got sick and am still recovering. I am selling here (under her house in the lantay); I use the profit to buy rice and fish if they can't go to the sea. If they (relatives) have caught fish, we only have to buy rice, coffee, and bread. When it comes to the banig (traditional mat), I weave it for two months because I have so many things to do. I weave at 4:00 am as I don't have the time during the day. I go down and stroll outside and sell cassava. If I don't persevere, my grandkids ask me for money, and they would cry if I gave them nothing. My grandchildren lack food, so I have to work hard* (Semi-structured interview, 60-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

From the results, the Sama Badjao women are the catalyst for continuing their Indigenous culture and tradition, such as their colorful mats, staple food, and traditional dress. This cultural knowledge has also facilitated them to make ends meet by selling these within the community and even reaching the other Sama Badjao communities in the southern part of the Philippines. The financial support and resourcefulness of the Sama Badjao women helped the community, especially vulnerable children, thrive after calamities while waiting for the remittances of their family members who were away from *Magosaha*. As mentioned in the previous section, the women in the community were knowledgeable in every detail of their family members' lives. Hence, they represented the household during meetings, seminars, interviews, falling in line and claiming relief goods and social aid.

Those who are often in *Magohasa* are not well-oriented about the current events surrounding the community. In a semi-structured interview, a Sama Badjao fisherman shared: *"We can't stay long because of our livelihood. We fish in other places for two-three days, then go home when we catch enough. While the women who are left in the community sell something, weave [traditional] mats, or wash the laundry, but older women like my mom can't walk around. The others can't bend over their neck for long."* Although older women are limited in what they can do due to their fragile health and caregiving

[57] The end product is called *Puto* or *Pietu*, a staple to the *Pangkat* believers.
[58] A commercialized medicated patch to relieve muscle pain.

responsibilities, the Sama Badjao culture grounded on their *Pangkat* religion ensures that the elderly are well cared for and respected.

During the absence of men, the women governed the community affairs with the NGOs, LGU, and other government agencies, in coordination with the SBHWs. This finding resonates with the Indigenous coastal communities in the islands of Kihnu, Munalaid, and Ruhnu, Estonia, where the absence of men due to their fishing expedition allows women to manage the islands. The women effectively govern island affairs and are at the forefront of innovation and economic development issues (Danto & Anatole, 2018). Likewise, Maracle et al. (2020) claim that Indigenous women perform critical roles in their communities as teachers, role models, healers, and guardians of intergenerational culture. They are articulate with significant Indigenous knowledge in governance, leadership, culture, and environmental aspects.

In the case of Bato, Leyte, the appointment of the first SBHW in 2006 started the inclusion of the Sama Badjao community in public activities and services. One of the participants of the FGD recounted, *"Before, when we had no health workers who are Badjao, we don't have any activities going on in the community* (FGD women, participant 7)*."* The activities they referred to are government-funded programs related to the health, social, economic, and development of the community, such as general assembly, immunization programs, conditional cash transfer programs, and others. When they experienced strong typhoons before, they said there was no announcement to evacuate to a designated shelter or relief and rehabilitation programs. They only took refuge in their neighbors' houses, which they thought could withstand typhoons.

Unlike the claims of intersectional scholars (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Lotfata & Munenzon, 2022), where women are less likely to be represented in climate change and resiliency decision-making processes, the Sama Badjao women were included. Yet, policies are not inclusive and generally unfavorable for women and children. Hence, there is a need to critically assess policies that comprise the well-being of vulnerable groups and those that reify gendered power dynamics. The role of the Sama Badjao women as caregivers and guardians of cultural practices both empower and limit them in post-disaster settings.

During calamities, the socially prescribed roles of women amplify their vulnerability and reinforce their subordination. Among the *Pangkat* women, cultural beliefs dictate that they must not leave their homes unattended to appease the spirits, yet this exposes them to their curse, unlike the Christian Sama Badjao women. Much of their time is spent on relentless tasks like washing clothes because many are unemployed or only seasonally self-employed. Begging also serves as a common source of income. In contrast, the Sama Badjao women are responsible for being the family caregivers, managing the household, attending seminars and training, and handling essential paperwork, as the men are often away pursuing livelihood opportunities. This shows that the Sama Badjao women adapted traditional gender roles to support their families after the disaster, such as seeking informal work as health workers, mendicancy, vending food and fashion accessories in the neighborhood, or engaging in community leadership, influencing their resilience strategies. However, due to perceived discrimination that resulted in their social isolation, various cultural and development professionals perceived their non-participation as lacking knowledge, openness, or willingness to engage, framing them as needing expert guidance to make 'better' cultural choices, further marginalizing their agency and self-determination.

7.5 Defying Norms and Traditions as an Adaptation

This section analyzes the intersecting structures that influence the resilience of the Sama Badjao after a disaster such as Super Typhoon Rai. It unveils how Sama Badjao men and women resisted and adapted to traditional gender roles to support their families financially by doing *Magosaha*, converting to the dominant religion, and transforming the material composition of their traditional houses to better prepare for the subsequent weather disturbances.

7.5.1 Recognizing Women as Financial Providers in the Household

The Sama Badjao traditions and customs limit women's opportunities through behavioral and spatial restrictions to control female sensuality that justifies male dominance (Morrison, 1993). However, the decline of fish and other marine resources, together with competition from other local fishermen in Bato, Leyte, has heavily affected the socio-economic status of the Sama Badjao. Healthy Sama Badjao men spear dive to catch fish as long as they can free dive under the sea. One interviewee said: ": "*Yes, I still dive. I don't have any other source of income. I am still active, thanks God. This is where our livelihood is, the sea and in the past, too, with our parents. That's what other people say, 'Our land is the sea,' because if we move uphill, we will struggle on how to plant. Our farm is the sea* (Unstructured interview, 50-year-old, male Sama Badjao)*."* Meanwhile, those Sama Badjao men who cannot spearfish due to health reasons from the harmful effects of compressor fishing or past traumatic experiences in the sea opted to sell various accessories in the busy streets across the Philippines. Now, in their case, the sea has become the streets.

During the FGDs, I observed that the working women were vocal about their views and opinions on this theme. This could be because when bartering, trading, or selling items, a Sama Badjao should be able to negotiate with prospective buyers in Tagalog or Cebuano language. One issue that emerged from interviews and FGDs was fishing restrictions due to *Habagat* (Southwest Monsoon) and frequent typhoons. This transformed gender relations within the community and offered opportunities for women to engage in community leadership and as entrepreneurs, traders, and even *Magosaha*. During the FGD for both men and women, the women have dominated the discussion on how female Sama Badjao were allowed to work nowadays compared to many years ago:

> *Male participant 1: There are others (referring to women) who are guilt-tripping their husbands, so men have to work.*
> *Female participant 2: Before, husbands didn't like their wives making a living; they wanted the wives to be proud that their husbands provided for the family.*
> *Male participant 1: Today is different. Before, the men who were only fishermen could give their women (good) profit. But today, we can't, especially when it's hard to catch fish. Then our wives get angry if we can't give them money.*

> *Female participant 2: Not really. Today, men like that women are also working and helping each other, especially when men go fishing and find it difficult to catch. But then, we have our own money from vending* (FGD, men and women).

This discussion indicates that within a Sama Badjao family structure, a woman married to a man with traditional views of being the provider is seen as dependent by her husband, who pressures him to work. Being able to provide is a status symbol for a Sama Badjao man. The wife's community considers him a good husband and father. Although a Sama Badjao man takes pride in earning income to meet their needs, it strains their marriage and can lead to fights during tough times. Meanwhile, a Sama Badjao who views their spouse as a partner experiences less tension in their marriage and can manage during the *Habagat* season and after the typhoon, with the wife's additional income.

Toward the end of my fieldwork, I met four women who formed a group that explored the Eastern Visayas region, including Cebu, Manila, and Batangas. They challenged the traditional expectation that female Badjaos should stay home to care for their children and family members. These women, identified as lesbian, separated, widows, and single adults, traveled to various places both within and outside the region to earn money for their families, specifically for food and home repairs, traditionally carried out by men. Vending is seen as an alternative source of income to support households financially. However, the community often disapproves of an all-women's group in *Magosaha* due to the potential dangers and risks associated with walking and exploring unfamiliar streets. One of the female vendors recounted: "*If we can't rent a place, we sleep in the corners of the streets, sometimes in public terminals. When we first arrived in Hinunangan (neighboring town), we spent two nights sleeping on the street near the police station, just in case something went wrong. There were also times when we didn't have enough money to rent a room* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, female Sama Badjao)*."*

In the Sama Badjao culture, machismo is prevalent, where women are perceived as fragile and need protection from men, especially if they are alone outside their community[59]. Hence, *Magosaha* is traditionally practiced by men, whether on the streets

[E]Especially during the marriageable age of 13-18 years old

or the seas. I asked for their opinions on female vendors who go to far places and take a long time before they return home:

> *Female participant 3: Today, it's really hard. For example, when they prohibit [during Habagat or tropical depression] the men from fishing, it's essential to help each other.*
> *Female participant 1: Before, wives were not allowed to work. It would look like the husbands don't know how to make a living for the family. They [husbands] want their wives to stay at home, then they can work.*
> *Male participant 1: There are times when we fish, and there are so many of us who fish. It's not only us who fish the sea; so often, our catch is too minimal. Then, we can no longer afford our daily needs. Vending is a way for our wives to help us.*
> *Female participant 3: In the old times, people here gossiped when they discovered that the wife provided for the family. But until today, women still gossip.*
> *Male participant 3: We don't get jealous [suspecting their wives of having an illicit affair when they are away]. It's nice instead because they can help us financially. The problem is when there are kids. Men can no longer care for them when we go to the sea and when no one else in the family or relatives can care for them. But sometimes, there might be jealousy or suspicions that might happen because not everyone is the same* (FGD, men and women)

As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 6.2.1), labor or paid employment is limited to the Badjaos in Bato, Leyte and in neighboring municipalities unless they move to the bigger cities, for example, Cebu or Manila, as long as they are qualified. Hence, if the family wants to stay in Bato together with their relatives, the women's best option is to be self-employed as vendors of fashion accessories within the neighborhood and around Bato. If they do not have husbands or are single, their option to go to *Magosaha* outside the community or across the country is high. However, female Sama Badjaos who are in *Magosaha* can no longer fulfil their religious practices, especially those who converted to Born Again Christianity, where they are required to attend fellowship every Wednesday night, Saturday, and Sunday. At the same time, *Pangkat* believers have kept themselves away from their spirit ancestors' *Busung* as they linger in their house. Being single and no longer committed to any relationship, religious affiliation, or membership to any organization gave them autonomy to decide for themselves, harness their trading and entrepreneurial skills, and provide for their children's needs, again through the discourse of good motherhood and providers. A female vendor explained: *"I can't attend any*

activities because I have to sell. I cannot commit to joining any organizations, church, activities, and meetings. I prefer to sell because I have to earn money (Semi-structured interview, 35-year-old, female Sama Badjao).*"*

For women in *Magosaha*, their expedition lasted for a shorter period than men. They have no regular rest day, unlike the fishermen who enjoy their break every Sunday. Unlike male vendors, the women who returned to the community find quality time to be with their kids and were still occupied by their motherly or carework duties:

> *We stay here with our family for three to five days. But I felt like I couldn't rest. I wash the laundry with my siblings and mother because my clothes are here. I fetch water, wash the dishes, and sweep the trash underneath the house. I have two children, and we are still close. Sometimes they call me to say I miss you, so please come home. We don't stay long afar, around seven to ten days. Also, when they are sick, and sometimes when my other child gets admitted to the hospital, I can't work. I am still thankful because my three siblings helped me. All of us in the family help each other. That's also the reason why we have a huge laundry. We started to wash in the morning until noon, then rest outside. At three in the afternoon, we go to the market to buy food to cook* (Semi-structured interview, 35-year-old, female Sama Badjao).

Her family comprises 14 members: Her two children, her mother, and two adult siblings' families. Before, when she was a full-time housewife, she only stayed at home caring for their children, doing housework, and waiting for the income of his husband. Everything changed when her husband left, and she started vending. With her help and her mother's mendicancy, they were able to gradually repair their house immediately, two months after Rai (Figure 32). Their house featured colored roofing materials rather than those typically associated with Mboh's tradition of simplicity using locally sourced materials. It remained unfinished with reused plywood attached as wall panels.

Single female parents who do *Magosaha* face the challenge of being away from their children during their formative years. This separation is a sacrifice they made to send remittances, not only to support their children but also to assist their *Kampung* after disasters such as Rai or during difficult times, such as bad weather and the monsoon season, when fishing is prohibited. Meanwhile, Sama Badjao women who have moved past their marriageable years can navigate traditional expectations and contribute economically to the family. At the same time, both older and widows and even those who are still married

females face compounded health and caregiving burdens, especially the *Pangkat* believers who might be vulnerable from their spirit ancestors or deceased husbands' *Busung*. Older female also becomes carers to their grandchildren, who are left by their own adult children for *Magosaha*.

These findings agree with study of Van Aelst & Holvoet (2016) in Tanzania, where women who have less access to resources to cope with climate-induced disasters such as drought for being widowed and divorce have instead found more excellent opportunities to diversify their income by utilizing their skills for those who were able to reach secondary education for labor or informal work than younger married or older widowed females.

Figure 32. Renovated house with galvanized iron sheets

Source: Author, 2022

7.5.2 Conversion to Christianity to improve Families and Being

This sub-section explores how religious conversion intersects with the gender and identity of the Sama Badjao as they navigated the public domain and faced disasters. This change can be interpreted as an adaptation strategy yet could cause tension within traditional

frameworks, especially for elders and their other family members who are tied to their ancestral beliefs. The Sama Badjaos have their own way of reconstructing their identities with the changing social, economic, and political conditions (Maglana, 2016). Researchers have noticed that as the Sama Badjao dwell inland, they are more Islamized or Christianized (Maglana, 2016; Nimmo, 2001), although it does not move their social mobility upward in mainstream society. Interestingly, converting to the host community's dominant religion, e.g., Christianity, is valuable in reestablishing their ethnic identity to survive. Their new religion eventually helped them improve their sense of self-dignity and self-identification not only as 'Christian Badjao' but as human beings (Aoyama, 2014). For the BAC members, attending the mass is a way of experiencing the sacredness of the Holy Spirit. During the FGD, they explained how they felt:

> *Female Participant 1: I rarely go to the Catholic Church. But what I like about Born Again [Christianity] is their seriousness during mass; we cry and can express our feelings.*
> *Female Participant 2: We felt the Holy Spirit* (FGD, women).

For the female Sama Badjao, their membership in BAC was a way to improve the well-being of their family and themselves. This offered them a social bond within their church, strongly connected to international donors, and supported the reconstruction of the *Goodjao* church and its members after the super typhoon. Aside from this, converting to BAC ended the efficacy of *Busung* towards them, which their husbands may have indirectly caused, family members' negative behavior, and the destruction of their houses from extreme weather. BAC members no longer believe in the rituals and the *Busung* brought by the spirit ancestors. For them, it also offered the opportunity to repent from their sins, especially the husbands, and abide by their strict doctrine of being a good Christian. A female Christian Sama Badjao narrated:

> *I've attended mass in the Born-Again Christian Church since I had children. I went to this church because my husband was a troublemaker before. He was a drunkard when he was a Pangkat before, too. I had a kid who went to church at that time. Then, he shared the words of God with us. He always talked to his father. At first, it didn't work, but he constantly prayed to him. Then, we eventually got convinced. Then, my husband got abdominal pain because of drinking alcohol excessively. So, my son talked to us to go to the church. I was thankful because of the enormous changes to us. Before, my family was always troubled by my husband's drinking habits. My greatest disappointment was when he always provoked to fight*

> *my neighbor, who was part of our family. Now, thanks to God, we are living peacefully. I attend the mass with my children, but if my mother performs rituals related to Pangkat, I give money but won't participate anymore (FGD women, participant 6).*

The participants from the FGD elucidated that they experienced conflict not because of religious differences but due to usual misunderstandings within a big family, such as gambling, vices, gossips, envy, trash management under their stilt houses, and other things. BAC members negotiated and paid their respect for their elders and their tradition by offering money or items needed for the ritual in lieu of their participation.

Not until August 2022, I observe how a tacit intergenerational conflict within the Kampung due to religious differences happened. When Trini's daughter was sick from recurring fever and vomited. They had to confine her to the hospital for a few days. After getting discharged from the hospital, they performed *Pagsumangat* to appease their spirit ancestors despite her adult daughter's disapproval. Her daughter is a BAC member and no longer conforms to *Pangkat* rituals. Their elders are *Pangkat,* while Trini is Roman Catholic and continues participating in *Pangkat* activities. Trini explained:

> *I scolded my younger [adult] sibling and daughter. They no longer participate and eat whenever we have rituals. They no longer eat our offerings to the spirits because, for them, it's forbidden to join any rituals. That's where I get mad at them, and I have to explain the implications of their actions* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 1).

Trini admitted that she is a Roman Catholic and remains upholding the *Pangkat* traditions and rituals. Due to her family's religious diversity, she participated in religious activities related to Roman Catholic, *Pangkat*, and BAC. But she believed the spirits were angry because they did not care for their elder uncle, whose house was still destroyed five months after Super Typhoon Rai. Together with her adult siblings and cousins, they contributed to raising funds to repair their uncle's house. Figure 33 shows the gradual reconstruction of his home until it was finished.

Figure 33. Damaged house (left) and after the repair (right)

Source: Author, 2022

At present, the Sama Badjao family dynamics is complicated by the growing influence of strict Christian doctrine in the community within the 2nd and 3rd generation. I assume that this may have caused the end of the celebration of the *PagMboh* ritual, which was supposed to be a yearly event in the community, and eventually, the decline of other rituals performed by *Pangkat* to honor their ancestors. Nevertheless, these findings agree with Jumala (2018) that these rituals not only promote social cohesion and strengthen kinship ties among the Sama Badjao but also memorialize their ancestors. The findings further suggest that the *Pangkat* belief system provides them with the capacity to recover during disasters and against the vagaries of nature, especially the sea. However, the impending threat due to its perceived backwardness or being 'unbiblical' among both the Christian Sama Badjao and non-indigenous residents remains an apparent marginalization of the *Pangkat* religion, while giving rise to *'Goodjao'* identity. Undeniably, the Christian Sama Badjao have found their identity and sense of belonging and external support during calamities through their church ties.

During FGDs and unstructured interviews, I asked what it means to be a *Goodjao* as an identity. For them, it was their own way of transforming the word 'Badjao' as how the outsiders have transformed their name from Sama to Badjao. Outsiders have been calling them Badjao, which has a negative connotation from the word 'Bad.' Although for them, Badjao does not mean anything, Sandra clarified: *"The name Badjao has no meaning to us. It's just the name people have been calling us. But they give a bad meaning to it because it starts with 'Bad', which means bad to them. The word 'jao' doesn't also make sense* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 4)*."* The *Goodjao* Church in Bato, Leyte, along with the Sama Badjao followers who identify as *Goodjao*, serves as resistance and adaptation against the dehumanizing stigmas they were portrayed into. On the one hand, the Sama Badjao in Batangas, south of the Manila capital, has also experienced the fluidity of identity through conversion to Christian Protestantism and integration into the urban lifestyle, which describes the *Goodjao* identity. *Goodjao* challenges the notion of permanent labels based on self-designation, language, or religion that is dynamic and subject to reinterpretation *(Maglana, 2016).*

7.5.3 Bouncing Better Through Dwelling Transformations

Three months after Rai, there was a noticeable adaptation among a few stilt houses from increasing high tide and severe weather events. I highlight that these transformations were not imposed on the Sama Badjao but were shaped by their vulnerability, precarious environment because of climate change, income, and exposure to a land-based lifestyle. Unfortunately, natural barriers like mangroves against weather disturbances and flooding have dwindled. In Western Leyte, Philippines, mangrove resources have declined due to massive damage from the super-typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Aside from that, in peri-urban municipalities like Bato, Leyte, several mangrove trees were cut down for livelihood, as well as encroached for residential and/or business enterprise(s) with the expansion of the town.

In the Sama Badjao community in Bato, Leyte, eight homeowners have changed the material of their houses from bamboo to concrete pillars and from nipa roofs to galvanized iron sheets. Bert revealed that they got the idea of upgrading their pillars to concrete from their Bisaya neighbors. The Sama Badjao considered it a durable foundation for their house. At the same time, he perceived that it was more economical to use concrete materials than bamboo slabs because concrete would not deteriorate quickly if exposed to saltwater during high tides. "*These bamboo slabs get damaged easily. When buried underneath the sand, they wear off after a few months, and you must replace them because they will rot* (Unstructured interview, Sama Badjao informant 3)*."*

On the other hand, one of the Sama Badjao interviewees whose stilt house was close to the sea contended that matured bamboo, compared to cheaper immature ones, would last longer, around one to two years. Indeed, fully matured bamboo timbers are stronger, denser, more durable and less prone to insect attack when harvested than immature ones (Department of Agriculture, 2021). Bamboo advocates believe that the durability of bamboo is equally the same as the strength of steel. It can last longer if properly treated before being used as materials to build houses or the *Bahay Kubo*, and other cottages. The proper treatment of bamboo can help strengthen its lifespan, quality, and durability of bamboo. Using bamboo for building homes and other structures has been part of Filipino culture through myths, various traditions, and everyday life (Canet, 2023). However, in the end, the Sama Badjao interviewee and her husband resorted to concrete pillars (Figure 34) to test if they could withstand super typhoons compared to their old stilt house, washed away by Rai.

Some Sama Badjao households resorted to lending money, selling their pump boats, or pawning their gold jewelry to repair their houses immediately. A development officer revealed that the community has unique perspectives on basic needs. He perceived that the community has middle-income earners who are unwilling to spend on what is considered basic needs, such as water connection, private toilets, etc. But then, they habitually imitate what works best with their neighbors or relatives who adapted to their present conditions. They observed first, and once convinced it was effective, they would consider spending money on it until it became a practice.

Figure 34. An unfinished stilt house with concrete pillars

Source: Author, 2022

One of the Sama Badjao interviewees noticed changes in the community after Rai:

> *Nowadays, many of us use galvanized irons and marine plywood. For those who can afford it, like my brother, who cemented the stilts in his house, that means he has the money to do it as much as possible to cement everything. But if you don't have the money like us, then we stick to the materials we always use* (Semi-structured interview, 34-year-old, female Sama Badjao*).*

Undeniably, traditional stilt houses are more economical in the Philippines than houses made of concrete materials. For the Sama Badjao, known to move to other places in a year or two, their houses also last the same way, using organic materials. Integrating concrete materials could be a sign of commitment to a fully sedentary lifestyle by investing in durable housing within a land they never owned, which might not be economical in the long run. Their position as 'outsiders' socially and spatially signifies their historical marginalization, exacerbated after Rai. Yet, this suggests that there is also a possibility of material transformation of the Sama Badjao stilt houses in Bato, Leyte, in the future, as

they adapt to the changing climate should they continue living on the shorelines. In a similar case in Indonesia, Amelia et al. (2016) explained the Bajo's changing lifestyle from nomadism to sedentary for different reasons, and that is learning to adjust their lifestyle to their present condition, while living in the middle of the sea. The Bajos lived in one area for some years and started changing their house material by obtaining a more durable foundation by stockpiling dead corals under the stilts. The only difference with the Sama Badjaos in Bato, Leyte is that they live on the shores, surrounded by non-indigenous peoples who reside a little farther from the seawater and many who own semi- and concrete houses.

The non-indigenous people perceived the Sama Badjao stilt houses as fragile, reflecting their economic status, unbeknown to their deep ties to their identity and cultural survival. The drawback of material changes in their housing, created conflict between the household owners, the elders, and their parents, who are *Pangkat* believers, because of the presence of their spirit ancestors and the curse they could inflict. According to their belief, a Sama Badjao stilt house should be based on the Sama Badjao's custom, without partitions or windows. It should be made of organic materials such as nipa, bamboo, plywood, and lumber. Bottignolo (1999) writes that the spirit of the dead lingers where the person once at home, among familiar places, things, and people. Once it becomes peaceful and decides to visit relatives, they have no reason to do harm or strike them with sickness. Kinship ties linger. For the same reason, Bottignolo (1999) further describes that *Mboh* loves tradition and wants respect for the old. He does not like change or novelty and loves the old-fashioned ways.

This translates to respect for the Sama Badjao traditional way of living, ensuring the sustainability of their lifestyle by placing the responsibility and duties not only on the homeowners (elders) but also on their adult children, even if they have their own families and their house to rebuild after the typhoon. Previous research by Wilkinson (2017) and Gonzaga et al. (2022) pointed out that faith could help build resilience after a disaster. For instance, the reconstruction of physical components in the Sama Badjao community, like rebuilding their elders' houses, was considered essential for pleasing their ancestors and ensuring the survival of their traditions in the next generation. As a form of psychological adaptation, faith gives them a positive attitude to act responsibly after the disaster and

oblige them to help their kin. As Bottignolo (1999, p. 121) highlights, “These spirits are keen on tradition because it guarantees survival.”

Based on their elders, their adult children must prioritize rebuilding their parents’ home. The person who always stays at home where the spirit can see often would get the illness who were frequently women.

See et al. (2024) argue about concrete houses from their four case studies in Asia-Pacific not only as an infrastructure but also as a metaphor for the rigidity and persistence of mainstream approaches to adaptation that rely on Eurocentric knowledge systems. They warn that adaptation strategies that depend on Eurocentric and modernist rationalities tend to favor concrete infrastructures and concrete forms of knowing. These do not work well with the current uncertainties of future climate change impacts. They suggest asking what type of knowledge is privileged in dealing with climate change is helpful. How does one understand legitimate knowledge in relation to social categories and power relations? Smith (2012) emphasizes the significance of carrying, sharing, and protecting Indigenous and community-held knowledge. This is because Western institution, with their Eurocentric way of knowing, has been appropriating Indigenous communities through ‘discovering’ their Indigenous knowledge for the institution's own advantage.

The Sama Badjao are a remarkably adaptable community. They manifest the variations and inequities of a distinctively sea-oriented form of transnational modernity (Sather, 2024). Yet, in the post-disaster recovery stage, being an Indigenous, former sea nomadic people situates them differently from non-indigenous peoples in terms of historical marginalization and access to resources. Hence, the Sama Badjao has been left without a choice but to adapt to survive where extreme weather has become frequent. Their adaptations are shaped by economic status, interactions with non-indigenous peoples, vulnerability to climate change, and land-tenure insecurity. Their lived experiences challenge dominant adaptation narratives rooted in Eurocentric perspectives. The community’s adaption of concrete materials reflects a negotiation between traditional practices and external influences from their non-indigenous neighbors. However, the Sama Badjao women are more affected by the consequence of their spirit ancestors than men when traditional beliefs are defied. Indigenous feminist literature indicates inequalities between Indigenous men and women (Dhillon, 2020; Méndez, 2020), yet other scholars

believe its link to colonialism resulting in Indigenous women being oppressed by the intersecting gender and Indigenous identities (Bouteldja, 2014; Olsen, 2018).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I scrutinized the intersecting factors that play a role in the recovery of the Sama Badjao community after a super typhoon. Although it is not my intention to romanticize the resiliency of the Sama people, it has been proven in past disasters how they recovered without or little external help. Nevertheless, the cycle of vulnerability against catastrophes continues while living at the periphery of the urban and peri-urban areas in the Philippines. The Sama Badjao community has been subjected to structural discrimination and marginalization shaped by gender, indigeneity, and religion. Potential emerging aspects are socio-economic status, age, and marital status. This historical context has created a foundation of vulnerability exacerbated by the extreme weather due to their exposure to the sea; by living on the shores. Despite the prevalent stigmas and stereotypes, the Sama Badjao community resisted to counter the dominant narratives against them and asserted their rights and identities. The absence of men due to *Magosaha* has provided the women the opportunity to take charge family matters, community relations, and guardians of their traditions. The community resisted perceived injustices and dehumanizing stigmas through social isolation and non-participation, often interpreted in the literature and by non-indigenous peoples as passive behavior. The study highlights how intersectional identities for female Pangkat Sama Badjao have created unique challenges, such as Busung and burden of care work after a disaster. These inequalities influenced their access to resources and relief efforts in the aftermath of Rai and exacerbated their marginalization, as well as their Indigenous knowledge.

Understanding how intersecting forms of discrimination contribute to the experiences of marginalized groups during disasters is essential for creating effective and equitable disaster response strategies. Extreme weather events such as Super-Typhoon Rai not only impact communities on a surface level but also intensify pre-existing social inequalities and discrimination. The community's resistance efforts demonstrate that marginalized groups actively work to redefine their 'Self' identity as Sama or Goodjao and resist structural discrimination.

Intersectionality analysis has the potential to address the specific needs of the Sama Badjao women and other vulnerable groups in the community, such as the pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, widows, single parents, the elderly, and children. Intersectional policies may consider indigeneity, gender, religion, and other factors to improve access to aid, health support, and livelihood programs after disasters. The findings suggest specific intersectional solutions for the marginalized groups within the Sama Badjao, such as creating disaster response policies that respect cultural practices and traditions and providing alternative livelihood programs for the fishermen and women left in the community and the youth facing heightened vulnerabilities. This might possibly be effectuated by including representatives from the Sama Badjao, not only women and the SBHWs but also men representing various groups in the community such as fishermen, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, youth, pump boat makers, vendors, elderlies, and others, with possible remuneration to increase their participation. Moreover, the LGU should ensure that the perspectives of these groups and representatives are included in the planning and decision-making processes.

There is also a need to increase public awareness and education about Indigenous rights and culture to fight stigma and encourage a more inclusive society. This can be reinforced within the educational system, focusing on the histories and cultures of the Sama Badjao and other Indigenous communities in the Philippines and conducting public awareness campaigns about Indigenous people's rights. In collaboration with the LGU, NCIP, and active NGOs in the community, there is a need to strengthen the legal frameworks and protections for Indigenous communities, including measures for safeguarding their land tenure, culture, tradition, and rights. Lastly, it is vital to support and fund Indigenous-led initiatives that empower Indigenous groups to take charge of their own development and resilience-building efforts. The results of this chapter highlight the importance of protecting and integrating Indigenous practices, such as sustainable bamboo use, rather than completely replacing them with a modernist approach. This may uphold the decolonial approach and emphasize the importance of agency for the Sama Badjao and other marginalized communities in the Philippines.

Chapter 8 Summary and Outlook

8.1 Key Findings and Policy Implications

This chapter summarizes the study's main findings and discusses the policy implications. The main objective is to examine the post-disaster experiences of the Sama Badjao Indigenous community from extreme weather events such as Super Typhoon Rai. This thesis framed disasters as the combination of political, social, economic, and environmental elements that affect the lives of various groups of people. I conceptualized a framework that elucidates the pre-existing othering of an Indigenous community and how disasters amplify their marginalization. By applying the concepts of structural discrimination and intersectionality theory, I explained how othering manifests due to the compounding forms of discrimination against the Sama Badjao, how Super Typhoon Rai exacerbated their marginalization, and how they take charge of their recovery. Within this framework, I analyzed the power dynamics involved in integrating Indigenous communities into the public domain and offered insights for development implementation programs and policy-making processes.

Guided by the central research question: How does the semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao community navigate the aftermath of extreme weather? The study concluded that the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events have aggravated the historical marginalization and vulnerability of the Sama Badjao. Using decolonial and intersectional frameworks, the Sama Badjao's post-disaster recovery is shaped by othering embedded in disaster governance. Structural discrimination within recovery programs systematically excludes the community from aid and shelter reconstruction materials despite losing their homes and alternative livelihoods, with female ancestral worshippers and children experiencing the most severe impacts of Super Typhoon Rai. They were often excluded from shelter reconstruction assistance because most aid programs assume land-based and permanent households. Their mobility, maritime livelihoods, and lack of formal

land tenure made them invisible in program criteria, systematically privileging settled populations while marginalizing the Sama Badjao.

However, the othering that resulted in inequalities against Indigenous communities was pre-existing and inherent within the modernizing postcolonial Philippines. This compromised the Sama Badjao's well-being and access to resources because they lacked representation in mainstream society. The structural discrimination and marginalization of the Sama Badjao were shaped by various intersecting categories such as gender, indigeneity, and religion. This historical context has created a foundation of disproportionate vulnerability to women, single parents, widows, children, and elders.

In the next paragraph, I present the key findings addressing the study's research questions. First, I explain the impact of Rai on the Sama Badjao community by exploring their pre-, during-, and post-disaster experiences. Second, I expound on the structural discrimination experienced by the Indigenous community due to non-inclusive government disaster recovery programs. Third, I demonstrate the intersecting factors that play a role in the recovery capacity of the community after the super typhoon. Lastly, I highlight the study's policy recommendations.

To answer the first sub-research question: How did Rai impact the Sama Badjao (before, during, and after the super typhoon)? The Sama Badjao were always well-prepared even before Rai has landed, given their exposure to monsoons and other weather disturbances by living on the shore. The community has well-defined gender roles and complements each other's responsibilities during calamities. Women cared for their dependent family members, and the men secured their houses and material properties. They were aware of the basic DRR practices led by the all-women SBHWs but unaware of Rai's strength and path due to residents comparing it with Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, thinking it would not massively hit Bato, Leyte. Some of them delayed their evacuation while family members with children and elderly moved early in the morning, farther from the shore. Those who stayed in baybayon relocated to their Bisaya neighbors since the majority (140 out of 156 houses) of the Sama Badjao's stilt houses were destroyed.

Kinship ties proved to be a valuable factor in their recovery. Their relatives provided quick relief to households who had totally lost their homes by offering temporary shelter, sharing food, and other resources. Due to the threat of displacement, they

immediately rebuilt makeshift stilt houses to reclaim their space on the coast and continue thriving in Bato, Leyte. Nonetheless, their recovery was longer since almost everyone in the community was affected, and their primary source of livelihood, fishing, was not viable.

The second sub-research question is the following: How did government relief programs address semi-sedentarized Sama Badjao after Rai? Findings reveal that the community experienced othering through structural discrimination, resulting in exclusion within the disaster recovery and rehabilitation programs. It involved misrepresenting Sama Badjao traditional practices and Pangkat religion (ancestral worshipping), portraying them as welfare-dependent, enforcing non-inclusive DRRM laws and bureaucratic systems, underrepresenting them in local government, and threatening them with displacement.

The traditional practice of Magosaha has been misinterpreted due to the colonial practices of settling nomadic peoples and subjugating Indigenous communities through paternalistic interventions. Magosaha is the Sama Badjao's means of seeking livelihood and subsistence in the sea, extended to land-based traveling for a living via vending and trading. The failure to address the cultural and socio-economic complexities of the Sama Badjao's lifestyle has led to their further exclusion and underrepresentation in recovery and rehabilitation processes. The Sama Badjao, as one of the marginalized groups in society (sub-altern), lacked the platform to voice their concerns and influence policy decisions. On the other hand, their social location not just in the municipal DRRM program but within the broader structures of local governance are slowly changing with the leadership exemplified by SBHWs. Nonetheless, it would be a long way of renegotiation and mutual trust building for disaster relief programs inadequately addressed their traditional practices and needs tied to their Pangkat religious practices. Their identity continued to be misconstrued as Moros by policymakers and social and development officers as indicated on pertinent government documents echoed by public narratives. Due to land-tenure insecurity, they were threatened by displacement whenever extreme weather swept away their houses. This exacerbated their marginalization and perpetuated a cycle of vulnerability as they continue to live in the shores.

The last sub-research question inquires: What role did gender, indigeneity, and religion play in the recovery capacity of Sama Badjao after Rai? The Sama Badjao community has long been subjected to a subordinate position. This has resulted in negative

stereotypes such as Moros, people with no religion and consistently associated with food and snacks, hugaw (dirty), Moros, baho (stinky), mangayo(ay) (mendicant), samokan (annoying), and stigmas such as people with poor hygiene and sanitation, messing and polluting the environment, and out of this world (Outsiders). These stigmas and stereotypes have been prevalent since colonial times yet amplified during disasters, for they were often seen in public differently (visually and ethnolinguistically).

In disaster recovery, being an Indigenous female sea-oriented person places them in a unique situation different from a non-indigenous person. The study highlights how a pangkat female Sama Badjao experienced disaster differently from other groups (e.g., Christian female Sama Badjao, Sama Badjao men, or the non-indigenous population) and how they faced and overcame their day-to-day struggles after a disaster. For example, Pangkat women were vulnerable to illness due to their failure to give comfort to their elders because of the damages they incurred from Super Typhoon Rai. Meanwhile, Christian women were free from the punishment of their ancestors since they no longer believed in the *Busung* or curse. Regardless, the vulnerability of children, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers increased due to untailored relief goods (instant and canned foods) compromising their health and nutrition.

Despite these struggles and stigmas, the Sama Badjao community resisted the dominant narratives against them and asserted their rights and identities. From a decolonial perspective, the Sama Badjao have their own way of challenging the representation as 'Badjao' on the periphery. Women, often perceived as beggars and unemployed, are instead positioned as homekeepers and caregivers for the family members left behind. Although women could not traditionally become a *Panlima* or chieftain, the absence of men in *Magasoha* allowed them to manage familial or community affairs and act as guardians of their traditions. They resisted perceived injustices and dehumanizing stigmas through social isolation and non-participation, often interpreted in the literature and by non-indigenous peoples as passive behavior. Instead, these forms of social distancing underscored their self-determination against Otherness. They adapted to mitigate any risks in the future, and their strategies are shaped by socio-economic status, marital status, age, interactions with non-indigenous peoples, vulnerability to climate change, and land-tenure insecurity. Few women practiced *Magosaha* despite the risks of traveling unfamiliar

streets. Others have found it through Christian conversion, while some households have done it through dwelling transformation using concrete materials. This somehow created conflict between intergenerational family members in a single household. More often, Pangkat women get the blame for the oversight of their spirit ancestors, who might inflict them with Busung for defying their traditions of simplicity.

Drawing from the findings, this project contributes to the literature by enriching our understanding of inclusive disaster governance and Indigenous issues through a decolonial and intersectional lens. First, it engages with the emerging discourse of the applicability of intersectionality theory, demonstrating that even in a homogeneous community, an intersectional approach to research may uncover internal inequality and diversity disadvantaging specific groups. Second, the experiences of the Sama Badjao people redefine the concepts of disaster, DRR, vulnerability, and resilience by examining their socio-cultural conditions. DRR goes beyond minimizing or mitigating exposure and vulnerability to hazards. It involves recognizing the structural discrimination they experience, such as land-tenure insecurity, poor access to services and resources, inadequate waste management, high unemployment rate, lack of alternative livelihoods, fishing restrictions, and the practice of illegal fishing methods (such as compressor fishing).

Their vulnerability arises from intersectional and historical marginalization, as they are perceived as 'outsiders' due to their sea mobility as *Sama Dilaut* (Sama of the sea), at present in the urban streets. As many moved to the littoral areas, their traditional stilt houses in coastal settlements, without legal rights, further increase their vulnerability to extreme weather events (e.g., storm surges, extreme winds, super typhoons) and place left-behind women and children in a more disadvantaged situation after a disaster. Furthermore, their resilience and Indigenous marine knowledge are often undervalued in mainstream DRR and adaptation frameworks, which equate these concepts with land-based and formal/scientific knowledge systems. For the Sama Badjao in Bato, Leyte, resilience encompasses a range of interrelated cultural and practical adaptation mechanisms that include mobility when fishing is not feasible, dwelling on traditional stilt houses, deep connection with ancestral/spiritual and marine knowledge, and strong kinship ties that foster communal aid in times of disaster.

From these insights, the Sama Badjao may form a council or community-based organization to represent various actors in the community, including the *Panlima*, elders, women, vendors, fisherfolk, and youth leaders. This organization can serve as a platform for the community to articulate their needs and long-term concerns, such as land-tenure security, waste disposal, and employment concerns, as well as protecting their Indigenous traditions. The LGU and NGOs can leverage the council by offering continuous capacity building and leadership training of the Sama Badjao health workers since they already have connections outside their community, not to mention the trust and respect they gained from the Sama Badjao constituents. This may provide avenues for locally- or Indigenous-led projects or programs focusing on disaster preparedness, coastal and marine conservation, cultural preservation, and self-determination that respect their sea-oriented traditions, spiritual beliefs, and adaptive practices.

The Sama Badjao experiences after Rai denote the need for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to disaster management and recovery. Although they are well-prepared for extreme weather events, their Indigenous knowledge could not predict the intensity and path of the typhoons. Hence, the information from the barangay council should be communicated clearly through its signal warning, pathway, and other vital details instead of only comparing them with previous super typhoons such as Haiyan. This essential information may be translated into the Sinama language and relayed through the Sama Badjao health workers to avoid miscommunication.

Moreover, the increased *Magosaha* activity among men in the streets and a few women implies their exclusion from receiving shelter reconstruction materials and livelihood initiatives. Hence, the LGU and humanitarian bodies should not consider the Sama Badjao as passive individuals but as partners in decision-making, contributing to conceptualizing and implementing programs that address sustainable alternative livelihoods, equitable resource allocation, and gender-specific vulnerabilities.

Relief programs should be tailored to support the Sama Badjao based on factors such as indigeneity, religion, gender, and other factors instead of the usual one-size-fits-all. Aid distribution may consider intersecting identities to reach the most affected individuals, such as the elderly, children, and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. Including marginalized groups in the planning process can ensure their unique needs and

perspectives are considered, leading to more effective and equitable disaster response strategies. This may also apply to other non-indigenous communities. Thus, the government agencies may consider implementing measures that require disaster response plans to undergo a review process for inclusivity, ensuring that plans address the specific needs of various groups in a community. Measures could include implementing targeted health interventions for elders, mothers, and children to improve nutrition and overall well-being. Their compromised health and nutrition status during and after disasters requires the immediate attention of the authorities.

8.2 Research Recommendations

This study encourages critical reflection on DRRM, particularly how power dynamics shape decision-making and access to resources during recovery and rehabilitation after a disaster. For the Sama Badjao, DRRM is not confined to state policy; their knowledge and resilience are deeply rooted in relationships with nature, especially the sea, the sun, their kin, spirits, ancestors, and traditions. To foster resilience, DRRM models must respect and integrate these perspectives. The experiences of the Sama Badjao challenge conventional, often Western-centric, disaster governance structures. These can provide valuable insights into how inclusive models promote resilience, moving beyond technocratic and Eurocentric approaches, which often disregard the voices of communities in the Global South.

To build resilient and sustainable communities, it is essential that development is not solely dictated by top-down policies or 'intellectual' discourse. Resilience must be grounded in listening to those with lived experiences, recognizing that their knowledge is vital for creating inclusive DRRM programs. Given the limitations of this study, as discussed in Chapter 4.6, I recommend expanding this research to other Sama Badjao communities across the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and other sea-oriented peoples (*Moken/Moklen and Orang Laut*) in Southeast Asia. Additionally, other intersecting factors such as socio-economic status, age, and marital status have proven to influence the marginalization of the Sama Badjao, especially the women, pregnant and breastfeeding

mothers, single parents, children, widows, and elderly after disasters, and should be further explored.

Disasters are not limited to extreme weather events; other catastrophic occurrences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, sea-level rise, flooding, storm surges, and other climatic stressors, also demand an investigation using political ecology lens. Further research on the Goodjao as the Christian Sama Badjao identity as their own 'Self' might be an interesting investigation, along with documentation of the Indigenous disaster risk reduction practices and traditional warning systems of the Sama Badjao. It is also worthwhile to explore the adaptation strategy of the Indigenous peoples as part of decolonizing the scholarship of adaptation strategy in climate change, calling for a broader, more inclusive approach that centers the voices and knowledge of marginalized communities. Other future research may also use a political economy lens to investigate how power over coastal land, marine resources, and aid distribution structure Sama Badjao marginalization in post-disaster recovery.

Glossary

Preliminary remark
The following is a list of Filipino (National Philippine language), Cebuano, and Sinama words used in this research. These terms reflect the cultural characteristics of the linguistically multifaceted Sama Badjao community and the municipality of Bato, Leyte. The meanings and definitions provided below aim to contextualize how the study utilized these terms and how these languages contribute to the interpretation of findings.

Amihan: The northeast monsoon. The cool and dry northeast wind from Siberia and China blows down to Southeast Asia. This monsoon commonly occurs from October to late March, although it might vary yearly. This season is characterized by slight to moderate rainfall and a prevailing cold wind that affects the eastern portion of the Philippines.

Bahay Kubo: A traditional Filipino stilt house or hut made of local materials found in nature, such as bamboo, wood timber, nipa, cogon grass, and coconut fronds.

Bajau [Laut]: The exonym of Sama/Sinama-speaking people living in Malaysia.

Bajo: The exonym of Sama/Sinama-speaking people living in Indonesia.

Barangay: It is also abbreviated as Brgy. The smallest political unit in the Philippines and is analogous to villages, suburbs, districts, or neighborhoods.

Bato, Leyte: The municipality where Barangay Dolho is located.

Baul: The sacred wooden chest where Mboh elders and Pangkat followers pray, perform rituals, and place their essential belongings.

Baybayon: It means seashore, where most Sama Badjao households' dwell.

Bisaya: It is also spelled as Bisayan or Visaya[n]. The Philippine ethnolinguistic group native to the Visayas and a significant portion of Mindanao. The host community and I are Bisaya.

Brgy. Captain: It is synonymous to Brgy. Kapitan, Brgy. Chieftain, Brgy. Chairperson, or Punong Barangay. The Brgy. Captain assumes the role of the chief executive officer of the barangay. They implement policies and programs that directly impact the lives of the residents, ensuring peace and order, and the overall welfare of the community members.

Brgy. Councilors: It is also called Kagawad or Konsehal. They are elected government officials who are members of the Sangguniang Barangay (Barangay Council) of a particular barangay.

Brgy. Dolho: The name of the host barangay where the Sama Badjao community resides.

Cebuano: The primary language spoken in the municipality of Bato, while it is the second language spoken by the Sama Badjaos.

Busung: The Sinama translation of the Bisaya word gaba. The phenomenon of experiencing trouble or misfortune because of offense given to elders, supernatural beings, or spirit ancestors, especially by failing to abide by the required manners and traditions.

CR: The abbreviation for comfort room; a term synonymous with rest room.

Eastern Visayas: The administrative region in the Philippines is designated as Region VIII. It consists of three main islands: Samar, Leyte, and Biliran. The research site where the municipality of Bato is located is in the Island province of Leyte.

Gaba: Bisaya word that means divine retribution caused by misbehavior or wrongdoings.

Goodjao: The socially constructed or exonym of Christian Sama Badjao.

Habagat: The southwest monsoon. During this season, the high-pressure area is on the Australian continent, and the low-pressure area is in North China, Mongolia, and Siberia. The southwest monsoon affects the western Philippines from May to September and may vary yearly. The southwest wind is characterized by frequent heavy rainfall and humid weather, often turning into dangerous typhoons.

Haiyan: The international name of the typhoon that caused massive destruction in the Philippines in early November 2013. It is known locally as Super Typhoon Yolanda.

Janji: The act of praying and pledging to God (Tuhan) or ancestor spirits.

Kamanyan: It is also spelled as kamangyan. It is used to banish bad spirits and communicate with the ancestors by offering smoke.

Kampung: It means a village inhabited by relatives or kin. It may also mean clans or alliances of related families who regularly tied up at a moorage when their sea mobility was high.

Kompyansa: It refers to being caught off guard due to complacency, overconfidence, or self-assurance without considering the risks or potential negative consequences.

Kubo-Kubo: An unfinished or temporary hut or Bahay-Kubo.

Lantay: The slats of bamboo used for flooring.

Laut: It is also spelled as Dilaut. The sea or at sea.

Lepa: A large canoe without outriggers, formerly used as a houseboat by the Sama Badjao.

Luzon: Philippines' largest and most populous island. It is located at the northern end of the country and is home to Manila, the national capital.

Magjanji: The act of performing janji.

Magosaha: The Sama Badjao tradition, which means the necessity to wander in search of livelihood.

Mamanwa: The Indigenous peoples whose ancestral domain is located in the forested area of Caraga Region, Philippines. They are described as traditionally nomadic and highly mobile, known to transfer sites based on the availability of resources. Around the 1950s, armed conflicts severely impacted their ancestral lands, forcing them to flee. Many Mamanwas were displaced from Mindanao and migrated northward, eventually settling in the Eastern Visayas region.

Mamasko: To perform caroling during the Christmas season.

Mangayo: To ask for something

Mboh: It is also spelled as Umboh/Omboh. Depending on the context, it refers to the first Sama Badjao man or ancestor. Alternatively, it is also used to call the elders who bear the spirit djinn. The spirit that makes a Sama Badjao sacred or gives them supernatural power and performs religious functions.

Mindanao: The second largest island after Luzon in the Philippines. It is located in the southern part of the archipelago, surrounded by four seas: the Sulu Sea to the west, the Philippine Sea to the east, the Celebes Sea to the south, and the Bohol Sea to the north. It is the center of Islam in a predominantly Christian country. It also has the largest concentration of ethnic minorities in the Philippines. The Sama Badjao, Mamanwa, and Tausug mentioned in this research have ancestral roots in Mindanao.

Moklo: A Cebuano slang that means naive but can also be a pejorative term for Filipino Muslims and Sama Badjao. It is commonly used among the Bisaya to scare the children with Moklo if they misbehave.

Moros: A pejorative word that can be traced back to the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, attributed to the Muslims in Mindanao. At present, the Muslims have appropriated and self-identified as Moros as solidarity. However, the majority of the Sama Badjao, especially non-Muslims, take offense to be called Moros.

Odette: The local name of Super-Typhoon Rai. Filipinos identified the Super Typhoon as Odette instead of its international name, Rai.

PagMboh: The ritual act of worshipping Mboh to appease the first Sama Badjao or spirit ancestors.

Pagsumangat: The act of offering a pledge to appease the Sumangat.

Pangkat: In the Sinama language, it refers to ancestors, especially invoked in the traditional Sama religion. The Sama Badjao refers to the *Mboh* followers as Pangkat.

Panlima: It is also spelled as Panglima. The Sama Badjao chieftain who leads the Kampung.

Pump boat: A double outrigger canoe powered by gasoline or diesel engines for bigger vessels. The smaller version is operated by a paddle without an engine. Both versions are used for sea transportation and fishing activities.

Sama/Sinama: It refers to the Sama or Sinama-speaking population. The Sama Badjao self-identified as Sama when interacting among themselves.

Sama Badjao: The exonym of the Sama Dilaut Indigenous communities in the Philippines.

Sama Dilaut: It means the Sama of the sea. They are the sub-group of the Sinama-speaking population in insular Southeast Asia who are sea-oriented and mobile.

Sumangat: It means spirits. The Sama Badjao believe everything in this world has sumangat, including the inanimate. They are afraid of offending them, for the sumangat can strike people with an illness.

Super Typhoon: Tropical cyclone with a maximum wind speed exceeding 185 kph or more than 100 knots.

Tabok: It means across. The *Tabok* settlement can be reached by crossing a concrete pathway mostly inhabited by both Sama Badjao and Bisaya residents. It is located a little farther from the sea but next to the estuary of the Bato River.

Tausug: It is also known as Suluk in Malaysia. They are the dominant and powerful Moro ethnolinguistic group in Mindanao.

Tuhan. It means God.

Typhoon Agaton: Four months after Rai, another typhoon hit Eastern Visayas while the people were still recovering from Super Typhoon Rai. Although weaker than Rai in terms of intensity, Typhoon Agaton brought heavy rains, violent winds, floods (flash floods) in low-lying areas and catch basins, and rain-induced landslides.

Visayas: It is an island group in the central Philippines. The Visayan group comprises seven large and several hundred smaller islands clustered around the Visayan, Samar, and Camotes seas. The seven main islands are Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Masbate, Negros, Panay, and Samar. The research site is located on the island of Leyte.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Data collection methods

Objectives	Variables/concepts	Methods	Data Analysis
Preliminary data To obtain household data in both *Tabok* and *Baybayon* settlements in Brgy. Dolho	Socio-demographic characteristics	Census	Descriptive statistics using STATA
To examine the impact of Rai on the Sama Badjao community by exploring their pre-, during-, and post-disaster experiences.	-Impact of Rai on their semi-sedentary lifestyle *Lived experiences *Struggles *Opportunities brought by the Typhoon *Coping strategies of the Sama Badjao community	-Unstructured and semi-structured interviews with the Sama Badjao -Literature review/secondary data -Observations -KII with elders and leaders	Thematic analysis using Atlas.ti
To explore on the structural discrimination experienced by the Indigenous community due to non-inclusive government disaster recovery programs.	-Financial expenditures, relief, and rehabilitation programs after Rai for Sama Badjao and non-indigenous communities in Bato, Leyte -Discriminatory pattern in terms of norms, rules, regulations, funding and policies	-Document analysis -Expert interview with the experts (DRRM implementer, NCIP staff, and NGOs) -Observation and field notes -Informal interviews with the elders	Thematic analysis using Atlas.ti
To determine the intersecting factors that play a role in the recovery capacity of the community after the super typhoon.	-Recovery stage *Ethnicity *Religion *Gender	-FGD with Sama Badjao men and women -Participant observation -Informal interviews with the elders	Intersectionality analysis

Appendix 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of Sama Badjao household heads

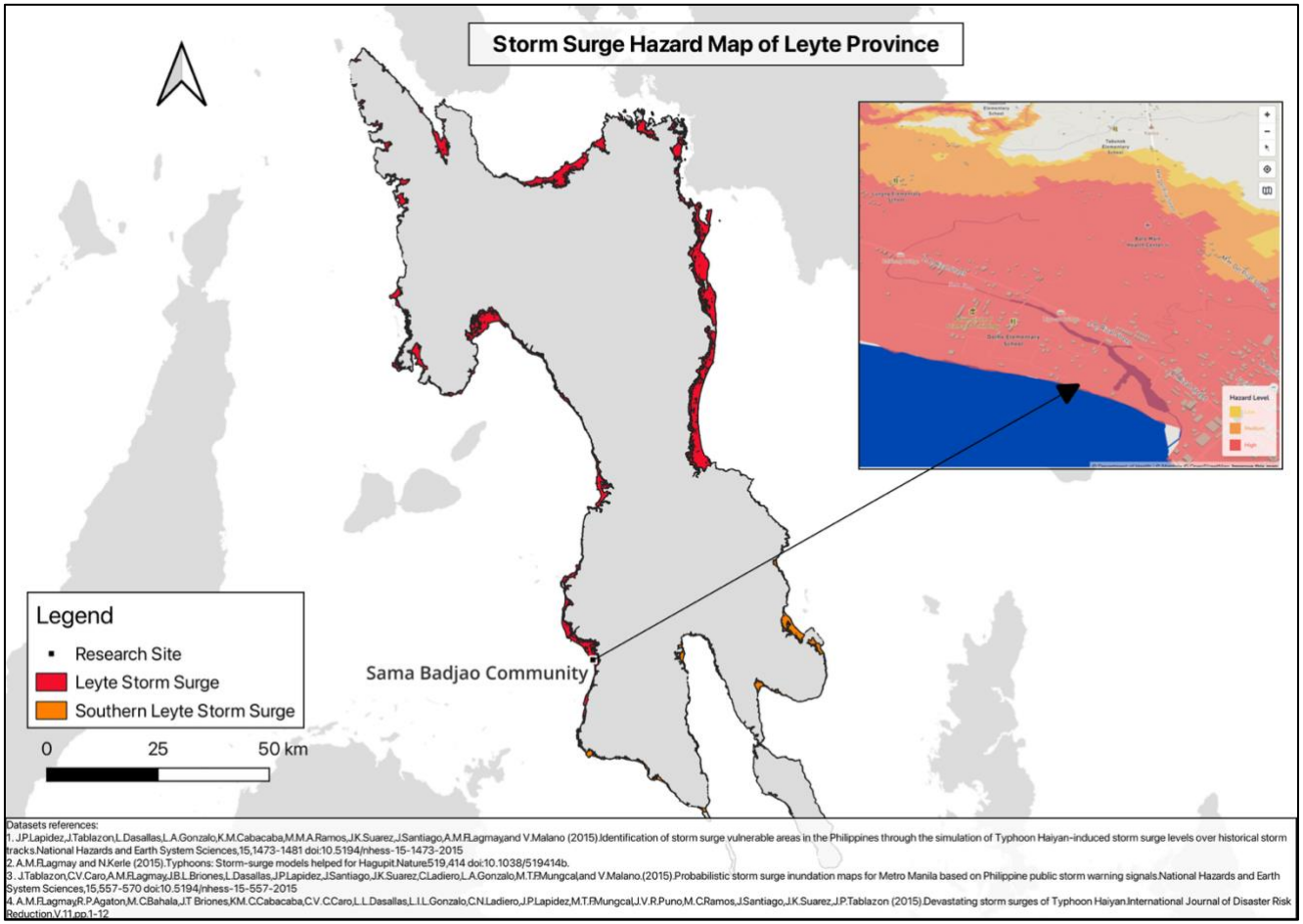
Variables	Frequency	Percent
Households per settlement		
Tabok	29	83.98
Baybayon	152	16.02
Birthplace		
Bato	157	87.74
Cebu	8	4.42
Zamboanga	6	3.31
Bantayan Islands	4	2.21
Surigao	2	1.10
Batangas	2	1.10
Bohol	1	0.55
Sogod	1	0.55
Age range		
Early adulthood	68	37.57
Adulthood	37	20.44
Late adulthood	30	16.57
Early senility period	22	12.15
Period of youth	17	9.39
Elderly period	4	2.21
Senile period	3	1.66
Gender		
Male	128	70.72
Female	52	28.73
Gay	1	0.55
Educational attainment		
No schooling	100	55.25
Elementary level	57	31.49
High school level	18	9.94
College level	4	2.21
Postgraduate level	1	0.55
Kindergarten level	1	0.55
Civil status		
Married	138	76.24
Widow/widower	25	13.81
Separated	15	8.29
Single	2	1.10
Living-in	1	0.55
Income		
Poor (Less than PhP 10,957 per month)	148	99.33
Lower middle income (Between PhP 21,914 to PhP 43,828 per month)	1	1.18

Religion		
Pangkat	121	66.85
Born Again Christianity	37	20.44
Roman Catholicism	22	12.15
New Apostolic Church	1	0.55
Occupation*Multiple responses		
Brgy. Tanod	1	0.49
Microfinance officer	1	0.49
Pastor	1	0.49
Old/damaged phone buyer/seller/trader		
Public school teacher	2	0.97
Bread vendor	2	0.97
Laborer	2	0.97
Water boy	2	0.97
Chieftain	2	0.97
Sari-sari store owner	3	1.46
Mat weaver	4	1.94
Mendicant	5	2.43
Unemployed	7	3.40
Carpenter	20	9.71
Housewife	22	10.68
Vendor	54	26.21
Fishing	77	37.38
Houses damaged by Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013		
No damaged	69	38.33
Totally damaged	50	27.78
Partially damaged	42	23.33
Did not own a house yet	19	10.56
Injuries/illnesses after Super-Typhoon Haiyan in 2013		
None	159	96.95
Wound injury	2	1.22
Diarrhea	1	0.61
Stomachache	1	0.61
Cramps	1	0.61
Houses damaged by Super Typhoon Rai in 2021		
No damaged	3	1.68
Totally damaged	113	63.13
Partially damaged	57	31.84
Did not own a house yet	6	3.35
Injuries/illnesses after Super-Typhoon Haiyan in 2021		
None	163	93.68

Wound injury	5	2.87
Diarrhea	3	1.72
Cough/colds	2	1.15
Pneumonia	1	0.57

Source: Household census conducted by the author

The mean average household head age is 43; mean average household income is 2,426 per month. Note that itinerant families who were visiting before and after the Super-Typhoon were included as a separate household during fieldwork, including those who have left for *Magosaha* with intention of return, and couples or families who planned to construct a separate house or have started to construct their own house. However, individuals who did not inform their family members of their intention to return and have been away for a month were excluded from household composition.



Appendix 3. High level of storm surge threat in the coastal area of Bato, Leyte

Source: Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazard) interactive website. The Philippines' primary disaster risk reduction and management program operated from 20212 until 2017 (Adapted by the Author using QGIS, 2025)

Appendix 4. List of documents collected

Title	Office	Publication
Shelter cluster meeting	DSWD regional office	2014
Indigenous People in Natural Disaster	United Nations HIGH commissions refugee	2014
The Ocean is our Home /Heaven A Sama Dilaut Fisherman	APE	2013
Typhoon Odette Destroy Badjao People	UNICEF	2022
Philippine Case Study Urban Disaster Response	NORCAP	2019
Empowering the Sama-Badjao Community in Bato Leyte	ERMF	2016
Annual Accomplishment Report	DSWD Bato	2,013
Annual Accomplishment Report	DSWD Bato	2,015
Annual Accomplishment Report	DSWD Bato	2,019
Distribution sheet -no.of galvanized iron	DSWD Bato	2021
National Housing Authority's Special Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP)	DSWD Bato	2021
Certification of Eligibility	DSWD Bato	2021
Annual Accomplishment Report	Municipal Barangay Affairs	2019;2020;2021
Total Population/numbers of Indigenous people	Municipal Barangay Affairs	2013
Budget Expenditures	Municipal Barangay Affairs	2021
Damage Report-Typhoon Odette	Municipal Barangay Affairs	2021
Sangguniang Bayan-Resolution no. 2019-73	DRRM	2020-2022
Organization of Bato Emergency Rescue Team	LDRRM	2019
Annual Municipal Risk Reduction and Management Work & Financial Plan	LDRRM	2019
Annual Municipal Risk Reduction and Management Work & Financial Plan	DRRM	2020
MDRRMC Bato Leyte Damage Report Typhoon Odette	DRRM	2022
Number of enrollees and Grade 10 advisory moving up	Bato National High School	2009

NCIP special report	NCIP	2021
The Badjao Hegira: From lean-tos boats and stilts	RDII-Leyte	
Proposal mangroves planting	ERMF	
Needs assessment	ERMF	
Sama-Badjao Women's Livelihood and Community WASH Project, Philippines.	ERMF	
IPRA law		1997
NCIP totally and partially damaged	NCIP region 7 and 8	2021
DRRM Plan		2019
Master's Thesis: Social exclusion of the Badjaos in Bato, Leyte: Basis for improvement of government and non-government programs and Services	University of Southwestern Philippine Foundation	2018
Bachelor's Thesis: Problems and aspirations of nomadic tribe members elicited through photo representations: The case of Badjaos in Bato, Leyte.	Visayas State University	2011
Profile of the Badjao Community	SLSU-social work department	2016
Profile of the Badjao Community	SLSU-social work department	2015