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THE STRUCTURE OF BAJAU SOCIETY.

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THE STRUCTURE OF BAJAU SOCIETY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ANTHROPOLOGY
DECEMBER 1969

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If the names of all persons who in some way assisted in the preparation of this dissertation were mentioned, the list would probably exceed the length of the dissertation. Consequently, only a few of the most indispensable can be mentioned here.

I could never have survived the physical and emotional ordeals of field work without Father Emile Lacquerre and Father Henri LaVallee, the O. M. I. priests of Bongao. Twice they nursed me to health through critical illness, and innumerable times they offered their home and companionship when they were most needed during the loneliness that is so often anthropological field work. I can never hope to adequately repay their kindness, and consider myself fortunate to have known men of their great stature.

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H. A. N.
THE STRUCTURE OF BAJAU SOCIETY

By Harry Arlo Nimmo

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Division of the University of Hawaii in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of social change among the Bajau of Sulu Province, Republic of the Philippines. It is based upon two field trips (June, 1963 to January, 1964 and October, 1965 to May, 1967) among two groups of Bajau, namely the nomadic boat-dwellers of the Tawi-Tawi Islands and the sedentary house-dwellers of the Sibutu Islands. The study is focused upon the changes in social structure resulting from the abandonment of a nomadic boat-dwelling way of life and the acceptance of a sedentary house-dwelling way of life.

The theoretical position on structural change proposed in Part I of the dissertation assumes that societies always sanction certain alternative forms of behavior if the preferred patterns cannot be followed. Consequently, when the preferred patterns can no longer be practiced, members of the society will turn to those sanctioned alternative patterns which are most congruent to the new social milieu. And since the new social milieu is often the result of a superordinate, imposing
society, those patterns of traditional behavior which most closely approximate the models of the imposing group will be those chosen by the changing society. Only if the traditionally preferred patterns and all the traditionally sanctioned alternative patterns are no longer practical does the society look elsewhere to perhaps "borrow" solutions from other societies. I contend, however, that borrowing of this sort is not common.

Part II of the dissertation is a description of the traditional boat-dwelling Bajau society and deals mainly with the nuclear family, work and ceremonial alliances, the kindred, and the village. Part III, a discussion of the changes which occurred when the Bajau moved to houses near land-dwelling Muslim people, illustrates the applicability of the theory to the Bajau case. Part IV is a summary of the major changes in Bajau society and a discussion of the implications of the Bajau case for the general theory of social change.

It is suggested in the final discussion that the Bajau case is somewhat unusual in the anthropological literature because 1) it is a case of non-directed social change and 2) the Bajau acculturated to a non-Western society. Nonetheless, it is contended that the Bajau case is probably more typical of social change throughout the long history of man since only in relatively recent years have transportation methods allowed greatly differing societies to encounter one another. The dissertation concludes with the suggestion that if social structures were described by anthropologists so as to reveal their preferred and alternative patterns of behavior, it would be possible for social scientists to predict more accurately the directions of change, once the agents of change are understood.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................ iii
ABSTRACT ....................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES ................................................ ix
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ....................................... x

PART I. INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION .................................... 2
Social Structure .............................................. 2
Structural Change .......................................... 5
Structural Change and Cognatic Societies ............. 10
Methodology .................................................. 25

CHAPTER II. THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO ....................... 28
The Geographical Setting .................................... 28
Ethnic Compositions of Sulu ................................ 34
The History of Sulu .......................................... 38

PART II. THE BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU OF TAWI-TAWI

CHAPTER I. HABITAT ......................................... 44
Geography of Tawi-Tawi .................................... 44
Ethnic Composition of Tawi-Tawi ....................... 48
Bajau Villages in Tawi-Tawi ............................... 52
Movements of the Bajau .................................... 59

CHAPTER II. THE HOUSEHOLD ................................ 64
Household Composition ..................................... 64
Residence Patterns ......................................... 70
Marriage Patterns .......................................... 73
Divorce Patterns ............................................ 77
Family Relationships ....................................... 78

CHAPTER III. THE SIBLING ALLIANCE UNIT ............... 82
Structure of the Sibling Alliance Unit .................. 82
Economic Activities ........................................ 88
Ceremonial Activities ..................................... 90
Interpersonal Relationships ............................... 98

CHAPTER IV. THE DAKAMPUNGAN ........................... 101
Structure of the Dakampungan ............................. 101
Kinship Terminology ....................................... 110
CHAPTER V. THE VILLAGE

Chapter 1: Village Structure
Chapter 2: Inter-Village Activities
Chapter 3: Intra-Village Relationships

PART III. THE HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU OF SITANGKAI

CHAPTER I. HABITAT
Chapter 1: Geography of the Sibutu Islands
Chapter 2: History of Sitangkai
Chapter 3: Ethnic Composition of Sitangkai

CHAPTER II. THE HOUSEHOLD
Chapter 1: Household Composition
Chapter 2: Residence Patterns
Chapter 3: Marriage Patterns
Chapter 4: Divorce Patterns
Chapter 5: Interpersonal Relations
Chapter 6: Kinship Terminology
Chapter 7: Household Segmentation

CHAPTER III. THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND ACTION GROUPS
Chapter 1: The Neighborhood
Chapter 2: Work Action Groups
Chapter 3: Ceremonial Action Groups
Chapter 4: Relationship to the Boat-dwellers' Action Group

CHAPTER IV. THE DAKAMPUNGAN
Chapter 1: The Generalized Dakampungan
Chapter 2: The Localized Dakampungan
Chapter 3: The Headman
Chapter 4: Intra-Localized Dakampungan Relationship

CHAPTER V. THE VILLAGE
Chapter 1: Village Activities
Chapter 2: Political Structure
Chapter 3: Social Stratification
Chapter 4: Inter-Village Relations

PART IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER I. SUMMARY
CHAPTER II. CONCLUSIONS

PART V. BIBLIOGRAPHY
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE I. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU........ 66
TABLE II. CHANGING RESIDENCE PATTERNS AT TUNGKALANG.......... 71
TABLE III. MARRIAGE PATTERNS OF BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU......... 75
TABLE IV. DIVORCE PATTERNS AMONG BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU......... 78
TABLE V. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU....... 144
TABLE VI. RESIDENCE PATTERNS OF HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU......... 145
TABLE VII. RELATIONSHIP OF HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU
              MARRIED COUPLES.................................................. 150
TABLE VIII. DIVORCE RATE AMONG HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU
              MALES AND FEMALES.................................................. 153
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1. MAP OF NORTHERN SULU ................................. 29
FIGURE 2. MAP OF SOUTHERN SULU ............................... 32
FIGURE 3. MAP OF TAWI-TAWI ISLANDS ......................... 47
FIGURE 4. BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU VILLAGE ...................... 53
FIGURE 5. HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU VILLAGE ..................... 53
FIGURE 6. MAP OF SIBUTU ISLANDS ............................... 128
PART I

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a review of the development of the theory of social structure and structural change. A theory of structural change is presented and its relevance to the Bajau case is illustrated. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of methodology.

Social Structure

By the time an anthropologist enters the alien culture he has chosen for his first field research, his learnings have taught him that these people -- as all peoples -- have arrived at a system of interpersonal relations by which their lives are ordered. His no small job is to uncover that system. Upon arrival in the field, he is confronted with seemingly contradictory behavior and values which fit no immediate pattern or design. Several scores of his early days may be spent pursuing false leads down blind alleys or against insurmountable blank walls. But dutifully, he daily records his observations and nervously files them away in a growing miscellaneous category. As the days and weeks roll by, shadowy hints of persistencies and regularities, a raison d'être, begin to emerge from what was before a hopelessly, complicated jumble of disconnected behavior. If successful, by the final months of the field trip, he has laid bare the skeleton of the society, and the formerly discarded, senseless data can be fitted back into what is a reasonably congruent system of social behavior.

The history of this study is no great exception to the above pattern. The data were collected during 24 months of field research among the Bajau of the southern Sulu Islands in the Republic of the Philippines.
A year was spent among each of two groups of Bajau, namely the nomadic boat-dwellers of the Tawi-Tawi Islands and the sedentary house-dwellers of the Sibutu Islands. This study is primarily descriptive of the structural changes wrought upon Bajau society by the abandonment of the nomadic boat-life and the acceptance of a sedentary house-life. The theoretical position of interpreting the Bajau data does not pretend great originality, but rather has been consciously borrowed from a number of earlier writers. Any claims to originality must rest in the attempt to incorporate the ideas of several writers into a consistent theory of social change and to apply that theory to a substantial body of data. It is consequently appropriate to review the relevant literature.

The notion that societies consist of a network of social relations called "social structure" is generally credited to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952:190), although the concept appears earlier, less well-defined, in the writings of Emile Durkheim (1915). Included in Radcliffe-Brown's concept of social structure are all dyadic role relations occurring between members of a society, as well as relations between persistent social groupings, such as clans and phratries. Although Radcliffe-Brown claimed to be describing "actually existing" social relations, his models of social structure are based on the jural rules of society and are not models of the actual behavior of the members. Largely due to the influence of Radcliffe-Brown as teacher and writer, various anthropologists -- especially British -- have followed his view of social structure.

Evans-Pritchard, in his classic study of the Nuer, restricts social structure to the interrelations between groups within a society, excluding interpersonal relations. Fortes (1949:340) feels that social structures
are composed of interpersonal relations which are abstracted from social roles; he does, however, also recognize the interaction of groups as an aspect of social structure. Fred Eggan, an American influenced by the British school, also finds it useful to examine interpersonal relations "which become part of the social structure in the form of status positions" held by individuals (1950:5). Raymond Firth regards social structure as "concerned with the ordered relations of parts to a whole, with the arrangement in which the elements of the social life are linked together" (1951:30). Metaphorically, he explains, this arrangement provides the "social anatomy" or form of society, and the form consists of the "persistence of repetition of behavior," "the element of continuity in social life" (1951:39). E. R. Leach in the more general of his several definitions of social structure, holds that social structure may be discussed "in terms of the principle of organization that unite the component parts of the system" (1954:4). Levi-Strauss (1963) denies that social structure has anything to do with empirical reality but only with the models built after it. Leach has seconded Levi-Strauss' idea and states that social structures are real only as models which exist as logical constructs in the minds of anthropologists (1954:8). Nadel (1957) has reduced social structure to an analysis of the roles assumed by members of the society; in a recent, more refined paper, Goodenough has found a similar analysis useful (1965).

Excepting Levi-Strauss' and Leach's denial that there is no reality which may be termed "social structure," the above definitions are variations and refinements of Radcliffe-Brown's original proposition.

In attempting to synthesize the sundry and conflicting views of social
structure, the edition of Notes and Queries on Anthropology proposes that the concept be regarded as the "whole network of social relations in which are involved the members of a given community at a particular time" (p. 63). Because of its very general nature, this definition resolves the conflicts reviewed above, and probably would have the greatest concordance among anthropologists. It will serve as a definition of social structure in the present context until there is need for greater refinement in later pages.

Structural Change

Since its inception, the concept of social structure has had difficulty in dealing with change. In a critique on the inability of the concept of social structure to deal with change, Leach points out that concern with structural change has been of two types, namely change which is "consistent with a continuity of the existing formal order," and change which reflects "alterations in the formal structure" (1954:5). He further notes that most social structuralists have dealt primarily with the former type and have not developed theoretical tools which can deal with changes in structure, the latter type of change. Leach's criticism, for the most part, still applies and consequently, discussion in the present context will deal primarily with change of the latter type.

Although Radcliffe-Brown early -- and vaguely -- discussed change as occurring when elements of a society become dysfunctional and thereby upset the social equilibrium to bring about a change in structure, early students of social structure were more concerned with establishing a theoretical framework in which societies could be described and compared
than they were with structural change, except of the type consistent with the existing structure. As a result, some of the earlier critics of structuralism were quite justified in criticizing the concept for being inadequate to deal with the dynamics of social change.

Much current thought on social structure is still concerned primarily with its tenability as a concept rather than with its ability to deal with the dynamics of social behavior. However, a number of anthropologists have dealt with structural change and have contributed to the present understanding of it. Fred Eggan (1950) has examined Western Pueblo social structure historically and concluded that the Western Pueblos all represent variations of a single structural type. The apparent differences presently manifested among them are due largely to differing culture contacts and ecological settings. Alexander Spoehr (1947) has also discussed structural change in relation to culture contact. His examination of the changing kinship systems of three Amerindian tribes from the Southeastern United States reveals that the three systems have undergone parallel, regular changes which he attributes largely to their original similarities in structural type as well as their similar acculturation to the surrounding non-Amerindian population. Perhaps the most systematic attempt to deal with structural change has been that of G. P. Murdock (1949). Concerned largely with changing kinship systems, Murdock proposes that all changes in kinship structure have their genesis in a change in residence. Using data from some 250 representative societies, he postulates the steps through which a kinship system must go (within a finite number of possibilities) once the original residence pattern has been altered. Murdock has since shifted his position regarding change in
bilateral societies (1959); in such societies, a change in the property system and inheritance may be the catalyst for succeeding changes.

The above studies reveal examples of the processes of change, but they have little to say as to why structural changes follow the patterns they do, except as acculturation to an intruding society or a new ecological setting. This concern has been almost the exclusive interest of British anthropologists.

Raymond Firth (1951) was one of the first to take a stand on structural change, and to suggest a re-examination of the models which social anthropologists construct to describe social structure. With minor alterations, Firth accepts the classic definition of "social structure" as a model constructed from the jural rules of society which he feels, as noted, provides the "continuity principle of society." He introduces, however, the concept of "social organization" which is the "systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision" (p. 40). Social structure sets "a precedent and provide(s) a limitation to the range of alternatives possible -- the arc within which seemingly free choice is exercisable is often very small. But it is the possibility of alternative that makes for variability. A person chooses, consciously or unconsciously, which course he will follow. And his decision will affect the future structural alignment. In the aspect of social structure is to be found the continuity principle of society; in the aspect of organization is to be found the variation or change principle -- by allowing evaluation of situations and entry of individual choice" (p. 40). Thus change is possible in any social structure because of the alternative behavior always available to members of the society. Presumably, when
enough members of the society begin to choose an alternative pattern of behavior, the structure of the society will alter accordingly. Consequently, to deal with structural change, the social anthropologist must deal with both social structure, the jural rules of society, as well as social organization, the variety of actual behavior displayed by members of the society.

In a later, modified discussion of structural change (Firth 1959), Firth finds it useful to distinguish between a structure of ideals, a structure of expectations, and a structure of action. "The structure of ideals represents the 'pure' statements of the optimum character of the society -- what it is held that members of the society ought to do and to have, and how they should be constituted as an entity ... The structure of expectations represents the 'anticipated' form of the society -- what it is held that members of the society are most likely to do, in particular the degree to which they are most likely to fulfill their obligations and the forms their cooperation will probably take. The structure of action represents the 'actual' form of the society as seen by the external behaviour -- the contemporary alignment. It comprises what members of the society are observed to do in fact, which is often very distinct from what they think they ought to do, and from what they have been expecting themselves to do" (341-342). Change may occur independently in any of the three structures, but should the new behavior persist, it will eventually bring about change in the others. The notion is a continuation of Firth's earlier attempt to portray social structure as a concept which can account for the varied and dynamic aspects of the reality of human social behavior.
Edmund R. Leach has offered a comparable explanation for structural change among the hill peoples of Burma (1954:8). He finds it useful to regard individuals as having status positions in a number of different social systems at the same time. "To the individual himself such systems present themselves as alternatives or inconsistencies in the scheme of values by which he orders his life. The overall process of structural change comes about through the manipulation of these alternatives as a means of social advancement. Every individual of a society, each in his own interest, endeavors to exploit the situation as he perceives it and in so doing the collectivity of individuals alters the structure of the society itself" (p. 8). Thus, Leach feels that the catalyst for change exists in the several status positions an individual holds in his society; the possible movement within the statuses sets the pattern for structural change.

S. F. Nadel discusses structural change in much the same vein (1957). Pursuing Firth's position, he emphasizes that any description of a social structure should include the alternative behavioral choices for the individual in a given social situation. He feels that this is not such a formidable task since such options or alternatives are themselves part of the "social routine" (136-137). He agrees with Firth that once a significant number of individuals within a society choose an alternative form of behavior, a change in structure appears, although the old behavior may still persist as a legitimate form of behavior.

Following much the same reasoning as Firth, Fredrik Barth has recently suggested a rethinking of the traditional approach to the study of structural change. He notes that traditionally, anthropologists have
dealt with change by describing the gross, morphological features of a society (such as matrilocal residence, bride price, or patrilineality) at a particular time and then describing the same society at a later point in time as having another set of gross morphological features with little explanation of the process of change by which one became the other. He feels that this tells virtually nothing about the process of change and the anthropologists need "... to use concepts that enable (them) to depict the pattern (i.e., the morphological feature) itself as a statistical thing, as a set of frequencies of alternatives" (1967:662). He continues: "What we see as a social form is, concretely, a pattern of distribution of behavior by different persons and on different occasions" (p. 662). And "It is only through attention to the frequencies of allocations, by describing the pattern itself as a certain set of frequencies, that it becomes possible to observe and describe such quite simple events of social change" (p. 663). Thus, his view is very similar to that of Firth, the "social form" being comparable to Firth's "social structure" and the various patterns of behavior within the form comparable to Firth's "social organization." Only with a knowledge of the variant patterns of human behavior can an understanding of the process of change be gleaned.

Structural Change and Cognatic Societies

In recent years, the dynamic nature of social structure has been further illustrated by several American anthropologists who have worked with cognatic societies. For many years the concept of social structure was almost synonymous with unilineal societies, or more specifically, African unilineal societies as described by British social anthropologists.
Anthropologists working with cognatic societies have discovered that many of the structural principles developed by the British for unilineal societies do not fare so well when used to investigate cognatic social systems. In fact, even unilineal systems in other parts of the world, e.g. New Guinea, are challenging some of the social structure models developed largely in Africa by the British (Langness 1964).

Robert Pehrson (1954) was one of the first to use structural principles to describe a cognatic society. His untimely death ended any further investigations on his part, but he nonetheless made a rather convincing description of Lapp society employing principles of British social structuralists. Following his work with the Lapps, the anthropological community seemed awakened to the fact that a good portion of the world's societies are cognatic; thus upon Pehrson's heels was a plethora of field work in cognatic societies. As field workers returned to analyze their data, they discovered that their societies were organized less discretely than African unilineal societies. Cognatic groups seemed less orderly when compared to the discrete units of social behavior found among such African classics as the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), the Ashanti (Fortes 1950), or the Tswana (Schapera 1950).

Davenport (1959) was among the first to suggest a typology for cognatic, or nonunilinear societies. His paper was, in the main, based upon the literature supplemented by his field work in Oceania. And since the study of cognatic societies was then in its infancy, it is not surprising that his typology has not completely held up over the years. Goodenough (1955) isolated some of the major difficulties in studying aspects of cognatic societies in his early paper on Malayo-
Polynesian social organization. Drawing largely from his Gilbertese experience, he illustrates the flexible nature of Gilbertese society. The Gilbertese recognize an "unrestricted ambilineal descent group," the so-called "personal kindred," but one of the most important social groups in Gilbertese society is the *kainga*, a local group of cognates, the structure of which is based on land-use and parental residence. When these local groups become predominantly uxorilocal or virilocal, they may be transformed into uxorilineal or virilineal lineages and clans. Conceivably, both types of clans could be found on the same island at any one time; and, also conceivably, the clans could change from virilineal to uxorilineal (or vice versa) over a number of years. The important point to emerge from Goodenough's discussion is that the individual has choice in his kin affiliations and he may belong to several groups at the same time for different purposes. And it is this mobility, or flexibility, which allows and directs social change. When, for any number of reasons, the Gilbertese tend to prefer one type of residence over another, the structure of the society alters accordingly.

Appell (1967) notes that the Rungus of Sabah recognize an ego-centered social isolate composed of all of one's cognitive kin (i.e. a personal kindred) which provides support and assistance to an individual when such is needed. However, the important social groups among the Rungus are the domestic family, the cluster of kinsmen in one's village, and the village itself which normally includes non-kinsmen. Matters of practical consideration determine which groups of consanguines or affines or non-kinsmen with whom an individual chooses to align. As among the Gilbertese, the individual has great freedom of choice
in deciding upon his associates and may have membership in several
groups. This freedom and multiple membership provide great plasti-
city in the social structure.

Leach (1950) discovered the same sort of flexibility and over-
lapping membership in Iban society, and as will become evident in
the remainder of this thesis, the same situation prevails among the
Bajau of Sulu. As Scheffler notes in his discussion of the Maori
(1965), it is this overlapping group membership characteristic of cog-
natic societies which distinguishes them from the classical descrip-
tions of unilineal societies.

Fortes (as a traditional British structuralist) envisions
a society divided into discrete (non-overlapping) seg-
ments. Each segment is equivalent to all others at
the same level of segmentation, and each is autonomous
with regard to the concerns regulated by segment member-
ship. Order is maintained between the segments in
various ways (e.g. formal juridical institutions or
a balance of power), but critical to this maintenance
process is a normative principle which allots each
person to one and only one segment. In such societies
there can be no conflicts of allegiance, at least in
principle and at least in regard to the concerns regu-
lated by segment membership (p. 127).

In unilineal segmentary systems there can be no such
conflicts of allegiance (i.e. as found among the
Maori), at least in principle; and for Fortes this
seems to be the crux of the matter. This is the
fundamental difference which separates the Maori sys-
tem from, for instance, those of the Tallensi and
Ashanti. In a unilineal system, a person’s loyalties
are at least formally determined by his descent iden-
tity, whereas in the Maori case there could not be
even this nominal determination of one’s descent
identity alone (p. 128).
Scheffler's comments on the Maori may with justification be extended to cognatic societies in general. Scheffler perhaps pinpoints the difficulty in using traditional models of social structure for cognatic societies when he notes:

He (i.e. Fortes) does not deny that social structures are in the process of continual recreation -- rather than once created and then self-perpetuating -- but he is typically concerned with how they recreate themselves rather than perhaps some other form (p. 128).

Thus it is the particular "analytical and theoretical perspective" of traditional British social structuralists which makes it difficult for them to handle the dynamic, changing aspects of social life.

Kessing (1968) pursues Scheffler's position when he suggests that:

... we should be more careful about viewing societies as composed of groups. We should concentrate instead on the multiplicity of social categories and roles to which our subjects assign one another, and on the way these are sorted out according to situation and groups are crystallized from social categories ... .

An approach to kin groups based on multiple roles, I believe, will not only help us to comprehend how non-unilineal systems work, but will clarify the ordering of other societies as well and help us to close the gap between our descriptive models and the complexities of social relations on the ground (p. 84).
Some years earlier, Leach made much the same contention when he stated that social anthropological analysis "must start from a concrete reality -- a local group of people -- rather than from an abstract reality -- such as the concept of lineage or the notion of kinship system" (1953:104).

In light of this recent thinking, Nadel's discussion of roles as social structure appears as a neglected warning. Nadel suggested that social structure be regarded as the roles held by individuals in the society. By holding several roles and constructing alliances through these roles, individuals may bring about structural change when a sizable number of them begin to alter their behavior from the norm (Nadel 1957).

These discussions of cognatic societies all emphasize the variety of social categories to which an individual may, or does, belong. Certain economic, ecological, or social settings make it profitable for the individual to hold membership in certain delimited groups. Should conditions change, he may find it more advantageous to drop his membership in the group to join another. It is this great flexibility of cognatic societies which makes it difficult to describe them in terms of traditional British social structure, and it is this same flexibility which is causing more and more social anthropologists to cast a suspicious eye on the rigid models of traditional British social structure.

In examining the structural changes in Bajau society, I have found certain aspects of the above positions useful, especially Firth's early proposition, which as been seconded by Barth and other recent students, that an adequate description of a social system must include both structural and organizational models in order to deal with structural change,
i.e. that the alternative behavioral choices present in the reality of social life allow for and give direction to changes in jural rules. I would further suggest that only such a description can account for and illustrate the processes of structural change. I find Firth's early two-fold distinction between "structure" and "organization" more useful for my own data than his later three-fold typology of ideals, expectations, and action.

Firth's position on structural change is particularly useful because it bridges some of the quarrel between traditional unilineal social structuralists and the more recent students of cognatic societies. Few social anthropologists would reject Firth's distinction between structure and organization; rather, the differences of opinion among them reflect their different orientations. Traditional British social structuralists have been more concerned with the structural aspect of society and how this is perpetuated whereas more recent students of cognatic societies are more concerned with the organizational aspects of society and how these alter the structure. Both are legitimate concerns, but each is misleading alone without consideration of the other.

This view of a social system as consisting of both a social structure, or jural rules, as well as a social organization, or the manipulation of these jural rules, is particularly useful in explaining the changes which have occurred among the Bajau. Although the structure of the sedentary, house-dwelling Bajau society at Sitangkai appears upon first examination a radical departure from the nomadic, boat-dwelling life these same people lived some 20 years ago (as exemplified by the Tawi-Tawi Bajau today), it is my contention that the genesis of practically
all the seemingly unique characteristics of the house-dwelling society is to be found in the behavioral patterns of the nomadic, boat-dwelling society. This position offers an explanation for the easy, undisruptive changes which have occurred among the Sitangkai Bajau with the abandonment of the nomadic boat life. An example will perhaps best illustrate its relevance to the Bajau case.

Among the boat-dwelling Bajau, first cousin marriage is permissible so long as the cousins are not patrilateral parallel cousins or have not been close playmates or reared in the same household. However, among the sedentary Bajau at Sitangkai, all first cousin marriage is beginning to meet with general disapproval. At first blush, the prohibition of first cousin marriage at Sitangkai seems a radical departure from the marriage practices of the boat-dwelling Bajau. However, upon closer examination it appears that the initial acceptance of sedentary house-living (which has fostered the development of large matrilocal extended families occupying single dwellings) has led to the prohibition of first cousin marriage since many first cousins live in the same household or live in neighboring households and are therefore not proper marriage partners by traditional Bajau mores. Thus the change in jural rules regarding marriage at Sitangkai has its roots in the traditional alternative patterns in the boat-dwelling society.

Equally relevant to the Bajau case are the discussions by Goodenough, Appell, Scheffler, and Kessing that the different roles an individual holds throughout the society which cross social categories allow for and give direction to change. For example, upon marriage a Bajau continues to belong to his personal kindred (a large, amorphous category of cognates),
but also belong to his wife's personal kindred. He may decide to remain in his parent's village to live among a group of cognates, a localized segment of his personal kindred, he may decide to live among a comparable group of his mother's kinsmen, or he may decide to live among any of several such groups of his wife's kinsmen. The point is that he has membership in several groups (none of which is mutually exclusive) and the group (or groups) which he decides to affiliate with is determined by his personal ambitions or wishes. And since individual wishes and ambitions tend to change over time, the structure of Bajau society tends to alter accordingly. Thus, as many recent critics of social structure have pointed out, an adequate description of a society must present not only the dominant patterns of behavior but the deviation from those dominant patterns, i.e., the alternative patterns of behavior found in the reality of social life. Only then is the concept able to deal with the changing, dynamic nature of social life.

Granted that change is possible within a structure because of the alternative behavioral choices available to members of the society, the position as stated here offers little in the way of explanation as to why individuals begin to choose differently from the way they have done so in the past. The stimulus for pursuing different patterns of behavior among the Bajau appears to have come from their more intimate associations with the land-dwelling people of Sitangkai as well as from the innovations of individual Bajau often sparked by desire for economic advancement.

To the casual observer, the house-dwelling Bajau at Sitangkai would probably represent a classic example of acculturation, i.e., a group of people who have borrowed cultural elements from an invading, dominant
society. It is, however, misleading to attribute the changes among the
Sitangkai Bajau to acculturation alone, at least as "acculturation" is
traditionally defined. In the first place, the Bajau have lived in vary­
ing degrees of intimacy with the land-dwellers for unknown centuries during
which time the two societies were doubtlessly influenced by one another.
Thus, even though only in recent years have the Bajau and land-dwellers
lived together in a single village, their relationships today are simply
a more intimate continuation of past relationships. As almost all soci­
eties of the world, the Bajau have always been in contact with other
peoples and the so-called "acculturation" process has always been opera­
tive among them; consequently, it alone cannot be called upon to explain
the more recent changes in their society. As Murphy (1964) has so ably
argued, "acculturation" is an ordinary feature of almost every social
system. And because it is so broadly defined, acculturation has little
contribution to make as a theoretical concept to a better understanding
of the processes of social change; to say that "acculturation" has occurred
tells little more than that social change has occurred. More recently,
Fredrik Barth (1967) has taken a similar stand on acculturation studies.
Like Murphy, he maintains that acculturation studies tell little about
the processes of change, and indeed sometimes obscure the actual processes
by attributing new behavior to "borrowed" elements from another culture.
Barth illustrates his position with data from the Fur (1967). He notes
that some of the Fur people who live near Arabs have a family structure
more like that of the Arabs than the more traditional, isolated Fur.
Upon first glance, this seems an obvious case of acculturation of
"borrowing." However, closer examination reveals that the "new" pattern
of Fur family structure was always a possible structure in the traditional society, but the economic patterns of the traditional society seldom made it practical.

Nonetheless, neither Murphy or Barth, nor other critics of acculturation studies, would deny that change does occur when two culture previously not in contact with one another come together or when two cultures with a long history of sporadic contact become more intimate with one another. Their disagreement is based on how such change comes about. Traditional acculturation studies are noticeably reticent regarding the processes by which "acculturation" occurs, but rather reveal the end result of the meeting of two societies with the impression that "elements" of culture have been "borrowed" and somehow reworked to fit the patterns of the borrowing culture (Beals 1953). Critics of acculturation studies want to know more about the vague processes of "borrowing" (e.g. Murphy 1964).

It has long been recognized that when two societies come in contact, and if one is superordinate to the other (as the land-dwelling Muslims are to the Bajau), the superordinate society may provide models for change to the subordinate society. And although the subordinate society may eventually display features that are similar to those of the dominant society, it contributes little to the understanding of social change to state simply that these features have been "borrowed" from the other culture. In fact, it may be misleading or even false to do so, as noted by Barth (1967). For example, as discussed above, one result of the Bajau contact with the land-dwelling Muslims has been the emerging prohibition against all first cousin marriage, a prohibition which formerly
included only patrilateral parallel cousin marriage. However, if the Bajau were confronted with a patrilineal society which also forbade patrilateral parallel cousin marriage, most likely the traditional Bajau prohibition against such marriages would be intensified. In either case, the real or the hypothetical, "acculturation" students may claim that the changing marriage practices of the Bajau were borrowed from the society they encountered. However, as already discussed, varying prohibitions against all types of first cousin marriages in certain circumstances are found in traditional Bajau society; thus rather than "borrowing" the prohibitions, the Bajau would simply re-emphasize certain traditional patterns to make them more congruent to the superordinate model.

This position does not deny, however, that elements of culture are sometimes borrowed by a society from another. This has, in fact, happened among the Bajau in the realm of religious behavior. The Sitangkai Bajau have consciously learned Islamic ritual from their land-dwelling neighbors, a case of obvious borrowing, the syncretic result of which has many parallels in American Negro religious behavior where African ritual and deities have been blended with Christian ritual and deities to form a

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1 Although patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is a preferred marriage form among most Muslims throughout the Arab world of the Middle East, it meets with disapproval among many Islamic and non-Islamic peoples of Southeast Asia, and apparently represents a pre-Islamic traditions in that part of the world.
uniquely New World Negro religion (Herskovits 1940). But it is misleading to say that even these elements are "borrowed"; such a simplistic explanation underplays the often complex reworking and reinterpretation of traditional patterns which must occur.

"Innovation" is another common, catch-all word which frequently appears in the literature on social change to explain the origin of new behavior. I do not deny the validity of the process in bringing about change, but rather wish to re-examine the manner in which it normally comes about. It is a well-known fact that there are relatively few "new" discoveries in the world, if discoveries are defined as additions to knowledge. However, the reinterpretation and rearrangement of past discoveries into new inventions is commonplace, as witnessed every day in the modern world. Thus, the child who builds a hitherto unknown structure with his erector set has not discovered anything new, but he has invented a new structure -- he has manipulated already known elements into a new arrangement. The innovators to whom culture change is often attributed also manipulate known parts into new configurations -- much as the child with his erector set. Obviously some individuals do come up with new discoveries that may revolutionize the social system (modern science is replete with such discoveries), but the majority of innovators rely upon existing knowledge for their inventions. Such has certainly been the case among the few Bajau who have been responsible for innovations which brought about radical changes in their society. An example is needed. Some 20 years ago, a bright and energetic Bajau headman in Sitangkai apparently realized that the principal barrier to his ambitions in Sulu society was that he and his people were considered pagans by the
surrounding Muslim people. To remedy the situation, he sent his youngest son to learn Islamic ritual and then built a mosque in which the son, the first Bajau imam, could begin to proselytize. The new mosque quickly gained a large following of Bajau and the consequent acceptance of Islam significantly changed Bajau society. The headman’s innovation represents no new discovery. Rather he simply utilized elements of his own culture and the nearby Muslim culture to establish a new institution in Bajau society. It is my contention that most innovation is of this sort, especially in the Bajau case and probably in most other cases. The cultural inventory of an individual (and his "cultural inventory" includes elements of the cultures around him with which he is familiar as well as those elements of his own culture which he knows) provides the material for innovations. Thus, innovation as most social change is germane to the cultural tradition of its producer.

My position throughout this discussion has been that unlike Athena who emerged full-grown from the head of Zeus, new social behavior can be traced through a finite number of steps to its origin -- usually in the traditional society. Confrontation, or more intimate association, with a second society may provide models for behavior or open opportunities which make formerly less popular alternatives now more popular and create new possible configurations and thereby set about processes of change, but the genesis of most seemingly new behavior may be found in the traditional society. These seemingly new patterns of behavior emerge from the alternative patterns of the traditional society which were always available when the dominant patterns could not be followed. Consequently, to deal with social change, the anthropologist must not
only know the jural rules of the society, but must also know the deviations from those rules. Rather than viewing acculturation as the borrowing of certain culture elements, it can be better understood as providing models of new behavior which set in motion new arrangements of traditional patterns to approximate the new model. And similarly, innovators use the traditional cultural inventory to create new manifestations of the traditional design. Obviously, this is not the entire story of change. Sometimes societies are forced to accept new patterns of behavior for which there is no parallel in their tradition, sometimes new unprecedented discoveries are made which revolutionize social systems; and sometimes elements of culture are consciously borrowed and bring about subsequent changes in the borrowing society. But in cases of culture change which are not forced and which are not the result of contact with an alien, intruding society, I contend that change more often follows the lines I have outlined above.

The remainder of this monograph is an illustration and elaboration of this position. The second chapter of Part I is an introduction to the Sulu Archipelago, home of the Bajau; Part II is a description of the traditional, boat-dwelling Bajau society; Part III is a discussion of the changes which occurred when the boat-dwellers abandoned their nomadic boat-life to live in houses; and Part IV is a summary of the changes in Bajau society and a discussion of the theoretical implications of the study.
Methodology

The data for this dissertation were collected during two field trips to Sulu. The first field trip of six months, from June, 1963, to January, 1964, was conducted among the boat-dwelling Bajau of Tawi-Tawi; the second field trip of 20 months, from October, 1965, to May, 1967, was divided into two parts, ten months among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau boat-dwellers and ten months among the Sitangkai Bajau house-dwellers. The data describe these two groups of Bajau as they lived during these periods.

As noted, this study is for the most part comparative, i.e. I have used the boat-dwelling Bajau society as a base-line for discussing the changes which have occurred at Sitangkai as those Bajau abandoned the boat-dwelling life to become house-dwellers. However, I have not assumed that the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers represent a mode of life identical to that lived by the Sitangkai Bajau before they became house-dwellers. Although it is evident that the ancestors of the Tawi-Tawi and Sitangkai Bajau once lived as a single people, the different environments and historical influences in the two areas have tended to differentiate the two groups -- a differentiation that no doubt existed even before the Sitangkai Bajau abandoned their boats. Consequently, I do not regard the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers as any sort of pristine representatives of the former boat-dwelling life of the Sitangkai people. Nonetheless, interviews with older informants in Sitangkai as well as evidence from the sparse literature on the Sitangkai Bajau indicate that the former boat-dwelling life of the Sitangkai Bajau was not greatly different from the present boat-dwelling life of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. As a result, it seems justifiable to use the boat-dwelling Bajau society of Tawi-Tawi as a baseline for
discussing the changes at Sitangkai so long as the ecological and historical variables are kept in mind.

Although about a quarter of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau were part-time house-dwellers at the time of my field work, I have not incorporated data on the house-dwellers into the section on the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, partly because my interest is in their traditional, boat-dwelling life and partly because the part-time, temporary house-dwelling habits have not significantly altered their still predominantly nomadic, boat-dwelling life. As with the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, my interest in the Sitangkai Bajau is in their present house-dwelling way of life, and not their former boat-dwelling way of life; consequently, I have included only a minimum of data on the very few Sitangkai Bajau who still follow the boat-dwelling way of life.

My role among the Bajau during my research was that of participant observer. While working among the boat-dwellers, I first lived with several different families in their houseboats until I was able to obtain my own small houseboat. I then attached myself to several different kin groups and followed their movements throughout Tawi-Tawi. While among the house-dwelling Bajau in Sitangkai, I lived with a family in one of the neighborhoods of the village, but also I kept a small house in another neighborhood as an office; thus I was intimately involved in two different neighborhoods while in Sitangkai.

During my early months among the Bajau, I was almost completely dependent upon an interpreter, but after about eight months I was able to get along in Samal by myself. However, throughout my research, I resorted to interpreters for in-depth interviews. Data was collected through
standard anthropological techniques, e.g. schedules, censuses, geneologies, life histories, and, most importantly, active participation in the Bajau community.
CHAPTER II

THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO

This Chapter describes the geographical setting of the Sulu Archipelago, home of the Bajau, and reviews the major events in Sulu history.

The Geographical Setting

The Sulu Islands, home of the Filipino Bajau, lie north of the equator between latitudes $4^0 30'$ and $6^0 50'$, and between east longitudes $119^0 10'$ and $122^0 25'$. The northern coasts are washed by the Sulu Sea while those on the south face the Celebes Sea. Because both seas are almost completely ringed by land masses and sufficiently removed from the Asian continent to be strongly influenced by the monsoon seasons, they rarely experience the violent weather more typical of the South China Sea and the open ocean of the Pacific. The shallow waters separating the islands suggest that ages ago, probably long before man roamed that portion of the earth, the islands were part of a land bridge that connected Borneo to Mindanao. Seas invaded to leave only volcanic peaks as witnesses to the past land while coral islands grew around the warm shallow shores. Much later, when man invaded the sea in boats, the islands acted as stepping stones between the two large land masses at their eastern and western extremities. The extent of early human traffic among the islands can only be surmised since the archaeologist has yet to sink his spade in Sulu soil. However, if the historic period is any indication of the past, Sulu has always been an important route for the flow of goods and ideas between Borneo and Mindanao.
FIGURE 1. MAP OF NORTHERN SULU
The picturesque peaks of Basilan Island mark the northern gateway to the Sulu Archipelago. Lying only a stone's throw from the port of Zamboanga, this volcanic island is the largest in the Sulu chain. Surrounding its shores are a number of smaller and considerably less imposing coral islands. Although a part of the geologic formation that forms the Sulu Archipelago and included in the old Sulu sultanate, Basilan is presently politically separate from the remaining Sulu Islands and is administered as part of Zamboanga Province. Southwest of Basilan are the low, coral Samales Islands infamous in early Spanish annals as the stronghold of some of the most fierce Sulu pirates. Like most of the low islands in Sulu, these islands suffer perennial drinking water shortages and support only a sparse scrub flora and, of course, the coconut. West of the Samales is the Jolo group, the ancient and present capital of the archipelago. The large volcanic island of Jolo is extremely fertile and the most intensively cultivated island in the archipelago. Its capital city, also called Jolo, has a population of some 30,000 people and is the economic, political and cultural center of the province. Northwest of Jolo are the Pangutaran Islands, low coral islands not unlike the Samales. To the south and west of Jolo are the Siasi Islands, an assortment of small volcanic islands flanked by coral atolls of varying sizes. The high islands are inhabited by an agricultural population while the low ones are populated by fishermen who depend upon their farming neighbors for vegetables and fruits as well as drinking water. The next and largest island group in the chain is Tawi-Tawi. This long, narrow island supports a mountain range that stretches some 40 miles in a northeast-southwest direction. Although
Tawi-Tawi's rich interior is virtually uninhabited, its shores and especially the many coral islands scattered about its southern reefs maintain heavy populations. Bongao, with a population of some 5000, is the administrative and economic port for the group. The final group of islands, the Sibutu Islands, were described by one unimpressed traveler as "the most God-forsaken islands of the entire archipelago." These low coral islands are separated from the Tawi-Tawi group by the swift Sibutu Passage which acts effectively as a barrier to the passage of small water craft during certain seasons of the year. As a result, the islands enjoy less frequent intercourse with the rest of the archipelago than do the other groups. Extensive reefs characterize the area and make it one of the richest fishing grounds of the entire archipelago -- indeed, of the entire Philippines. The Cagayan de Sulu islands are politically a part of Sulu Province, but because of their isolation, have always been at the peripherals of the mainstreams of history which have passed through the other Sulu Islands. Linguistic and cultural anomalies distinguish the Cagayan people from the remaining Sulu people and they will consequently be excluded from any generalizations made about the Sulu Archipelago. "Sulu," then, will be used throughout this dissertation to include the islands of Samales, Jolo, Pangutaran, Siasi, Tawi-Tawi, and Sibutu, but excluding the islands of Cagayan de Sulu which are outside the Sulu Archipelago and Basilan which are outside the political unit of Sulu Province.

Although the Sulu Islands experience the monsoon winds, they do not have the pronounced wet and dry seasons characteristic of the monsoon
FIGURE 2. MAP OF SOUTHERN SULU
lands of continental Southeast Asia. The Northeast Monsoon is generally well established by November and lasts until April. These winds are more constant than winds of other months — sometimes blowing for four or five days at a stretch — and as a result bring some of the longest periods of cool weather, rain, and rough seas. June ushers in the less predictable Southwest Monsoon winds which last until October. The suddenness with which these winds arise and the velocity with which they sometimes blow often endanger small craft caught on the open sea. The most rain falls from June to December whereas rainless months have been reported for February and April. Sulu's yearly average temperature is 79.6°F. Recorded temperature extremes range from 95°F to 65°F; however, the difference between summer and winter mean temperatures does not exceed 2°F. (Sailing Directions for the Philippine Islands: III: 1956).

Tides are chiefly diurnal in Sulu and range from 2½ to 6½ feet. The strong tidal currents typical of some parts of the archipelago are due to the movement of waters from the Sulu and Celebes Seas over the shelf which supports the island chain. The most noteworthy currents, some of which flow up to seven knots at the spring tides, include the Basilan Current between Basilan Island and Pilas Island, the Tapaan Current between Tapaan Island and Bubuan Island, and the Sibutu Current between Bongao Island and Sibutu Island. (Sailing Directions for the Philippine Islands: III: 1956). Few Sulu sailors who know the currents are foolish enough to venture into them at their greatest strengths and, if they do, they time their entry and utilize the fast flow for what would otherwise be long and tedious travel.
The islands with sufficient rainfall and soil abound in tropical fruits, including bananas, coconuts, papayas, mangoes, lansones, oranges, guavas, jack fruit, mangosteens, and durians. The low islands have fewer varieties, and on the driest islands only the ubiquitous coconut is found. Cassava, cultivated and wild, occurs on almost all islands and is the staple food for most people of Sulu. Monkeys, wild pigs, numerous sea and land birds, lizards, and snakes are the most common inhabitants of the high islands whereas the low islands support a much sparser fauna. Jolo Island once had a small herd of elephants, a gift from a Javanese sultan to the Sultan of Sulu, but they have long since disappeared. Domesticated horses and cattle are not numerous, but are found throughout the archipelago. By far the most important fauna in Sulu is the rich marine life that not only feeds most Suluanoes but also provides one of their chief incomes.

**Ethnic Composition of Sulu**

As many beginnings, Sulu's human beginnings are shrouded in mists and greys. Virtually nothing is known of the prehistory of the archipelago and so it will remain until an archaeologist excavates a Sulu site. Three main ethnic groups reside in the islands, namely the Yakan, who live in the interior of Basilan Island; the Taosug, who occupy the most fertile islands of the Jolo and Siasi groups; and the Samal, who dominate the Tawi-Tawi and Sibutu Islands, but who also form entire populations on small islands throughout the entire island chain. All are nominal Muslims with the degree of acculturation to orthodox Islam varying among members of each group. The Yakan are less dispersed
than the Taosug or Samal, and since their home island, Basilan, is beyond the pale of this discussion, they will not be included in any generalizations about the peoples of Sulu.

Probably the ancestral Taosug peoples were the first inhabitants of the islands which are today called Sulu. The intensive cultivation of Jolo Island is mentioned by the earliest visitors to Sulu and hints that the island has been inhabited for a long time whereas the Tawi-Tawi Island, heartland of the Samal population, still has large interior tracts of fertile virgin land which suggests a more recent settlement of that island. Sulu origin stories (Saleeby 1963:36; Nimmo 1968a:39) from both Taosug and Samal traditions also claim that the Taosug were the first to live in the islands. They have always been the politically dominant group and still maintain that position today.

The Samal-speaking population is much more diverse than the Taosug. Members range from sophisticated Muslim hadjis who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca to the pagan, boat-dwelling Bajau who still spend nomadic lives in tiny houseboats. Earlier accounts of Sulu generally discuss the Samal and Bajau as separate ethnic groups, but as I have pointed out elsewhere, this division is misleading:

...these people (i.e. the Bajau) speak dialects of the Samal language, view themselves as Samal, and are identified as a group of Samal by the other people of Sulu. Perhaps their chief distinction from Sulu's other Samal is that some of them have not yet fully embraced the Islamic faith. Nonetheless, some Muslim Samal would view other Muslim Samal as different from themselves as are the so-called Bajau (Nimmo 1968a:35).

The name "Bajau" is not commonly used in Sulu to identify the boat-dwelling Samal people, but is commonly used in Borneo and Celebes
to identify the boat-dwellers of that area as well as all other Samal speakers. I have chosen to use the name because it is already established in the literature, it does not have the offensive connotations to the Bajau that some of their other local names do have, and it distinguishes the boat-dwelling Samal from the other Samal people of Sulu. "Bajau," then, shall be used to identify the boat-dwelling Samal population of Sulu, or those who occasionally still use the boat as living quarters, or those who have only recently abandoned the boat-dwelling habit. These Bajau people have been reported as far north as Surigao, Davao, and Zamboanga on Mindanao Island, in almost all the major island groups of Sulu, in eastern Borneo, and on numerous Celebes coasts.

Within Sulu, the more confirmed boat-dwellers are found in the Tawi-Tawi waters. Those at Sitangkai and the other Sibutu Islands have almost completely abandoned the boat as permanent living quarters within recent years. The Bajau of the northern islands, i.e. Siasi, Jolo, Basilan, and southern Mindanao, appear to have always been part-time boat-dwellers who use the boat as living quarters for fishing and traveling, but return to house-living when in their home vicinity.

These southern and northern divisions represent the two major groups of Bajau in Sulu. The Bajau of Tawi-Tawi, Sibutu, and Semporna form a single group; they are connected by many and important kinship ties, and intermarriage among the three areas is still fairly common. Few and insignificant kin ties extend from these people to the northern Bajau. The southern Bajau view the Siasi, Jolo, Basilan, and Zamboanga Bajau as a different, albeit a closely related, group of Samal. The
northern Bajau possibly subdivide their members further, but I can speak confidently only of the Tawi-Tawi and Sibutu people.

Several cultural differences distinguish the southern Bajau from their northern kinsmen. Within the memory of living persons, the three southern groups shared a single boat-type, the *djenging*; in fact, some of the Sirsi Bajau still refer to the Tawi-Tawi Bajau as "Samal *djenging*." Today the *djenging* has been replaced by the outriggerless *lipa* (a boat type from Borneo) among the Semporna, Sibutu, and some of the Tawi-Tawi people; only in Tawi-Tawi is it occasionally still found. The fishing techniques of these people also distinguish them from other Samal speakers of Sulu; their hand-woven fishing nets are not found elsewhere in Sulu. The art forms (flags, grave markers, and boat carvings) of the Tawi-Tawi, Sibutu, and Semporna Bajau are also different from those forms found among the northern Bajau.

Most written accounts of Sulu deal with Jolo Island and the Taosug. Few early writers traveled to the southern Sulu Islands and those who did were not sufficiently impressed to write extensively on what they saw. Earliest reports indicate that Jolo was an important center of trade for eastern Malaysia long before the present ports of Sandakan, Macassar, Cebu and Manila rose to power. At late as 1842, Charles Wilkes still reported a brisk trade between Jolo and southern China. Earlier writers describe boats and goods in Jolo from Java, Sumatra, Malaya, eastern Borneo, Celebes, Mindanao, Cambodia, China, and even distant Japan. The central location of Jolo in eastern Malaysia—as well as the traditional commercial and sailing interests of the Taosug—have contributed most significantly to its historical commercial role.
Apparently long before Islam arrived in the archipelago, it enjoyed this commercial position; indeed, it may well have been its commercial importance that attracted the first Muslim teachers and traders.

**The History of Sulu**

The Genealogy of Sulu, a Taosug tradition, credits the introduction of Islam to three men, namely Makdum, Raja Baginda, and Abu Bakr. Makdum, supposedly a scholar from Malacca, arrived in Sulu in about 1380 and visited almost all the islands of Sulu to preach his faith. About ten years after Makdum, Raja Baginda arrived in Zamboanga from Menangkabau in Sumatra. From there he went to Jolo where he was successful in establishing himself as supreme ruler of that island. Some time later Abu Bakr arrived and married the daughter of Raja Baginda. He eventually took over his father-in-law's leadership position and is most important in early Sulu history for reorganizing the Muslim church and the political and legal structure of the sultanate (Saleeby 1963). The line between myth and reality is so thin in the Genealogy that it is dangerous to trust it too fully as a historical document. More recent students have suggested that Islam may have been introduced to Sulu from southern China (Majul 1963:xii). The possibility is not moot considering the extensive Muslim missionizing in southern China at that time and the frequent trade between China and Sulu. But until further evidence is discovered, the origins of Sulu's Islam must rest with other unknowns, and perhaps unknowables, of Malaysia.

Spanish conflict with the Muslim Filipinos occurred almost simultaneous with Spain's arrival in the Philippines. Although the
stronghold of Philippine Islam was concentrated in Sulu and southern Mindanao, small enclaves of Muslims were scattered throughout the Visayas and as far north as Manila. Had Spain arrived 100 years later, she probably would have found Islam over the entire Philippines. The small Muslim settlements in the north could offer little resistance to the Spanish forces who, with amazing speed, conquered and christianized the low land areas of Luzon, the Visayas and northern Mindanao. With these easy victories behind them, a Spanish fleet set out in 1578 with orders to reduce Sulu to a vassal state and to wipe out the "accursed doctrine" of Islam. The Spaniards attacked Jolo and reported a sound defeat of the Muslims there; however, they established no garrison in Jolo and consequently no foothold in the archipelago. Their first attack did little more than to arouse the ire of the Muslims. This was the first of what was to be a long series of attacks and counter-attacks which lasted throughout the Spanish occupation of the Philippines.

Several times throughout the period, the Muslims suffered devastating defeats, but because the Spaniards unwisely never occupied the sites of their victories, the lands immediately fell back to Muslim control.

In 1899, the Americans arrived in Jolo and the Spaniards, probably happily, handed over their troublesome stepchild to the new administrators. The Americans soon discovered that the Muslims were once again claiming sovereignty in Sulu and were ill-disposed to give up to the new invaders. Before America gained control of Sulu another bloody chapter was to be written in Philippine history.

Until 1913, battles between the Muslims and American troops were common. The superior weapons of the Americans brought them many
victories, but nonetheless, the Muslim outlaws and bandits persisted with a tenacity that sometimes taxes credibility. In 1913, a decisive American victory against Muslim outlaws on Mount Bagsak established the United States as master of Sulu. Individual bandits and pirates occasionally rebelled, but no major battles occurred during the remainder of American control of the Philippines.

Prior to 1913, the lawlessness which prevailed in Sulu had been met by a military government. With the subjugation of the Muslims in that year, the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was established with a civilian governor. In 1920, Sulu was placed under the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, and became a regular province in 1921. Throughout this period of peace in Sulu, American influence spread and many of the islands, especially in the south, were visited for the first time by foreigners. Americans made their greatest impact through the establishment of public schools. Their reputation as good fighters and the tolerance they accorded the Muslim religion had already won the respect of most Suluans; consequently, they were ready to trust the American schools. However, with the fall of Corregidor and Bataan, war again returned to Sulu. Japanese bases were established at Jolo and Tawi-Tawi, and during the final months of the war, the Sulu Sea was the scene of several fierce naval battles. Throughout the war, Muslim guerilla troops resisted the Japanese, and offered immediate support to the returning liberation troops. In 1946, the Philippines gained complete independence from the United States, but it was not until 1957 that Sulu had its first elected governor.
Shortly following the war, most of Sulu's pre-war economy was re-established. Copra continues to be the most important export and its production is found throughout the archipelago. Kapok is an important export from Jolo Island, as are certain fruits not found elsewhere in the Philippines. Sea products, especially fish, are second only to copra in export value. Within the past two or three years, a certain sea weed native to Sulu reefs has been exported in great quantities to European and American chemical firms; sea shells and tripang are other important marine exports. Although Sulu pearls continue to hold world acclaim, the post-war pearling industry has never reached its pre-war peak. Quick post-war fortunes have been amassed by some Suluans through the lucrative smuggling activities between Sulu and Sabah.

Airplanes and various water craft connect Sulu with the rest of the world. Daily flights tie Jolo to Zamboanga while four times a week, planes fly on down the archipelago to Tawi-Tawi. Numerous inter-island ships regularly move between Zamboanga and Jolo; only three such ships make weekly trips down the archipelago with ports-of-call at Siasi, Bongao, and Sitangkai to pick up copra and marine products, and to deposit manufactured items which in turn are transported to the more remote islands.

Today, like much of the Philippines, Sulu is an interesting study in contrasts. Wealthy Jolo business men live in penthouse-like homes equipped with the luxuries and conveniences of the West while at the wharf only a few hundred yards away are Bajau families living in the small houseboats they have lived in for unknown centuries. Airplanes fly up and down the archipelago above the colorful sails of native
outrigger dugouts. Rock and roll dances of the youthful elite in Jolo compete with the clamour of the gongs and drums of traditional Muslim ceremonies. But, as one moves away from Jolo and the main port towns, the guise of the West falls away. In the more remote islands, life moves much as it has moved for many, many years. A full moon at Sitangkai may set the scene for the graceful dances of the shamans who dwell there. An evening elsewhere invites the plaintive song of an itinerant Sulu balladeer. Occasional pirates still rear their heads to make Manila headlines. Throughout the islands, the color of Islam has blended with native Sulu traditions to create spectacular ceremonies of marriage, horling, and prayer. Fishermen fish much as they have always fished, and farmers farm much as they have always farmed. And largely because of the different streams of history that have moved through its waters, Sulu exists as an archipelago apart from the remaining Philippines. Thus, for a northern Filipino, a visit to the far south -- to the Sulu Islands -- is like a visit to a foreign land.
PART II

THE BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU OF TAWI-TAWI
CHAPTER I
HABITAT

This chapter deals with the geography of the Tawi-Tawi Islands, home of the boat-dwelling Bajau, and describes the ethnic composition of the islands. The major Bajau moorages are described, followed by a discussion of factors which contribute to the movements of the boat-dwelling Bajau of Tawi-Tawi.

Geography of Tawi-Tawi

The Tawi-Tawi island group of Sulu takes its name from the long, narrow island of Tawi-Tawi which stretches in a northeast-southwest direction some 40 miles. The verdant forests and rugged volcanic peaks of the island provide a mountainous backdrop for the dozens of small, coral islands flanked about its southern shores. For unknown centuries, its human inhabitants have chosen to live in pile dwellings built along its miles of coast, and even today, except for a few notable penetrations, the interior of the island is still virgin forest. To the north and west of the island are the deep waters of the open sea, dotted with rich fishing grounds well-known to Tawi-Tawi's sea-faring population. Compared to other seas of the world, these waters are calm and gentle, but nonetheless, during the seasons of the monsoons only the more hardy venture upon them. To the east and especially the south of the island, the seas are shallow and filled with myriad coral islands and reefs which make navigation by large ships virtually impossible. At high tide, the waters are as varicolored as only coral seas can be, but at low tide the great, sprawling reefs lie ugly and exposed. It is among these
southern reefs and islands that the Tawi-Tawi Bajau have carved their unique ecological niche; their small houseboats ply the waters as regularly and as persistently as the fishes themselves.

Fairly uniform climatic conditions prevail in Tawi-Tawi throughout the year, and there are no seasons of winds and rains when fishermen cannot go to the open sea, although during certain months the sea is considerably rougher and the weather less predictable. The Northeast Monsoon is usually well established in Tawi-Tawi by November and lasts until the latter part of March, but the winds never reach the force of the gales in the South China Sea, and seldom cause more than occasional squalls. May ushers in the Southwest Monsoon which lasts until October. For the most part, winds are gentle during this season, although heavy rain squalls and stormy weather characteristically occur in July and August. However, during neither of the monsoon seasons do stretches of bad weather last longer than two or three days to prevent fishing or traveling.

Several ocean currents in Tawi-Tawi are fairly swift during the spring tides, but none are exceedingly dangerous to the experienced sailor. The most treacherous current, in the Sibutu Passage between Simunul and Sibutu Islands, has been known to drift unwary sailors well into the Celebes Sea. However, this Sibutu Current is well-known to local sea-farers, and they seldom venture into it during its periods of greatest strength. Tawi-Tawi sailors utilize winds and currents whenever possible during their travels. Journeys may be delayed a day or so in order to catch a favorable wind, and similarly, travel is
often initiated during day or night hours when tidal currents provide the most efficient transport.

Because of the many islands in Sulu, it is rarely necessary to travel beyond the sight of land, and consequently islands and mountains are important navigational guides. Among the best known land marks in Tawi-Tawi are the fabled, imposing mountain peak of Bongao Island, the Sibutu Hill, and the mountains of Tawi-Tawi Island. During nocturnal hours, native boats are guided by stars, the moon, and winds, as well as the mountains which are visible for some distance during full moon.

Important islands and settlements in Tawi-Tawi include Sanga-Sanga, home of the southernmost outpost of the Philippine Air Force and a landing strip for Philippine Air Lines; Bongao, the trading and commercial center of Tawi-Tawi; Batu-Batu, the former trading center of the area, but now important as a base for the Philippine Navy. Large land-dwelling Samal populations live on the islands of Tandubas, Tabauwan, South Ubian, and Simunul. With the noteworthy exceptions of Tawi-Tawi and Bongao, most islands of the area are low coral islands, unsuited for intensive agriculture and perennially short of drinking water.

All trading routes in Tawi-Tawi lead to Bongao, the port of call for the inter-island steamers which travel weekly up and down the archipelago. Many motor launches also utilize Bongao's port for the goods and passengers they transport throughout Tawi-Tawi. In addition, hundreds of native boats, still wind- and man-powered, daily visit the
FIGURE 3. MAP OF TAWI-TAWI ISLANDS

LEGEND

1. Luuk Tulai
2. Tungkaling
3. Lamiun
4. Tungbangkao
5. Lioboran
Bongao traders with their small wares of fish, garden produce, and handicrafts. Bongao's population, conservatively listed as 1615 by the 1960 Census, probably now consists of some 5000 persons. This population, as all Tawi-Tawi, is predominantly Samal with a growing Taosug community which, for the most part, is post-World War II. A few northern Christian Filipinos hold professional and governmental jobs, while the economy of the town is almost exclusively in the hands of a few Chinese families. The market of Bongao, the so-called Chinese Pier, is built on piles over the sea, connected to land by boardwalks. Each morning, crowds from all over Tawi-Tawi, throng the shops to purchase goods in exchange for their own wares. The color of the clientele is only matched by the goods for sale. Here the buyer can purchase parrots in rattan cages, fish of every color of the rainbow, native-made mats and basketry, cigarettes from Borneo, dry goods from India, Javanese tea, petromax lanterns from the United States, cure-all medicines from Singapore, Japanese transistor radios -- the list is only suggestive of the variety of goods which enter and leave Bongao's shops.

**Ethnic Composition of Tawi-Tawi**

The 1960 Census does not provide a population break-down by language for Tawi-Tawi, but probably over 75 percent of the population is Samal with 20 percent Taosug, and the remaining five percent Chinese and northern Christian Filipino. The large number of Samal-speakers is somewhat misleading in that it connotes a cultural uniformity to the area which in fact is not completely the case. Although a general "Samal culture" may be described for Tawi-Tawi, nonetheless almost each island
of Samal-speakers is somewhat unique from all others. Dialectal differences, occupational specializations, values, material culture, religious beliefs, and in some cases, physical differences, tend to set-off the various groups. As a result, the Samal-speakers normally identify themselves by their island, sometimes even village, rather than by "Samal" which, because of its generic nature, has little identification value among them.

By far the most unique group of Samal-speakers are the boat-dwellers, the so-called Bajau. In fact, their uniqueness led earlier observers to describe them as a people separate from the remaining Samal population, but as earlier noted, this is not the case, and they are best regarded as a sub-culture of the general Samal culture. Their most obvious distinctions from the land-dwelling Samal are the boat-dwelling habit, their "pagan" religion, and certain physical features which can be directly traced to the boat-dwelling habit. All of these traits mark them as a lowly outcast group in the eyes of the Muslim land-dwellers. In Tawi-Tawi the Bajau number approximately 1600 and represent only about four percent of the total Tawi-Tawi population. Their moorages are all located in the western half of the Tawi-Tawi group, and except for occasional fishing trips, they rarely leave these waters. The Tawi-Tawi Bajau are the most conservative of all the Sulu Samal, and probably reflect much of pre-Islamic Samal culture. Their sea-borne homes, which effectively isolate them from the land-dwelling peoples, seem most responsible for this conservatism; it is significant, in this respect, that other Bajau groups in Sulu who have abandoned the boat-dwelling life to become
house-dwellers, have, or are quickly becoming, amalgamated into Islamic Samal culture, e.g. the Sitangkai Bajau. Although greatly influenced by Sulu Islam, the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers are still regarded as pagans by the surrounding Muslim peoples.

Most Bajau are physically distinct from the neighboring populations, but many of these distinctions can be traced to their unique sea life, and are not genetic. Because of frequent diving and exposure to the sun, the Bajau skin is darker than that of other Sulu people and their hair is frequently bleached to various shades of red and sometimes, especially among the children, even blond. A permanent squint, apparently the result of staring into the sun's reflection on the sea, is characteristic of most adults. The Bajau habit of chewing a betel nut mixture, formerly practiced by most adult natives of Sulu, causes blackened teeth and red-stained lips. Legs of adult Bajau are often under-developed due to the hours spent squatting every day with legs jack-knifed while paddling and living in the houseboats. Seemingly as a result of this continual squatting, many of the older people are unable to lock their knees when they stand upright, and the skin on their kneecaps is loose and wrinkled. A deformation of the lower spine (also apparently due to the sitting position) causes the buttocks of some to protrude abnormally when they stand upright. These physical adaptations to boat-living make the Bajau gait distinctive, and the sea people are easily recognized on this basis alone. On land their walk appears clumsy and uncertain, but when moving on the boats or from boat to boat, their movements are extremely agile. In contrast to the under-developed lower extremities, torsos and arms are muscular and well-developed, especially
among the men who spend much of their time paddling and handling the heavy boats.

Many Bajau, however, do not reveal these physical adaptations to boat-living, and cannot be physically distinguished from the surrounding Samal and Taosug populations. Nonetheless, after several months among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, I was able to distinguish most of them from the Tawi-Tawi land-dwelling people, as well as from the northern Bajau groups. Other people in Sulu, attentive to the Bajau, have also indicated that they can discern similar physical differences among the groups. This is no doubt partly due to a long history of endogamous marriage.

Bajau clothing is very simple. Children usually wear no clothes until about the age of ten. Men generally wear only short pants or the hosi, a versatile, sarong-like garment which can be worn as a skirt, a loin cloth, a robe, or a turban. Sometimes only a small cloth is tied around the waist, apron-like, to cover the genitals, and frequently when diving the men go naked. Women wear only a sarong in the village, but always don a blouse when they leave; teen-age girls always cover their breasts until they are married and have their first child. Both sexes wear loose, baggy trousers, called sahwal, the legs of which the men often pull up and tuck into the waist, thereby converting the garment into a loin cloth. Women prefer long hair, sometimes hanging loose to the shoulders, but more commonly tied into a knot at the back of the head. Formerly the men also had loose, long hair, but now most have Western-style hair cuts, although some of the older men, especially religious persons, still do not cut their hair.
Bajau Villages in Tawi-Tawi

Lone Bajau houseboats and occasional clusters of houseboats can be seen at any time throughout the Tawi-Tawi waters. However, such small groupings generally consist of Bajau on fishing trips or enroute to some other destination, and cannot be considered permanent Bajau settlements. Five villages are recognized as permanent boat villages by the Bajau; these are "villages" in that they are moorages where some houseboats are always found, the number of which depends upon factors to be discussed below. These five villages surround the seas most commonly exploited by the sea folk (see Map 2).

The northernmost Tawi-Tawi Bajau village is Luuk Tulai, located about a quarter of a mile seaward of the land village of the same name on the northwest tip of Tawi-Tawi Island. The village has an average of 25 boats and no houses, providing a total population of approximately 125 persons. The boats are moored on a large reef, partly exposed at low tide, which extends seaward about a half mile. The Bajau village is several hundred feet from the land village and intercourse between the two is mainly economic in nature.

Tungkalang is located on the southwest tip of Sanga-Sanga Island, about eight miles from Luuk Tulai. The name of the village is taken from the long, narrow, exposed reef which protects the community from the open sea, and means literally "coral-covered point." The village is also known among the Bajau as Landing, after the nearby air field; Tubig Salang, after the nearby land village; or simply Sanga-Sanga. At its southernmost point, the exposed reef is about a quarter of a mile from Sanga-Sanga Island and extends northward almost parallel
FIGURE 1. BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU VILLAGE

FIGURE 5. HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU VILLAGE
to the island for about two miles until it finally joins the mainland. Thus, with Sanga-Sanga Island, it forms a long, narrow, shallow bay, parts of which are exposed at low tide. At the mouth of this bay is located the Bajau settlement. Barren of vegetation, the southern extension of the reef, near the Bajau village, is used for building and repairing boats, drying nets, children's games, weddings, and other village activities. The only building on the reef is the Catholic mission school erected in 1962. When I first knew the village in 1963, its population averaged about 400 over a six month period; however, when I returned to the village in 1965-67, its population averaged only about 250 over an 18 month period. In addition to the boats, there were 17 poorly constructed houses in January of 1964; by April of 1967, that number had grown to 30.

Lamiun is a small Bajau settlement located on the northern point of Bongao Island, near the town of Bongao. Only nine houses are at Lamiun and the number of boats varies greatly since Bajau visiting Bongao usually anchor their boats at this village. Located about 1000 feet from Bongao Island, the Bajau houses and boats form a separate community, unconnected to the town of Bongao. For weddings and other ceremonials, the Lamiun people usually make the two and a half mile trip to Tungkalang. My count of boats at Lamiun ranged from 4 to 30 and because of the very transient nature of Lamiun's population, an average figure is not too significant. However, the average I determined is nine, which, added to the nine houses, provides a total population of 90 for the village.
Located about 17 miles from Lamiun near the northwest point of Bilatan Island, Tungbangkao is the only Bajau village with non-Bajau residents. The nearby rich fishing grounds provide the chief income for the Bajau who sell their catches to the resident land-Samal traders. The village is named after a nearby mangrove-covered island, and is about two miles from Bilatan Island. Fifty houses have been built in the village, about half of which belong to land-Samal. In addition, there are normally about 35 boats in the village, providing a total population of approximately 450. The land Samal houses are fairly well dispersed among the Bajau houses, and there is considerable social intercourse between the two groups; however, there has been no intermarriage. The land-Samal have only been at Tungbangkao for about four years, many having come from nearby islands to buy the fish of the Bajau. The entire island of Bilatan plus the Tijitiji Islands to the south are encompassed by the great Biloc-Biloc Reef which is partly exposed at low tide. This reef plus the Tijitiji Reef and the islands of Simmunul, Sangasiapu, Bongao, Sanga-Sanga, and Tawi-Tawi form a protective barrier to the open sea, thereby creating an almost lagoon-like calm in the Tawi-Tawi Bay. The excellent fishing grounds within this barrier attract Bajau from all over Tawi-Tawi.

The fifth and final Bajau village in Tawi-Tawi is located east of Lioboran, a tiny island in the Tijitiji group, about six miles south of Tungbangkao. This small village, also known as Lioboran, has no houses and normally about 25 boats, a total population of approximately 125. Like Tungbangkao, its population greatly increases at full moon when Bajau from the Sanga-Sanga area come to fish at Bilatan. It, too, is
located on the large Biloc-Biloc Reef and has a perennial drinking water problem.

Two other islands important to the Tawi-Tawi Bajau are Bilatan Poon, west of Bilatan Island, and Bunabunaan, between Bilatan and Lioboran. The traditional burial grounds of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, these uninhabited, low islands serve to identify the Tawi-Tawi boat people as a single group, and distinguish them from the other Bajau of Sulu who have their own burial islands. On both islands the Bajau cemeteries are located near land-Samal graves, but the elaborate Bajau grave structures are quite distinct from the simple land-Samal markers. The cemetery on Bunabunaan is the largest, with about 40 family graves, while Bilatan Poon has only about 10 such graves. These islands are not considered particularly sacred by the Bajau, but are generally approached with some apprehension since it is believed that the spirits of the deceased hover around the graves for a time after death.

Although each of the Bajau villages is in some respects unique, the five share a number of common features. The flotillas are always located on a protected reef, partly exposed at low tide, which serves also as a source of edible marine life. This reef may be very small, as at Lamiun, or it may extend for several miles, as does the one at Tungbangkao. Part of this exposed reef, or the nearby beach, is used for boat-building and other work by the adults, and as a play area by the children. Generally several shallow channels are found among the boats, as well as a deeper channel which serves as a main passage for boats entering and leaving the village at low tide. Throughout the village area, poles stuck into the reef are used for mooring the boats. The sea folk are usually found
only a few hundred yards from land villages, and relations between the
two groups are normally symbiotic in nature with the boat people trading
fish for the cassava and fruits of the land-dwellers. With the exception
of the land-dwelling Samal population at Tungbangkao, no non-Bajau people
live in the villages. Only Tungbangkao has a few small stores operated
by the land-Samal fish buyers; the other villages have no retail stores
of any sort.

Visitors to Tawi-Tawi would probably note other Bajau moorages.
For example, a flotilla of eight or ten houseboats may moor for a week
or so at a particular anchorage as they fish the nearby waters; however,
after exhausting the waters, they return to their home villages or move
on to other fishing grounds. In no sense can these flotilla be considered
permanent moorages. During the northeast monsoons, some Bajau boats moor
near certain land villages where they plant small plots of dry rice on
land loaned by land-dwelling friends, but after the harvest, they return
to their home villages. As a result of these temporary moorages, it is
difficult to make any hard-fast statements regarding Bajau settlements.
The above five villages appear to have been Bajau moorages for a good
number of years, but should any sort of trouble arise, they could easily
disappear overnight. About ten years ago, a Bajau flotilla regularly
moored near the land-village of Karundung on the southeastern part of
Sanga-Sanga Island. A group of Taosug outlaws from Jolo attacked the
land-village, killing 17 people. Within a matter of hours after the
news was learned, the Bajau boats dispersed—some to Bongao to form the
present village of Lamiun, and others to the Bilatan villages. During
my first visit to Tawi-Tawi in 1963, a sizeable Bajau flotilla was
located near northern Sanga-Sanga, across the channel from Luuk Tulai. After I left, four Bajau men died mysteriously enough to convince the boat-dwellers that evil spirits were plaguing the village and that it was no longer a safe place to dwell. When I returned to the site in 1965, not a single Bajau boat was moored there.

The total population of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau is no more than 1500, an approximate four percent of the entire Tawi-Tawi population. The Bajau villages are concentrated in the western half of Tawi-Tawi, and although these villages are normally located only a few hundred feet from land-dwelling Samal villages, the social distance between the two groups is great. The sea has effectively separated the two peoples, a traditional separation which was intensified when the land-dwellers were converted to Islam while the Bajau retained their native religious beliefs. The sea continues to isolate the Bajau from the mainstreams of influence which have brought Western elements to the land-dwelling society in post-war years.

Apparently throughout their history in Tawi-Tawi, the small numbers of the Bajau have never given anyone serious pause. The Bajau were never incorporated into the Sulu sultanate nor do they have any tradition of allegiance to any of the Tawi-Tawi datu who once claimed sovereignty over the land-dwellers. The Spaniards had little influence in Sulu, and even less among the Bajau. American administrators found the Bajau population small enough to ignore while they attended to the more pressing problems of the land-dwellers, and similarly, the government of the independent Philippine nation has had enough problems in Sulu without concerning itself with the affairs of a handful of boat-
dwellers. Thus, their small population, coupled with the nomadic boat-dwelling habit, has been an important factor in the retention of their traditional way of life.

**Movements of the Bajau**

The population of a single Bajau boat-village varies greatly at different times of the month and at different seasons of the year. For example, on a Monday of an October week in 1965, a wedding had attracted 120 houseboats to the village of Tungkalang; by Thursday of that week, only 28 houseboats remained in the village. During the season of the northeast monsoons, the winds sometimes build up swells in the open sea which break over the protective reefs of Luuk Tulai and Tungkalang to cause considerable agitation in the reef waters and occasional damage to houseboats. As a result, during this season, many Bajau choose to leave these villages to fish the calm Bilatan waters or to moor near other land-dwelling villages more protected from the destructive breakers where they sometimes plant dry rice on borrowed land.

Fishing cycles also determine Bajau movements. During the spring tides of the full moon, seas spill over the normally exposed reefs of Bilatan to attract fish from the deeper waters to the newly created feeding grounds. Awaiting their arrival are Bajau from all over Tawi-Tawi, including many from the western villages, who monthly make the trip to Bilatan at full moon. As the moon wanes and the differences between high and low tides are less dramatic, other types of fishing become more practical. At the time of these neap tides, the Bilatan reefs are again the scene of intensive fishing in the form of communal fish drives practiced by the reef-dwelling Bajau when fish are attracted
to the reefs in great schools for feeding. Tides, winds, and of course, fish must be properly disposed during the daylight hours to make this type of fishing feasible; as a result, during the neaps of many months when it is practiced, many Sanga-Sanga Bajau travel to Bilatan to join the drive. When the moon disappears completely, the Bajau engage in net fishing with pressure lanterns. This type of fishing is lucrative on many reefs throughout Tawi-Tawi and contributes to a great deal of Bajau movements; Bilatan Bajau regularly seek the fish on Sanga-Sanga reefs whereas the Sanga-Sanga people equally regularly visit the Bilatan reefs in search of the same fish. Many other types of fishing are, of course, practiced during the month, but the above types attract the greatest number of fishermen at any single time.

The deep seas to the west of the Sanga-Sanga villages have several fishing grounds which yield large fish to the hook and line fisherman, and some of these Bajau engage almost exclusively in this type of fishing and rarely travel to the Bilatan reefs. At one time, the reefs of the Basun Islands apparently attracted almost as many Bajau as presently do the Bilatan reefs; however, in recent years the area has been rumored to be the hangout of Jolo outlaws and Bajau fishermen have consequently avoided those reefs. More Sanga-Sanga Bajau travel to the Bilatan reefs for fishing than do Bilatan Bajau to Sanga-Sanga; nonetheless, in spite of the rich fishing grounds in their home waters, many Bilatan Bajau regularly visit the deep sea fishing grounds of the Sanga-Sanga villages. Shark fishing attracts many of them to the seas off Sanga-Sanga during the northeast monsoons, as do the above-mentioned fishing grounds during all periods of the year.
For those few Bilatan Bajau who wish to practice agriculture during the growing season of the northeast monsoon, they must temporarily reside near Sanga-Sanga or Tawi-Tawi villages since the dry, rocky islands of Bilatan do not allow this type of cultivation. Even the Sanga-Sanga Bajau frequently go to another village where a land-dwelling friend permits them to use his land for their small gardens.

Ceremonies contribute to much Bajau movements. Kinsmen are, of course, expected to attend ceremonies of marriage, healing, and circumcision, and since any Bajau's kinsmen are scattered among the five major villages, a single ceremony in one of the villages attracts visitors from the others. Not surprisingly, the ceremonial cycles complement the general movements of the fishing cycles: The Bilatan villages hold their ceremonies during full moon, apparently to take advantage of the many visiting fishermen already in the area, while in the Sanga-Sanga villages, ceremonies are held during the period of no moon when the villagers have returned from the full moon fishing at Bilatan and when many of the Bilatan people are in the area to sell their full-moon catches in Bongao.

The two small cemetery islands at Bilatan, Bunabunaan and Bilatan Poon, also account for some Bajau movements. Since all Bajau are buried on these islands, a death in any of the villages means that an entourage of mourners must travel to one of the cemetery islands for the burial. In addition, the nature of Bajau religious beliefs demands that periodic visits be made to the graves of deceased relatives.

Because the Bilatan Islands produce no cassava and have no potable water, it is necessary for these Bajau to make periodic journeys to Tawi-Tawi or Sanga-Sanga to obtain these necessities. Also, the Bilatan
Islands have no trees suitable for boat-building. Consequently, if a Bilatan Bajau needs to construct a new boat, he usually moves to one of the Sanga-Sanga Bajau villages which are located near forests with trees suitable for boat-building. Rather than attempt to pull the large logs back to his home village, he normally remains at the Sanga-Sanga village until the boat is completed.

The nomadic territory of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau is difficult to delimit since some Bajau have traveled almost the entire length of the Sulu Archipelago, while others have never been outside the Tawi-Tawi area. However, most Bajau travels are limited to the Tawi-Tawi vicinity, with occasional fishing trips to Sitangkai. The area enclosed by the dotted lines on Map 2 indicates the waters most commonly frequented by the Tawi-Tawi sea folk; the boundary must be considered a rough mode, since some Bajau seldom travel outside the Tawi-Tawi Bay while others often go far into the open sea. The nomadic territory most commonly exploited by a Bajau generally does not exceed 25 miles in any direction from his home village.

Bajau men travel more extensively than women, and younger men travel most of all, sometimes going on long fishing trips of several weeks' duration. Although economic reasons are generally advanced for taking such trips, they seem to be undertaken primarily to satisfy the young men's desires to visit the islands of which they have so often heard their elders speak. Almost all the Tawi-Tawi Bajau men have been to Sitangkai (a distance of 40 miles), whereas fewer have traveled to
Siasi (75 miles) and Jolo (100 miles). Several Bajau from Tawi-Tawi have traveled to Zamboanga (200 miles) and a considerable number have visited Bajau villages in the Darvel Bay region of Sabah (75 miles).

Much popular ink has been spilled on the reportedly senseless wanderings of these "sea gypsies" who are usually depicted as aimless wanderers drifting a carefree life over romantic seas. Such is certainly not the case. A touch of wanderlust may account for some Bajau travels, but most are undertaken for practical, necessary reasons, and are patterned and predictable.
CHAPTER II

THE HOUSEHOLD

Major features of the boat-dwelling Bajau household are discussed in this chapter. The chapter begins with a discussion of the nuclear family household and its several variations, followed by residence patterns, marriage patterns, and divorce. The chapter concludes with a discussion of inter-personal relations within the household group.

Household Composition

The independent nuclear family of a man, his wife, and their children is the basic unit of Bajau society. It consequently is not surprising to find that the strongest, most enduring, and most important kin relationships are those fostered within this unit called mataan by the Bajau. The nuclear family is the only face-to-face grouping of individuals that endures over an extensive period of time and even its span is limited by the life of its members and the marriage of its offspring. Although regularly associated with a larger grouping of kinsmen, the nuclear family is extremely self-sufficient. Much of its time is spent traveling or fishing alone away from the larger Bajau community, and even when at rest in a moorage, the isolation given each houseboat by the water separating it from others acts effectively in providing a great deal of privacy to its occupants.

A survey of Bajau households reveals two basic features: 1) The household ideally consists of a single nuclear family and any variation of this is either temporary or an adjustment to a fragmented nuclear family; and 2) Each broken nuclear family adds persons so that it approxi-
mates the structure of the nuclear household. Reasons for this are practical and realistic. First, the size of a Bajau houseboat limits the size of the household, since the average living area of the houseboat is only about ten feet long, five feet wide, and four feet high; consequently, few houseboats are large enough to accommodate more than a single nuclear family even by the Bajau cramped definition of comfort. Secondly, the Bajau household has a fairly well-defined division of labor between husband and wife; essentially, the husband provides sustenance and protection while the wife cares for the household and the children. While it is not impossible for a widow or widower to live alone, it is difficult, and often taxes their immediate kinsmen who must frequently fill the vacant role. As a result, widows or widowers remarry as soon as possible or form alliances with kinsmen who are left in similar circumstances.

Although the most common household composition found among the boat-dwelling Bajau is that of the nuclear family, i.e. husband, wife, and their unmarried offspring, an average of five members, Table I reveals that considerable variation is found within this common structure.

A biological rather than structural variation of the nuclear family is the case when a man and his wife adopt children. Not uncommonly, a childless couple raises an orphaned child or takes a child or two of a sibling who has more children than he can manage. Sometimes they may be the only children in the household, or they may have adoptive siblings, but in either case, they are treated as biological offspring. Probably there are more cases of adoptions among the Bajau than I was able to discover since such children are normally referred to by the same term used
### TABLE I. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF BOAT-DWELLING BAJAU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Nuclear family.</th>
<th>103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Nuclear family plus additional members.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and widowed father or husband.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and widowed mother of wife</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family, widowed mother of wife,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorced sister of wife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and wife's widowed mother and widowed sister.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and unmarried adult nephew of husband</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and unmarried male patrilateral cousin of husband</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Extended families.</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and married son and family</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and two married sons and families</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and married daughter and husband</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family and mother and father of husband and wife</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow and children and her nephew and his wife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Fragmented families.</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widower and children.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow and children.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow, her two sons, her two teenaged brothers and her widowed father.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower and his grandson</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow and her children and her widowed mother</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two widows (second cousins) and children of one</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>132</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for biological offspring and their adopted status is not significant in the family structure or sentiment. Consequently, unless pressed to do so, a Bajau rarely mentions that a child is adopted.

Frequently an aged adult, a widow or widower, will attach himself to a nuclear household. Most commonly, this is a parent or both parents of either the husband or wife. Occasionally an aged couple may join a nuclear family household, but usually, as long as they are both alive and still able, an old couple lives alone until the death of one. If an aged person has several children, he normally moves among their several houseboats rather than stay with one child permanently. There are some cases, however, where an aged adult has chosen to remain permanently with one of his married children either because there is no space for him elsewhere, there is greater need for the small services he can offer the household, or because of close emotional ties with that particular child. On rare occasions, an aged person lives alone. I encountered only three such persons among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. One was an eccentric old widow who had such great supernatural powers that even her own children were afraid of her. A second widow had only two sons both of whom had many children and consequently full houseboats. As a result, she moored her old houseboat next to one of the sons and although she was not an actual member of his household, she was intimately involved in its activities. The third case was an old widower who was so quarrelsome that he could not get along with his children; his children provided him sustenance, but he refused to live with any of them.

Other variations of the Bajau household include the extended family. This normally consists of a newly wed couple who are temporarily staying
with one of the sets of parents, or perhaps with an older married sibling, until they can obtain their own houseboat. Frequently, such newlyweds pass among the several houseboats of their parents and married siblings for a week or so at a stretch, becoming better acquainted with their in-laws as they work toward their own boat. Another version of the extended family, mentioned above, is that of an aged couple living with their married child.

Several closely related adults who have been left without spouses and constitute "fragmented families" (Table I) sometimes form a household for their mutual economic and social benefit. In one case a widow and her two small children lived with her aged, widowed father and her two, unmarried teen-aged brothers. The benefits of such an arrangement to both families are obvious. Alone the widow and her sons would always be in need of fish and other goods supplied by the Bajau male, while, similarly, the old man and his two sons would find it troublesome to live without a woman to perform the female duties of the household. By joining together, the two families complete the economic structure of the household and all members benefit. A second household of this type included a widow and her widowed brother and his three children. Although the two adults maintained their separate houseboats, they acted as a single household unit and normally ate together. In another case, a newly wed couple, both from large households, lived with the groom's widowed aunt (mother's sister) and her children, partly because both parental households were crowded and partly because the widow needed the services of a male in her household.

Orphaned, unmarried siblings of either the husband or wife are sometimes found attached to nuclear family units. Normally these are the
youngest members of their families and are staying with siblings only until they marry and form their own households.

**Residence Patterns**

Much diversity is revealed as to where each household, whether an independent nuclear family or a reconstituted or variant form of it, prefers to moor its houseboat, its movable dwellings. By far the most dominant Bajau residence pattern may be called, for lack of a better term, ambilocal, a general term which covers a number of residence variations. For the few, truly nomadic Bajau it refers to their lifelong movements among the several Bajau villages and fishing grounds in Tawi-Tawi. For couples who otherwise reside at a single village it refers to those movements which monthly take them away from the village in pursuit of fish. For some couples it is a conscious decision to spend part of the year in the home waters of the husband and the other part in the home waters of the wife. For still other couples, it refers to their seasonal residence near certain fertile islands where they practice agriculture.

Because of the frequent movements of Bajau houseboats, the residence pattern in a Bajau village on any single day is different, and sometimes dramatically different, from the pattern found on any other day. Table II, constructed from residence surveys taken at the village of Tungakalang on three different occasions, illustrates the changing nature of Bajau residence.
TABLE II. CHANGING RESIDENCE PATTERNS AT TUNGKALANG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of residence</th>
<th>Nov., 1965</th>
<th>Dec., 1965</th>
<th>Jan., 1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Uxorilocal village</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Virilocal village</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Natolocal village</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neolocal village</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Virilocal village</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Virilocal household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Uxorilocal village</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uxorilocal household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uxorilocal village</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Virilocal household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Natolocal village</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Virilocal household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If one were to survey Bajau public opinion as to the type of post-marital residence practiced by the Bajau, he would discover, as I did, that most Bajau profess the ideal that after marriage, the couple should spend the first few months moving between the villages, or houseboats, of both sets of parents, and then eventually settle down to married life in the village of the wife; i.e. an initial ambilocality which develops into a more permanent uxorilocality. However, as many social ideals, their stated preference does not always reflect reality, and more practical considerations determine the actual residence patterns of the Bajau.

An initial ambilocality is typical of most marriages. Since frequently newlyweds are from different villages, the ambilocal practice allows them to become acquainted with their new in-laws while at the same time
relieves the strain from a single household of having to support and find space for an additional person. Sometimes the couple may forego the initial ambilocality and live in the houseboat of a kinsmen who needs a male or female to complete the household unit. In one case, mentioned earlier, this was the groom's mother's widowed sister who needed an adult male in the household and had space for the extra couple. In another case, it was a widowed man who needed his new daughter-in-law to assume the female responsibilities of his household. Sometimes if one set of parents has a small and crowded houseboat, the couple may spend all their first months with the other set of parents who has more space for them. But whatever the case, the couple expects, and is expected, to have their own houseboat within a year or so after marriage, and most usually do.

Residence becomes even more complicated after the couple acquires its own boat. Some Bajau seldom leave a single moorage whereas others spend almost their entire lives traveling among the five Bajau moorages in Tawi-Tawi; most Bajau fall somewhere between these two extremes. Those Bajau who rarely travel beyond their home moorages are normally those who have married persons from that same moorage. Often these people are less dependent upon fishing as a livelihood than most Bajau and practice boat-building or agriculture. What fishing they do is limited to the nearby waters and except for rare fishing trips to other parts of Tawi-Tawi or visits to the cemetery islands, they seldom leave the moorage. They consequently represent the stable core of the village population.

Other considerations may influence a couple's decision to spend most of their time at a single village. If one of the couple has few and in-
significant kinsmen, the couple normally moors at the village where the most important kin ties are located. Similarly, if for some reason, the couple is on unfriendly terms with the kinsmen of one of the spouses, they usually moor at the village of those kinsmen with whom they are friendly.

A virilocality found among some couples is related to ecological factors. Bajau men living in the western villages, i.e. Luuk Tulai and Tungkalang, most commonly practice deep-sea fishing in the nearby fishing grounds and less commonly do gill-net fishing on the few and small reefs of the area. The reverse situation is found in the eastern villages, i.e. Tungbangkao and Lioboran. Here the extensive reefs allow for profitable net fishing, and rarely do the men practice deep-sea fishing. As a result, those men who grow up in one of the two areas are most familiar with the fishing techniques which most profitably exploit that environment. And since successful fishing is obviously important in Bajau society, most men prefer to fish those waters where they can use familiar fishing methods. As a result when men more familiar with one fishing method marry outside their home waters, most commonly the wife goes to live in the husband's home village since he can more profitably fish those waters. Women's work is less specialized and allows for greater freedom of movement.

The couples practicing neolocal residence frequently have moved to the village from another village after being frightened or driven away by land-dwellers. Some in the neolocal category also represent couples who are staying in the village for only a few days while enroute to some other destination.

Marriage Patterns

The Bajau contend that for a good marriage it is best to marry rela-
tives, and most do. Indeed, if one were able to completely unravel the web of kinship among the Bajau, he would probably find that all Bajau couples are related in some manner. Bajau are free to marry all relatives, except siblings of parents and grandparents, grandparents, and, of course, members of the nuclear family. First cousin marriage is permissible, except between patrilateral parallel cousins who, before their marriage is considered non-incestuous, must perform a ritual which involves throwing certain valuables into the sea. Also, any first cousins who have been reared together intimately are considered improper marriage partners. Table III reveals the variation found in Bajau marriage patterns among 155 boat-dwelling couples.

Caution must be used in interpreting the second and third cousin categories too literally. Rather than strictly defining a degree of collaterality, the terms are often used to indicate closeness of the relationship relative to first cousins; thus someone identified as a second cousin may in reality be more distantly related, but in terms of friendship and interpersonal relations is regarded as a closer relative. Few Bajau are able to actually trace collaterality to third cousins while slightly more can identify second cousins.

Although romantic love is no prerequisite to marriage in Bajau society, many young couples are in love at the time of their marriage. These are the couples who have expressed their desire for marriage to one another through their parents, who have in turn taken care of the formalities of the arrangement, or those not uncommon couples who have eloped rather than waited for the formalities and possible opposition to their marriage. Since Bajau youth are rarely forced into a distasteful match, attraction
### Table III. Marriage Patterns of Boat-Dwelling Bajau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of marriage relationship</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patrilateral parallel 1st cousins</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Matrilateral parallel 1st cousins</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cross cousins</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 2nd cousins</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 3rd cousins</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 2nd kamanakan*</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Distant relationship (exact relationship unknown by informants)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uncertain as to whether or not relationship exists</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. No relationship</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The category 2nd kamanakan is a relationship of persons separated by one generation in the second degree of collaterality.*
between the couple characterizes most marriages. After the novelty of
the marriage wears away, the romantic love is frequently replaced by a
genuine deep mutual affection. If it is not, the marriage may end in di-
orce, or if a child is on the way, the couple learns to tolerate one
another.

The longer the marriage, generally the stronger the emotional ties
between husband and wife. On several occasions, I accompanied Bajau men
on three and four day fishing trips, during which they frequently complain-
ed of homesickness for their wives and children. I recall one man who had
planned to fish for several weeks with his brother while his wife remained
at home; after two days, he became so lonely for his wife that he returned
to get her. They had been married for almost ten years. One widow who
had been married for about 12 years refused to remarry because she said
she could never find a man she loved as much as her husband--this in spite
of the fact that her unmarried state made living very difficult for her
and placed a heavy burden on her siblings who had to support her. On many
occasions I observed widows break into tears as they recalled husbands who
had been dead for perhaps two, three, or even four years. This strong tie
between husband and wife seems fostered by the intimacy they share by be-
ing together virtually all their adult lives in a small houseboat. Very
rarely is the Bajau husband away from the houseboat overnight, and much
more commonly he is with his wife and children the 24 hours of the day.
And since the houseboat is often at sea separated from the larger Bajau
community, it is not surprising that extremely intimate and close ties
characterize the nuclear family.

The husband is the recognized head of the household, although most
matters are discussed with the wife before any decisions are made. Most commonly the wife is in charge of the small finances each family maintains which she parcels out for purchases and payments. The husband is in charge of fishing, repairing and maintaining the boat, making and repairing fish nets and other equipment; the wife is in charge of cooking, preparing cassava, gathering firewood from the beaches and edibles from the reef, and frequently assists in fishing. Both are actively involved in caring for the children, although infants are, of course, almost exclusively cared for by the wife.

If the husband or wife should die, the surviving spouse expresses real as well as conventional grief at the death. Because Bajau have so little property, the distribution of the dead spouse's property follows only loosely defined customs. When her husband dies a wife inherits all his property but she normally redistributes some of it among family members. Male children usually claim his fishing equipment while the houseboat continues as the wife's home. Sometimes the houseboat is destroyed at a man's death, but only in cases of extreme grief or if the boat is not greatly needed by the living. Similarly a woman's property normally passes to her husband. What jewelry she may have goes to her daughters or sisters if there are no daughters. An aged couple has few belongings left by the time one or both have died, having long ago either given them away to children or worn them out. Personal items of all deceased, young and old, such as clothing, betel boxes, and sometimes jewelry, are placed in the grave with the corpse.

**Divorce Patterns**

If the married couple finds their marriage distasteful and decides
that even the children born to them are not reason enough to maintain an
unhappy home, divorce is the frequent way out. Incompatible personalities,
barrenness, irresponsibility, and interfering relatives are the most common
causes of divorce. If divorce occurs shortly after marriage, the bride
price, or a portion of it, is returned to the groom's family. Money and
goods acquired by the couple, and sometimes even the children, are divided
between them. Table IV summarizes Bajau divorce patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of marriages</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Percentage of total married men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL.</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of marriages</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Percentage of total women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL.</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Relationships**

The same intimacy that breeds close ties between husband and wife is
responsible for the same sort of ties and sentiments between parents and
children. Children are greatly desired in Bajau society for emotional as
well as practical reasons. Indeed barrenness is a just cause for divorce,
and those barren couples who do not want divorce frequently adopt children from more fortunate siblings. The few children a Bajau family does have are cherished even more because of the high infant mortality rate. There appears to be no preference for male or female children, and most couples agree that an equal number of each is ideal since then both husband and wife will have assistance in their work.

Children are inseparable from their parents. While at anchorage in one of the boat villages, they may wander from the houseboat to join playmates on the reef, but when the family is away from the village and at sea, children are always, of course, with their parents. At a very early age, mothers take infants with them in small boats as they collect from the nearby reefs. This is always the case if it is necessary for the mother to leave the houseboat and there is no one to nurse the infant in her absence. Often she constructs a sunshade on the dugout and places the child under it as she goes about her work. If the husband needs the assistance of his wife in fishing away from the houseboat, they may construct a similar shelter on the fishing boat to protect the infant from the sun or night air as they fish. And, of course, the children are always intimately involved in any activities on the houseboat.

Although permissiveness characterizes all aspects of Bajau child rearing and children are allowed, within reason, to do almost anything they want without punishment, they begin to participate in household work at an early age and assist wherever they are needed and helpful. Girls, of course, work more closely with their mothers while boys are more involved with their fathers, but the smallness of the houseboat fosters intimacy which crosses sex lines. Bajau sleeping habits vividly illustrate the closeness
of the family. Frequently a Bajau man and wife and their two or three small children sleep together nude within a single sarong. Family members rarely sleep alone within the boat and prefer to sleep beside and usually entwined with one another, partly because it is warmer to do so and partly out of affection for one another.

Parents often become involved in quarrels between their children and playmates. In fact, one of the most common causes of adult dissent within the village is parental involvement in children's disagreements. Similarly, children are staunch defenders of any of their parents' actions.

Sibling relationships are characteristically intimate and protective. When the family houseboat is at moorage in one of the Bajau boat villages, Bajau siblings spend the daylight hours playing together with other village children on the nearby beach. But when the family is away from the village, the only playmates usually available for the child are his siblings and as a result of this periodic separation from the Bajau community, brothers and sisters become very dependent upon one another. Older girls frequently assume almost all maternal responsibilities for younger siblings while the mother's time is occupied with a newly born infant. If a child somehow acquires food, or some other item of childhood value, he invariably shares it with his brothers and sisters, but feels no compunction to share it with non-siblings who may be watching hungrily as he gorges himself. In serious childhood quarrels between two non-siblings, the siblings of each usually become involved since brothers and sisters always assist one another in such instances. This same intimacy between siblings frequently continues even after marriage, for they prefer to moor their boats together and work as a sibling group.
As noted, the Bajau household sometimes includes additional members, e.g. aged adults, unmarried siblings of either the husband or wife, or married siblings of either the husband or wife. So long as the aged are physically active and mentally alert, they are vital and respected members of the household. But when they become senile or physically inactive, or both, they are largely disregarded by the other household members. They are, however, never maltreated, due to the responsibility children feel toward their parents and because of the belief that old people can curse others with bad luck and illness. Often Bajau old people retain their prestige within the family and village because of their knowledge of ceremonial ritual and curing lore. Some old women enjoy renown as midwives. For the most part, the Bajau aged do whatever small jobs they are able to do and then sit back to be cared for by their children.

Unmarried adult siblings of either the husband or wife are expected to assist in the household duties appropriate to their sex. They assist in disciplining and caring for the children in a parental role, but their position in the household is usually regarded as temporary and they expect, and are expected, to leave upon their marriage.

Additional couples in the household are also regarded as temporary members. They, too, assist in duties appropriate to their sex, and discipline and care for one another's children. The crowded houseboat resulting from extended family households discourages their formation, and they usually last only as long as it takes one of the families to acquire its own boat.
CHAPTER III

THE SIBLING ALLIANCE UNIT

This chapter describes the sibling alliance unit, a collection of related nuclear families which periodically forms alliances. The structure of the alliance unit is first described, followed by a discussion of its economic and ceremonial activities. A consideration of interpersonal relationships within the unit concludes the chapter.

Although the Bajau nuclear family is extremely independent, it is not an isolated unit unto itself, but rather periodically attaches itself to a larger social grouping—especially during those periods when it is at one of the moorages. When a Bajau family arrives at one of the five moorages, it normally anchors near the houseboats of whatever kinsmen are there. Usually these kinsmen are siblings of either the wife or husband and are the main reason the family has chosen to stop at the village. This group of married siblings who normally moor together in a Bajau boat village and assist one another in work and ceremonies is the second most important social unit in Bajau society, second only to the nuclear family. Although the Bajau call such a group paymundah, a word meaning a group of boats traveling or mooring together, I shall refer to it by the more descriptive term "sibling alliance."

Structure of the Sibling Alliance Unit

The sibling alliance units follow no single structural type, except that they are usually no deeper than two generations and are rarely extended collaterally beyond siblings. The unit may consist of a married man and his several married sons, a married man and his several married daughters, or a married man and his several married sons and daughters. Or it may represent the adults of a single generation, i.e., several
married brothers, several married sisters, or several married brothers and sisters. However, not all married siblings who reside in a single village are necessarily members of the same alliance unit. For any number of reasons, such as family quarrels, social prestige, or economic factors, married siblings may choose to align themselves with the siblings of their spouses and never act together in a single alliance unit.

Of the 25 alliance units I encountered, one is composed of two nuclear families, five are composed of three nuclear families each, ten are composed of four nuclear families each, six are composed of five nuclear families each, and one is composed of six nuclear families. Six consist of married siblings, one consists of married brothers and five consist of married brothers and sisters. Seventeen are two generations deep; eleven of these consist of a married man and his married children, an extension of the nuclear family; six are married siblings and their married child or children. Two are three generations deep: in both cases, they are a married man, his married children, and his married grandchild or grandchildren. Thus the most common Bajau sibling alliance unit is two generations in depth and consists of four nuclear families. The average nuclear family has five members which provides an approximate 20 persons to each Bajau alliance unit.

Within the sibling alliance units, work groups, or action groups, are formed for certain activities. Sometimes these action groups, e.g., certain fishing groups, consist of all the adult male members of the sibling alliance unit whereas at other times only two or three members
may form such a group. In general, the sibling alliance unit provides a group of closely related, trusted persons from which work alliances are formed.

Factors important in determining the composition of the action groups as well as the sibling alliance units include compatibility, occupational preferences, and age. Obviously, only persons who can get along well can work well together. Also, if members of an alliance unit have different occupational interests, e.g. boat-building and fishing, they will rarely work together in an action group. And since certain fishing techniques require the efforts of several able-bodied men, a sibling alliance unit must have several men of this age group among its members. If siblings satisfy these requirements, the Bajau action group consists of such siblings or their affinal counterparts. Otherwise, one seeks less closely related persons for alliances.

However, I encountered no cases of alliances between non-kinsmen, either in action groups or sibling alliance units, partly no doubt because if forced to do so, a Bajau can trace a kin connection to almost every other Bajau in Tawi-Tawi. The Bajau ideal is to align with siblings, and most sibling alliance units as well as action groups realize this ideal.

Because of the frequent movements of the individual nuclear families, the composition of a sibling alliance unit is constantly changing. While in his home moorage, a man normally forms an alliance with his own siblings who may be there, but when in his wife's village, he is a member of a unit composed primarily of her siblings. While mooring at villages different from those of his own or his wife's, he ideally forms
alliances with siblings of his own or his wife's who moor at those villages or with less closely related persons. When it is remembered that almost each nuclear household of any single unit is extremely mobile, some appreciation of the fluidity of the units may be gleaned.

Single Bajau households begin to break from traditional alliances as members of the household marry and form their own households. Once a man has married children, he tends to gradually dissolve alliances with his siblings in favor of alliances with his children. Eventually this alliance completely replaces his earlier ones and he never participates in a unit with his former partners. Most commonly he acts as leader of the newly formed unit, but as he becomes older he relinquishes this position to a younger member. With his death, the tie with the earlier alliance unit is completely dissolved.

The less nomadic households of the moorages add an element of stability to the otherwise fluid sibling alliance units because it is around these more sedentary households that the nomadic households cluster. These sedentary households, as noted earlier, are those families who rarely travel beyond the waters of the home moorage. Often both spouses are from that moorage and if they fish, they are content to fish the nearby waters. Frequently, however, they are not fishermen but rather are boatbuilders or agriculturalists who have no need to follow the fishing cycles. Because they are almost always at the home moorage their less stable siblings, when they arrive at the moorage, form alliances with them. However, it must be noted, that not all sibling alliance units have these sedentary members.

Generally only one man acts as leader of the alliance unit. If a
unit is composed of an older man and his married children, he invariably acts as its leader so long as he is physically and mentally strong. When he becomes too old to assume the position of leader, the responsibilities pass on to the next most capable adult male--either one of his sons or one of his sons-in-law.

Leaders, or *nakura*, are not chosen through any formal decision, but rather emerge through innate personal qualities. Frequently, but not always, they are among the more sedentary members of the alliance, and have some talent, e.g. boatbuilding or fishing skills, as well as respected personality traits which set them off from their peers. Leaders, however, are as subject to change as the composition of the unit itself and different leaders may emerge for the different activities of the unit. For example, ceremonies are led by that person familiar with the proper ritual; fishing activities are led by the man acknowledged as an expert fisherman; boatbuilding activities may be in the hands of still another man recognized as a master boatbuilder. To add a further complication to this already complicated pattern, all positions are subject to change as the composition of the alliance unit changes.

The history of a specific individual man's alliances over a year's period illustrates the fluid nature of Bajau alliance units. Masarani, his wife, and their six children lived as a nuclear family unit in their houseboat. From October through December, Masarani moored at the village of Tungkalang, his wife's home village, while he was engaged in major repairs on his houseboat. During this period he was a member of an alliance unit composed primarily of his wife's siblings, led by his wife's oldest brother. In January he left Tungkalang with his wife's
married sister and their two married brothers for an extended fishing trip in the Lioboran waters. Masarani is an acknowledged expert fisherman and during this trip he acted as leader of the unit even though the brother of his wife who acted as leader at Tungkalang was with him. Following the fishing trip, which lasted about two months, Masarani's wife's siblings returned to Tungkalang while he and his family went on to Tungbangkao, his home village. During his stay in Tungbangkao, Masarani participated in an alliance composed of himself and his two married brothers. He again acted as fishing leader for the group while one of his brothers was leader for the unit's ceremonies. After about two months at Tungbangkao, Masarani went to Luuk Tulai to assist his wife's sister's husband to build a boat. During this period he was a member of an alliance unit composed of himself, his wife's married brother and sister, and a first cousin of his wife, with his wife's sister's husband (who regularly moored at Luuk Tulai) as leader. During this period, Masarani was engaged almost exclusively in boatbuilding while the other members divided their time between fishing and woodworking in the forest. Five months later, upon completion of the boat, Masarani and one of his wife's brothers from Luuk Tulai and two of her married sisters from Tungkalang went to the Bilatan waters for a fishing trip, during which time Masarani again acted as leader. When I left Sulu, Masarani who had again returned to Tungkalang for boatbuilding and was considering farming on the nearby island, had again stepped down from his position of leadership in favor of his wife's oldest brother. The pattern becomes even more complicated when it is remembered that within each of these sibling alliance units, Masarani also frequently changed
his action group affiliation. Masarani's movements are in no sense unique; in fact, they are considerably less complicated than some of the truly nomadic Bajau families.

Economic Activities

Social factors provide cohesion to the sibling alliance units, whereas action groups are more often formed for economic reasons. Even when intimately involved with a unit over an extensive period of time, the nuclear family remains for the most part economically independent of the larger unit. In no sense is the sibling alliance unit corporate. A great deal of borrowing and loaning of such essentials as food, water, firewood, betel nut or cigarettes occurs among the members of an alliance unit, but it is all of a reciprocal nature. Anyone who borrows from fellow members too consistently without making loans in return will eventually find himself without an alliance unit.

When traveling together on fishing trips as an alliance unit, each nuclear family normally fishes independently unless the husband has no one in the family to help him because either his children are too young or his wife has too many demanding duties. In such cases, he may form an action group with another adult male or two of the unit. But if at all possible, each man prefers to fish alone with other members of his family of procreation since then he need not divide the catch with others. During these trips, the boats of the alliance unit moor at a central place in the fishing grounds and some of the members fish in smaller boats away from the anchorage in family groups or non-family action groups while others, usually older females, remain with the houseboats. All return to the boats at night. If a family does not catch enough
fish for immediate consumption, others of the alliance unit give them fish, but surplus catches which are dried and sold in Bongao are personal property of each nuclear family unit. Certain types of fishing are more profitably done with several boats and for this type of fishing, action groups are always formed. At night, if tides and winds are favorable, Bajau practice spear fishing with kerosene lanterns. For such fishing, nuclear family units accompany one another, but each in its own boat with its own lantern and claiming its own catch. The additional lights illuminate more fish to the benefit of all and the additional persons provide companionship as well as protection from outlaws who occasionally harass lone Bajau fishermen.

During the day when the men are fishing away from the houseboats, women who have not accompanied their husbands usually scavenge the reefs exposed during the low tides. They almost always collect in groups, but whatever each finds is claimed individually and unless one of the members is extremely unlucky and finds nothing, no division occurs. The women individually collect firewood in similar groups.

When at one of the five permanent moorages, individual nuclear family units continue to act economically independent of the others. During stays at such moorages, men frequently seek additional income and diversion from fishing, especially if they are not well-versed in the fishing techniques of the area, by making boards from trees in the forests. Bajau men always go to the forest in groups, but once there each works individually and claims for himself all boards he cuts. The group provides companionship as well as occasional assistance for the individual and allays his fear of traveling alone in the forest.
Boatbuilding is normally an individual project, but occasionally a man needs assistance to help him over a difficult stage of construction, or to provide skills, such as carving, which he does not have. At such times, he calls upon members of his sibling alliance unit to form an action group; unless their assistance is needed for a long time, these members expect no payment for their services beyond reciprocal favors. A man with little talent for boatbuilding, or a young, inexperienced man, sometimes must depend upon members of his alliance unit to construct his entire boat. The owner provides all materials for the boat and does whatever work he can under the direction of the master boatbuilder; in addition, he may be expected to provide sustenance for some of the men during this period. All depends upon the closeness of the relationship between the two men. Most men closely related to the boat owner would demand no payment but would certainly feel no qualms about seeking reciprocity from him in time of their own need. He would, of course, be obligated to give such assistance. On rare occasions, two or three men of an alliance unit may form an action group to construct a boat to sell, in which case, profits are equally divided.

Ceremonial Activities

Unlike economic activities, Bajau ceremonies usually demand the participation of the entire alliance unit and sometimes of more distantly related kinsmen. In fact, besides the obvious functions connected with marriage, healing, and initiation, the chief function of Bajau ceremonies is to congregate the otherwise dispersed Bajau households. Only for ceremonies do large groupings of Bajau houseboats moor at a single village.
The simplest Bajau ceremonies are performed alone by the nuclear family. If the family happens to be in the vicinity of the cemetery islands, some members may visit family graves to leave small offerings of betel nut or cigarettes to a recently deceased relative. Sometimes the offering is left out of thoughtfulness for the deceased, but more commonly it is left to insure that the deceased's spirit will not visit the living with illness or bad luck. A similar ceremony occurs when a Bajau advertently or inadvertently passes a place known to be the hangout of saitan, evil spirits. As a placation for having possibly aroused the displeasure of the saitan by disturbing their home, the trespassers frequently leave offerings of betel or cigarettes, or small green or white flags, favorite colors of the spirits. A chant may be recited as the offering is left, but frequently no formal ritual is involved.

By far the great majority of Bajau ceremonies involves the attendance and participation of the entire alliance unit. Participation frequently extends well beyond the alliance unit, but the unit is most actively involved in the planning and execution of the ceremony. Certain healing ceremonies, which are attended only by alliance unit members, are held in response to serious or prolonged illnesses. Members of the unit congregate in the houseboat of the patient while a person familiar with the proper ritual asks the spirits believed to be causing the illness to refrain from their disease-causing activities. Each unit normally has a person among its members familiar with curing rituals, but if not, an outsider, almost always a relative, may be asked to conduct the ceremony. The ritual consists of a simple prayer made in the presence
of burning incense to call the spirits and offerings of food. Several types of curing ceremonies are observed by the Bajau, depending upon the illness, but all initially involve only alliance unit members. If the ceremony is the first for the illness and if the illness is not particularly serious, some members of the unit may feel it unnecessary to attend. However, the more serious the illness, especially the illness of an adult, the more members of the unit attend. And in a case of critical illness of an adult, all adult members of the unit attend—partly out of real concern for the patient and partly out of fear that in the event of his death, his spirit may punish those persons unconcerned with his fate.

One type of Bajau curing ceremony, the magtimbang (literally, to scale, or to weigh), involves considerably more persons than those of the sibling alliance unit, although unit members plan and execute the ceremony. In the event of a serious illness, close relatives of the patient may promise the disease-causing spirits to hold a magtimbang if the afflicted is allowed to survive. If the patient recovers, the ceremony is held shortly thereafter. A pole, about 12 feet long, with a sling at either end is tied at the center to a rope which in turn is fastened to a brace erected on the boat for this special purpose. The patient sits in one of the slings while goods, such as bananas, sugar cane, and firewood, are placed in the other end to balance his weight. The entire pole is then turned several times to the chant of a religious leader and then returned to its original position, following which the patient is removed from the sling and the goods are distributed to relatives who have attended the ceremony. Although the sibling alliance
unit of the recovered patient plans the ceremony and contributes to the goods, anyone in the village is free to attend and most relatives of the patient are expected to do so.

The ear-piercing operation, performed on all girls usually during infancy, is normally attended only by the sibling alliance unit and other close relatives, siblings or parents of the child's parents. The ceremony probably once had religious significance but now only consists of a minor operation performed by an older person, usually a woman of the alliance unit experienced in such matters. An older man familiar with religious lore usually sits in to chant a prayer to insure good luck and health to the child. Almost all female members of the alliance unit attend the ceremony, but most male members, excepting the father of the child and other adult males of her household, usually do not attend.

The circumcision ceremony held for boys may involve only the sibling alliance unit, or, if very elaborate, may extend to include additional relatives, or even non-relatives. If the family is poor or simply does not care to spend the money for an elaborate celebration, the ceremony is a small affair held in the family boat. Non-unit members may attend, such as siblings or first cousins of the boy's parents, and unit members are almost always there. Some play music before, during, and after the brief ceremony while others, especially girls, may dance on the sometimes decorated boat. Both men and women of the unit assist in bathing and dressing the boy. The older man who performs the simple operation is frequently a member of the sibling alliance unit, and if not, a relative of the boy. More elaborate ceremonies include a distribution of rice and sugar, or both, to the entire village with music and dancing on the
reef or nearby beach throughout the afternoon and evening hours during which betel nut and cigarettes are provided to all adult guests. Such elaborate ceremonies may involve considerable expense and although the father of the boy is expected to bear the main expense of the celebration, he sometimes calls upon relatives to assist in financing a large celebration. His own and his wife's siblings usually contribute equal shares to the celebration, regardless of whether they are members of his present sibling alliance unit -- all probably have been in the past and will be again in the future. All share some of the limelight of the elaborate affair and all expect reciprocity when they will circumcise or seek a wife for one of their boys. Rarely are relatives more distantly related than siblings of the boy's parents asked to contribute.

A boy is almost completely dependent upon his kinsmen in obtaining a wife. Even if he should elope and thereby avoid a large bride price, a settlement nonetheless must be paid which he normally does not have, since whatever earnings he may have made are a part of the family savings. Because most nuclear families are unable to afford the usual bride prices of 80 to 100 pesos, they must call upon kinsmen, siblings of the boy's parents, to assist. And even if the boy's family could afford to pay the entire price, tradition would demand that others be asked for some assistance. In one case, the groom's family, being poor, paid less toward the bride price than any of the contributors; in another case, the groom's family paid over 75% of the total with the remainder shared among the eight siblings of the groom's parents. Both cases are somewhat unique, and most fall somewhere between these two extremes.
As in all Bajau social and economic relations, reciprocity is the keynote to the event. One always contributes to a bride price what one has received from that family for a past bride price or circumcision.

Division of the bride price received by the bride's family follows lines similar to those by which it was collected among the groom's family, i.e., it is parcelled out to the siblings of the bride's parents with the parents normally receiving a larger share. Division among the parents' siblings is determined by the amounts they have contributed to past family ceremonies, but if family quarrels have separated some siblings, they are no longer included in the social activities of the group. It is not unusual for a man to contribute to a bride price and then a day or so later receive a share, possibly larger than his original contribution, from the same bride. This would, of course, be the case if the bride and groom were first cousins; the actual transfer of goods and money always occurs even though a good deal of it may return to the donors.

As the preceding discussion reveals, a family with only sons has considerably more expenses than a family with only females; boys require money for both circumcision and marriage, whereas girls have no comparable expenses. The Bajau recognize this disequilibrium but generally feel that the nearly equal number of males and females in the kin group balances it over time -- which it does. But, nonetheless, a family with many sons is a drain on its kinsmen. An exceptional, but illustrative case, is that of a family with eleven sons and no daughters. No money came directly to the family through marriages of daughters, although it shared in the bride prices of the few daughters of other
members of the sibling alliance unit. As might be expected, circumcision ceremonies in this family were extremely simple, and the four sons who had married had all done so by elopement, thereby reducing the bride price. As each son married, another person was added to those who would contribute to the bride price for the next son. Most likely, elaborate Weddings, the ideal of all Bajau, will be possible for the youngest family members. But, thus far, marriage has been a constant drain on the family as well as on its alliance unit.

Aside from economics, the sibling alliance unit has another important function at marriage. It is considered poor taste for the parents of the bride and groom to be directly involved in the sometimes sticky business of coming to an agreement on the bride price. Consequently, all the negotiations between the two parties is done by siblings of the parents of the bride and groom. Once the boy has indicated his choice of a girl for his bride, or his family has talked him into marrying a particular girl, adult members of the unit, siblings of his mother and father, or both, visit a houseboat of the future bride's sibling alliance unit -- never the boat of the bride. At this time, after they have made their proposal to the family, they leave a gift, consisting of family jewels or other valuables. If the girl's family is interested in the proposal, after often long hours of discussion with the girl's parents and after her consent, they return the gift to the houseboat of the boy's relatives and ask the price they have decided upon. If they are not interested in the marriage, they ask an unreasonably high bride price which the boy's family usually
interprets as a rejection of the proposal. But even if the proposed bride price is a reasonable one, the boy's family may try to bargain down the price. Eventually an agreement is reached between the two parties, but at no time are the parents of the couple nor the bride and groom present at the actual meeting, although the parents do, however, take an active part in the discussions preliminary to the meetings. Once the bride price has been paid the marriage can be held. Arrangements for the entire affair are made by the alliance unit members and other siblings of the prospective parents-in-law. Bride, groom, and their parents, continue to have insignificant roles in the arrangements.

The death of an adult Bajau also demands the participation of the sibling alliance unit as well as any other relatives who may be in the vicinity. After an initial display of grief and mourning by the deceased's alliance unit, the more responsible members conduct the funeral activities. An older person, normally an uncle or older in-law of the deceased (female if the deceased is female), washes the body and prepares it for burial. Throughout the night following death, a wake is held in honor of the dead man. In the case of an adult death, almost all adults of the village visit the funeral boat during the night to chant prayers and sing mourning songs; if the deceased is a child, normally only close relatives, e.g. siblings of the parents attend the wake. The following morning the body is taken to the cemetery islands for burial. The number and composition of the entourage of mourners vary greatly; in the case of an infant's death, only a couple of boats with members of the sibling alliance unit may attend, whereas the death of
an adult may be mourned by a dozen boats with relatives of second and third degrees of collaterality also in attendance. As with all Bajau ceremonies, the alliance unit initiates the activities and less intimate relatives, or even non-relatives, are invited to attend the formal ceremony.

Death does not involve a great deal of expense to the survivors although there are some necessary outlays of cash. Most importantly the shroud of white cloth must be purchased. Usually, the immediate nuclear family of the deceased has the necessary cash, but if not, members of the sibling alliance unit contribute to the purchase of the cloth. Some families provide food for the mourners who accompany the corpse to the burial islands; in such cases, the sibling alliance unit makes a contribution, although if the nuclear family of the deceased is fairly well off, it may pay all the expenses.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relations within the sibling alliance unit vary greatly, of course, depending upon the intimacy and duration of the contact between members, relationships of the members, and individual personality factors. Nonetheless, some generalizations may be made. Normally the sibling tie remains strong even after marriage, although it tends to weaken as one's own children attain adulthood and marriage to form their own alliance unit. Circumstances may separate siblings for months or years, but even after such separation the sibling tie may be reactivated. During the early months and years of marriage the sibling tie occasionally overrides the marital bond; I observed numerous family quarrels in which a spouse sided with a sibling rather than his
mate, and, on the other hand, I have heard individuals chastised by siblings because they defended mates rather than siblings. However, as the marriage bond lengthens and loyalties are more completely transferred to spouses, the sibling bond weakens. Non-involved unit members act as mediators in the event of serious quarrels between spouses or other persons of the unit. If differences cannot be resolved, families sometimes break from the unit to join another -- possibly in the same village or in a different village.

Among the adult members of the alliance unit, patterns of friendship and intimacy follow sex lines, i.e., females form close friendships among themselves as do the males among themselves. Two types of sibling "in-law" relationships are recognized by the Bajau, namely the relationship between a man and his sibling's spouse or the relationship between a man and his spouse's sibling (the ipal relationship), and the relationship between two persons married to siblings (the bilas relationship). The nature of the relationship varies greatly among individuals with perhaps the most significant variables being compatibility and the duration of the relationship. Persons who get along and work well together tend to remain in the same alliance unit and work as an action group for long periods of time, perhaps until they break off to form alliances with their own married children. In such cases, intimate relationships develop which may even override sibling ties on some occasions. Two men who are married to sisters and belong to the same alliance unit over a long period of time develop sentiments and reciprocal relationships not unlike those between siblings. The same is true for men in the ipal relationship, and it does, of course, also apply to females.
On the other hand, siblings may for reasons mentioned earlier form different alliances and never act together in the same unit. Even in such cases obligations for mutual assistance are always present, but sentiments between siblings often weaken in favor of those persons more intimately involved in their everyday lives. Also, family quarrels sometimes separate siblings for years or even a lifetime.

Relationships among children of the alliance unit are determined by the same variables. First cousins reared within a single alliance unit form almost sibling-like relationships whereas those who never act together in a single alliance unit feel little intimacy. Illustrative of this is the belief among the Bajau that first cousins who have been intimately reared together are improper marriage partners, whereas those who have been reared separately may be married without qualms, unless they are patrilateral parallel cousins.
CHAPTER IV

THE DAKAMPUNGAN

This chapter describes the Bajau generalized dakampungan, or personal kindred, and the localized dakampungan, or localized kindred. Following the definition of the two groups, a discussion of the structure and leadership patterns is presented. A consideration of kinship terminology concludes the chapter.

Dakampungan has two meanings among the Bajau. In its most general meaning, it is the totality of ego's relatives as traced lineally and collaterally through his male and female progenitors, the so-called "personal kindred." But in a more restricted sense, it means the group of cognatic kinsmen, or a group of related sibling alliance units who regularly moor together at a boat village. To avoid confusion, I shall call the first group a "generalized dakampungan" and refer to the second group as a "localized dakampungan."

Structure of the Dakampungan

Theoretically, the generalized dakampungan could be extended indefinitely to all related persons, and in such a theoretical consideration one could probably speak of all the Tawi-Tawi Bajau as members of one generalized dakampungan. Such a generalized dakampungan, of course, never meets as a social group, and has little function other than to generate sentiments of obligation and reciprocity among members by virtue of their being recognized as kinsmen to one another. Consequently, except as a term to describe the totality of one's relatives, the generalized dakampungan has little meaning to the Bajau.

The localized dakampungan, however, is quite a different matter, and
the boat-dwelling Bajau of Tawi-Tawi recognize about seven such groups among themselves. Obviously these localized dakampungan are not closed kin groups since all members have kin ties which extend into other groups either in the same village or in a different village. And, excepting the sedentary core of people found in each Bajau village, membership in the groups is constantly changing as families move in and out of the village. Each is identified by the headman, or panglima, who is considered leader of the group as well as by the moorage where the majority of its boats are normally found. A single localized dakampungan may constitute an entire Bajau village, or a village may have two or three such localized groups within it.

If a Bajau's mother and father are from different localized dakampungan, matters of circumstance usually determine to which he belongs. Or quite conceivably he may never find it necessary to state membership in one or the other, but simply use both at his convenience. More often, though, he comes to identify more closely with one than the other, due to the residence preferences of his parents. And upon marriage, he may choose to identify with his wife's localized dakampungan which may or may not be different from his own. Two important leads in determining a Bajau's kin affiliations are his participation in the maggomboh ceremony, a first fruits celebration held during the dry rice harvest season which theoretically involves all members of a generalized dakampungan, and the man he recognizes as the panglima, or headman, of his localized dakampungan.

Bajau kin relationships are vividly demonstrated in the maggomboh (from the word omboh, meaning grandparent or ancestor) ceremony which is held each year during the dry rice harvest season, usually July or August.
Each household head acquires dry rice from land-dwelling Samal farmers or from other Bajau who sometimes raise their own small plots. The rice, having been pounded by the women to remove the husk, is placed in a specially made basket which in turn is placed at the bow of the houseboat. That night members of the household sleep with their heads directed toward the rice. The following morning the rice is cooked, moulded into a conical shape in a bowl, and taken by family members to a central houseboat where other relatives have assembled with their own bowls of rice. The bowls, sometimes as many as 20 or 30, are placed on the deck of the boat following which a shaman, or djin, conducts a brief ceremony to call the ancestral spirits to partake of the rice and to bless the living with good luck and health. Taking small portions of rice from each bowl, he mixes them together in an empty bowl, and offers the combined rice to all the children present. Each family then takes its own bowl of rice home to eat at the next meal. All villagers do not hold the ceremony on the same day and any family may participate in any number of ceremonies so long as they are conducted by relatives. The ceremony serves to reinforce ties among all living kinsmen (not only members of a localized dakampungan), to remind persons of their deceased kinsmen, and to socialize the children into the kin group. Bajau explain that if it is not held, illness and death will occur or that great storms with rough seas, strong winds, and heavy rains will visit the area.

If one were somehow able to map out all the maggombobh ceremonies of any one season and the individuals participating in them, he could arrive at the Bajau definition of the generalized dakampungan. This ceremony emphasizes even distant kinsmen. The ceremony is not limited to the Tawi-
Tawi Bajau. Some of these Bajau travel to Sitangkai to participate in
the ceremony with kinsmen there, while the Sitangkai Bajau occasionally
travel to Tawi-Tawi for the same reason. Similarly, Bajau people living
near Semporna, Sabah, participate in some of the Sitangkai ceremonies with
people from Tawi-Tawi. Groups participating in the ceremony comprise the
bangsa, or ethnic group, delimited by these Bajau as their own, namely the
Bajau of Tawi-Tawi, Sibutu, and Semporna.

Each localized dakampungan recognizes a panglima, or headman, whose
chief functions are arbitration and ritual leadership. When disputes
cross localized dakampungan lines, e.g. in villages where there are sever­
al such dakampungan, the panglima of the leading localized dakampungan of
the village handles the case. The position of panglima ideally passes
from father to eldest son, but matters of practicality, e.g. leadership
ability and wisdom, are more important in determining who holds the posi­
tion. An old panglima in one village had several sons, none of whom had
leadership abilities and none of whom was interested in the position. At
the old panglima's death, the eldest son was acknowledged as the panglima
and was addressed by the title, but the position was taken over by the
younger brother of the panglima. People gravitated to him because of his
natural charisma, and before long with no formal decision or announcement
on anyone's part, he was recognized as the panglima of the group. The el­
dest son of the deceased panglima did not object because he was not inter­
ested in the position. Practical considerations of this sort probably
more often determine succession than ideal patterns of inheritance.

The panglima theoretically settles all disputes in the localized da­
kampungan, collects fines, and sometimes solemnizes weddings. In reality,
his participation in these events is often minor, although his presence at a dispute seems to give official recognition to the disagreement. He may collect fines from offenders, but often the persons involved refuse to accept his decision and eventually settle the argument among themselves. Any fines which he does succeed in collecting, he usually divides with the offended party. I never saw nor heard of any instance when the decision of the panglima was enforced against someone's will. If a man arouses too much antipathy in a village, he simply moves on to another, and returns after several months have allowed the incident to be forgotten. If a case is particularly difficult the panglima may call in other older men to act as advisors, while serious problems are taken to law enforcement officials in Bongao; however, the Bajau usually avoid such men, most of whom they do not trust.

Only in extreme cases is the panglima called upon to settle disputes, since most disagreements within an alliance unit are settled by the members themselves. Thus disputes brought to the panglima are usually those which cross alliance units, as illustrated by the following cases.

A Tungkalang Bajau purchased a boat from a Sitangkai Bajau which was part of the bride price of the Sitangkai man's sister. Several months after the boat was sold, the seller became seriously ill. The attending shaman diagnosed the cause of the illness as the illegal sale of the boat which legally belonged to the sick man's father. Consequently, the relatives of the Sitangkai man came to Tungkalang to rebuy the boat in order that the sick man might recover. When they arrived at Tungkalang, the Sitangkai people offered a price less than the sale price, since, as they reasoned, the boat had depreciated during its several months of use by the
new owners. The owners of the boat reasoned the opposite; they felt that interest should be added to the boat price since they had improved it after the purchase. For several hours the two parties argued, while most of the villagers dropped by to offer comment and suggestions. Finally, it was decided that the panglima should handle the dispute. He was called to the boat, and after listening to both sides of the lengthy argument, suggested that the original sale price be returned for the boat. He then retired to his own houseboat. Dissatisfied with his decision, the owners said they would not return the boat unless their price was met by the Sitangkai people. At last the Sitangkai Bajau acquiesced and paid the demanded price.

Another case handled by the panglima concerned an elopement. In traditional style, a Bajau boy and girl who wanted to forego the formalities of marriage, stole from their own boats to spend the night in the boat of the panglima. The following morning both sets of parents went to the panglima's boat. None of the parents was unhappy about the elopement, and with the panglima acting as mediator, decided upon a suitable bride price, after which the marriage was solemnized by the panglima.

The lengthiest case I observed concerned a dispute over some boards. Two men had been cutting boards in the forest near two other men and accused the latter of stealing part of their lumber. The accused men, adamantly denying the charge, spent several hours that night in very heated argument with the accusers, at times almost coming to blows. Both parties finally agreed that the case should go to the panglima. The following day, the men spent the entire day at the panglima's boat, arguing and presenting their claims while other villagers expressed their opinions. The
next morning, the case continued with more violent argument. The panglima, evidently realizing that the men had become too emotional to think rationally, suggested that they wait three days before continuing the case. The accusers, refusing to wait, said they wanted the boards returned immediately or they would go to the officials in Bongao. But the panglima washed his hands of the affair and left the boat. The argument continued until finally a Bajau, related to both parties, suggested that the accused men pay for the boards rather than involve the Bongao officials. After some reluctance, the two accused men decided to pay part of the price, and the case was dropped.

A fourth case concerned an argument between two women, sisters-in-law. One of the women sent her child to the boat of her sister-in-law, a member of a different alliance unit, to collect some money which the latter had borrowed several months previously. The second woman, angry because the first had demanded the money through her child, insultingly accused the woman of great sexual promiscuity before she was married. The accused demanded an apology which her sister-in-law refused to give. After several days of bickering, they took the case to the panglima. After meeting with the women and their husbands, the panglima decided that the insulting woman should be fined ten pesos. The insulted woman thought the fine too small, and threatened to take the case to the officials in Bongao, which, however, she never did. The women remained enemies during my stay in the village, but the case was never renewed, nor was the fine paid.

On another occasion, a motor launch traveling from Jolo to Bongao ran aground on the reef in front of the Bajau village at Tungkalang. Bajau men from the village worked for several hours with the crew and finally
succeeded in freeing the launch. In appreciation for their assistance, the launch owner offered a cash payment to the Bajau men. Some of the men thought they should not take the money since their assistance was a gesture of kindness offered to the unfortunate crew; others felt they had earned the money, and therefore should accept payment. During the argument the village panglima was called; in a short time, he decided that the men should not accept the money. Relatives of the panglima, those who had originally refused payment, followed his decision while the men who wanted payment, non-relatives of the panglima, accepted the money.

The position of panglima carries certain social prestige although not a great deal of wealth. Any wealth a panglima may succeed in accumulating is usually through his efforts at fishing or some other activity, and not through his duties as panglima. As indicated in the preceding illustrations, frequently fines are not paid even when levied and when they are paid, the normally small amounts must always be divided with the offended party. In general, panglima have very little power, and it would be difficult for them to exert power even if they so desired. The mobile nature of the scattered individual Bajau families discourages the development of any strong, central political authority. If any panglima should become inordinately demanding, in all likelihood, the persons under him would simply move to another village and a more tolerant panglima.

Title alone does not necessarily identify a panglima since the title is often extended to any older man as a term of respect for his age and wisdom. In addition, certain Bajau men have been given panglima appointments through the Office of the Sultan in Jolo because of special favors they have done for local politicians. Consequently, any single village
may have several men who have been appointed at various times as panglima plus the traditionally recognized panglima. However, these political appointees rarely press their claims since most do not understand nor care about the nature of their appointments.

Besides the panglima, each localized dakampungan has a number of other specialists who perform primarily for members but whose services may extend beyond the group—especially if their talents have gained some renown. These roles often overlap, however; for example, three panglima in Tawi-Tawi are also recognized as outstanding shamans and one enjoys local renown as an excellent boatbuilder. The anambar, a herb-doctor, has knowledge of certain plants which are used in the treatment of wounds, headaches, stomach disorders, and other such ailments. Normally, an ill person is first treated by such a person, but if the illness persists, then the djin, or shaman, is called for further treatment. Some djin are only casual practitioners who rarely perform beyond their own alliance unit whereas others are full-time specialists who practice even among the land-dwelling Samal and Taosug, and enjoy considerable fame throughout Tawi-Tawi. Most djin fall somewhere between these two extremes. All localized dakampungan number several djin among their members, and if there is ever need for their services, they are called upon. Those most closely related are consulted first, but should the illness persist, a famous, although unrelated, djin may be consulted. Djin rarely charge closely related persons for the services, although they may charge considerably to non-relatives, and especially non-Bajau. Each sibling alliance unit usually has at least one woman who acts as midwife, but within each localized dakampungan, several older women are recognized as expert midwives and are consulted in
the event of difficult childbirth. Some men who call themselves **imam** (Islamic ritual leaders) have learned some Arabic chants and are asked to chant at curing ceremonies, funerals, or weddings. Only four such men are found among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau and they all belong to a single localized dakampungan. As the Bajau become more Islamic, these men will no doubt become more numerous and achieve greater importance. Most localized dakampungan also have several men recognized as wood carvers. These men do the carvings on new boats and grave markers. As the djin, they never charge closely related persons for their services, although they usually receive some compensation from distantly related persons and especially non-kinsmen. Expert boat-builders, too, are frequently called upon by localized dakampungan members to assist in building or to build a boat; except when assisting closely related persons, these men are almost always paid for their work.

Although the localized dakampungan never meets as a group, most of its members come together in the event of an important wedding, curing ceremony or circumcision. In no sense is it a corporate group, nor is it a descent group. The meagre property of the Bajau is always held by individuals or individual families; descent is of little importance in Bajau society and is called upon only in determining the panglimaship, and, as noted earlier, even in this case more practical considerations than line-age come into play.

**Kinship Terminology**

Members of both the generalized and the localized dakampungan are identified by kinship terms that reflect the cognatic principle of organization. Besides generational groupings and consanguinal-affinal groupings,
the only persons within the generalized dakampungan distinguished by distinct kin terms are members of the nuclear family. The kin terms which identify members of the nuclear family are extended beyond this group only in very special cases, e.g. intimate friendships where nuclear family kin terms may be used in address or reference. The dispute regarding the degree to which kinship terminology reflects society has yet to be resolved, but the distinctive terms for the nuclear family reflect its basic and independent role in Bajau society. Furthermore, the lack of terminological distinction between father's and mother's relatives is in keeping with the cognatic nature of Bajau society.

Bajau kin terms are a combination of the so-called Eskimo and Hawaiian-type systems. Ego terminologically distinguishes his mother and father from their siblings, and parents' siblings are called by male and female terms which are extended collaterally to all relatives of their generation. A single term (the same term used for "ancestors") is used for all relatives in the second and subsequent ascending generations from ego. Within his own generation, ego distinguishes siblings from cousins, and further distinguishes collaterality of cousinship by suffixing first, second, third, etc. to the term. Ego's own children are distinguished from nephews and nieces, although the term for nephew and niece is extended to the offspring of anyone in ego's generation. All persons in the second and subsequent descending generations from ego are addressed by a single term. Persons married to ego's spouse's siblings are called by a term which is also extended to include all persons married to kinsmen of ego's spouse's generation. Persons married to ego's siblings and collateral consanguines of his generation are called by a single term, as are those persons married
to ego's consanguines of descending generation (including his own children's spouses). Ego calls all affines in ascending generations by a single term. Excepting the terms for mother and father, and uncle and aunt, all Bajau kin terms are neuter; sex may be indicated by adding the proper suffix. An apparently older term, siit, makes no sexual distinction between mother's and father's collaterals. The following discussion defines each term.

1. **Hundah**—ego's female spouse. This term is used both as a term of address and reference. Ego rarely refers to his wife by her first name. When speaking to an adult, ego always refers to her as "my wife;" if speaking to his child, he refers to her as "your mother;" or if addressing his wife, he calls her "hundah."

2. **Hallah**—ego's male spouse. This term is also used as both a term of address and reference. Ego rarely refers to her husband by his first name. A husband is usually called "my husband;" or if speaking to one's child as "your father;" or if addressing him, as "hallah."

3. **Unggoh**—mother. This term is used as both a term of reference and address for ego's female progenitor.

4. **Ummah**—father. This term is used as both a term of reference and address for ego's male progenitor.

5. **Babu**—parents' female siblings; female spouses of parents' siblings; any female collateral relatives of parents' generation; any female spouses of collateral relatives of parents' generation. Babu is used primarily as a term of reference. If ego is intimately associated with babu over an extensive period of time, the term is used as a term of address. However, if there is little age difference between ego and babu, or if
ego rarely associates with her, he refers to her by her name. Although theoretically, the term may be extended to indefinite collateral limits, except as an occasional term of respect, it is rarely used for addressing persons beyond parents' siblings. However, as a term of reference, the term is extended to indefinite collateral limits.

6. Bapa—parents' male siblings; male spouses of parents' siblings; any male collateral relative of parents' generation; any male spouses of collateral relatives of parents' generation. The uses of this term are identical to those described for babu.

7. Siit—any consanguineal relative of parents' generation. This term is rarely used among the Bajau, and appears to be an old term. Most young people cannot define it accurately, and usually say that it refers to any older relative. Older informants, however, maintain that it is an old term that describes persons in the babu-bapa relationships. Among some Samal-speaking people in Tawi-Tawi the term has been lost completely whereas others maintain that it is an old term meaning simply "kinsmen."

8. Ombuh—any consanguineal relative in the second and ascending generations from ego. This term is extended collaterally to indefinite limits as a term of address and is frequently used as a term of respect for older persons unrelated to ego. The same term is extended lineally and collaterally to refer to all of one's deceased ancestors. As a term of reference, it is used for any older person to whom ego may be related.

9. Danakan—sibling. This kin term serves as a reference term. Depending upon age in relation to ego, siblings are normally addressed by one of the following terms or by their given names or nicknames. Occasionally the name is extended to a close friend, relative or non-relative, to
indicate the intimacy of the relationship.

10. **Otok**—youngest and oldest brother, or youngest and oldest son. Most commonly this term of address is reserved for members of the nuclear family although it is sometimes extended collaterally to cousins who stand in those age positions within their own nuclear families. When applied to the youngest child, it is used as a term of endearment (and is temporary if other sons follow him) while it serves as a term of respect when addressing the oldest son.

11. **Arung**—youngest and oldest sister, or youngest and oldest daughter. The use of this term of address follows that of otok.

12. **Kaki**—cousin. As a term of reference, kaki is used for any degree of cousin relationship. If there is need to specify the degree of collaterality, suffixes indicating first, second, third, etc. may be added. However, few Bajau are able to trace cousinship geneologically beyond second cousins, and although Bajau can theoretically trace cousinship to an infinite degree of collaterality, rarely is there need to define such relationships. A person beyond a first cousin falls into that large amorphous group of kampun, or kinsmen. Kaki is often indiscriminately applied to any person known to be related to ego but whose exact relationship is not known. In this second usage, it could perhaps better be translated as kinsmen.

13. **Anak**—son or daughter. This word has the general meaning of child, but when used with a personal pronoun it becomes the reference term for son or daughter. Children are addressed by otok, arung, or their personal names.

14. **Kamanakan**—sibling's child; child of any cousin in any degree of
collaterality. Kamanakan is a term of reference; persons in this relationship to ego are usually addressed by their personal names or by otok or arung if they are in those age categories.

15. Umpu—any consanguinal relative in the second and descending generations from ego.

16. Mattoo—any affines in ascending generations from ego. The term is always used as a term of reference for relatives falling in these categories. As a term of address, it is usually reserved for spouse's parents. Other affines in spouse's generation are normally called by their given names whereas affines in higher generations are usually called omboh.

17. Ipal—any person married to a consanguineal relative of ego's generation or a consanguine of ego's spouse's generation. Most commonly used as a term of reference, ipal may also be used as a term of address.

18. Bilas—any person married to a consanguineal of ego's spouse and belonging to the same generation. Although the term may be extended to infinite collaterality, it is rarely extended beyond the first degree. The term is used as both a term of reference and address.

19. Ayuan—any affines in descending generations from ego. Ayuan is a term of reference, and rarely used in address.

Even a cursory glance at Bajau kinship terms reveals that they are predominantly classificatory. The grandparental and ascending generations are called by a single term. At one time, all members of ego's parents' generation (excluding the parents) were called by a single term; now division occurs along sex lines. Excluding his own children, all members of the first descending generation from ego are called by a single term as are all members of the second and descending generations. Affines are
lumped even more. A single term describes all affines in ascending generations from ego while another term describes all affines in descending generations from ego. All affines married to consanguines of ego's generation are called by one term.
CHAPTER V

THE VILLAGE

This chapter is a discussion of the structure of the Bajau boat-villages, the only non-kin based social group in Bajau society. A discussion of village leadership and village activities is presented, followed by a consideration of inter- and intra-village relations.

"Village" is perhaps not the best term to describe the Bajau moorages found throughout Tawi-Tawi since it connotes sedentary, land-based dwellings. However, excepting the fact that Bajau dwellings are not land-based nor sedentary, the Bajau moorages are similar to villages in that they are places where some Bajau are found all the time, the number depending upon factors discussed earlier.

Village Structure

In each of the five Bajau villages in Tawi-Tawi, one localized dakampungan is recognized as the first, or leading, kin group of that village. In most cases this first group is the one that originally began mooring at the place. Others who began to moor there later, recognized the priority of the first group. Tungkalang and Luuk Tulai have two such groups, Tungbangkao has three, while tiny Lioboran and Lamiun each has one. Although extremely informal, certain rights and prestige are enjoyed by these "first families." In the event of quarrels, others are often chas-tized as being "outsiders" even though they may have moored there for many years. The headman of the original group is recognized as headman of the village, and although each localized dakampungan calls upon its own headman for problems within the group, any quarrels which cross group lines are taken to the village headman. And should it be necessary for the
village to be represented at a celebration in a land village, the headman of the first localized dakampungan would attend.

Lamiun illustrates how Bajau villages are founded. This village consists almost exclusively of the married sons and daughters of two brothers and their female first cousin who began to moor at the place some ten years ago after having been frightened from a nearby village of land-dwellers. The village is identified among Bajau as the home place of this particular localized dakampungan even though a considerable number of other Bajau have begun to moor there. Eventually several other localized dakampungan will probably emerge at Lamiun if the present trend continues, but the founding group will be considered the "natives" of the village and their panglima will continue to be headman of the village.

A shift in power occurred between two localized dakampungan at Tungkalang. The original localized dakampungan in that village was headed by a panglima who enjoyed great renown as a good leader in his younger days. His siblings were equally well-known; one was an outstanding magician, another a powerful djin, another an expert boatbuilder, and still another an excellent fisherman. When I first met the family in 1963, they were living on past laurels and most were old and somewhat senile. The headman himself had only one daughter, one of his brothers had eight children, and the other siblings had only one or two children each. None of the younger generation had the skills nor charisma of their parents. Some four years previous to my arrival, a localized dakampungan from a boat village now dispersed moved to Tungkalang. The adults of the new group were much as the leaders of the old group must have been when they were young—extremely competent in a number of skills with outstanding abilities.
in leadership. The new localized dakampungan, in acknowledgment of the priority of the first group, paid the proper respect to the old panglima. At his death they recognized the ascendancy of his oldest nephew to the position. The nephew, unfortunately, was not qualified for the position; he was unlearned in traditional law, had poor judgment, and in general lacked the ingredients of a good leader. After a few rather pathetic cases, it became apparent to the villagers that the man was not a proper headman. No one else in his family fared better than he, so the villagers began to look elsewhere for someone to settle their disputes. The headman of the recently arrived kin group was still fairly young, perhaps 40, but well-versed in Bajau tradition and a competent leader of his own localized dakampungan. Before long villagers began to seek his advice on problems, and by the time I left the village in 1967, he was recognized as the panglima of the village and his kin group was considered the leading localized dakampungan. The older members of the original localized dakampungan revealed some resentment at the shift in power, but realized that they had failed to provide a competent leader for the village. The nephew of the deceased panglima continued to act as headman of his localized dakampungan, but his position of village leadership was lost.

Cutting across the localized dakampungan in the village, three different types of households are discernible, namely sedentary, semi-nomadic, and nomadic. A nucleus of boats which rarely leaves the village forms the stable element of the population around which the other boats are clustered. Generally these households are composed of the immediate family of the village headman, married couples who are both natives of the village, families who are predominantly agriculturalists, or those who
are involved in some other non-fishing activity. The second group, the semi-nomads, are usually fishermen whose residence in the village is determined by the phases of the moon, or others who for various reasons discussed earlier are in the village only part-time. The third, and smallest, group, the nomads, usually moor at the fringes of the village, and are seldom in any village for longer than a couple weeks at a time. Also included in this last group are those persons passing through the village enroute to some other destination.

The village may be viewed as three concentric circles, the innermost circle being the sedentary population, the second circle the semi-nomads, and the third the nomads. Overlaying these concentric circles are the localized dakampungan. Within these localized dakampungan boundaries, the sibling alliance units may be considered a series of smaller circles, not concentric, but overlapping one another and overlaying the three major concentric circles since a sibling alliance unit often consists of sedentary persons, semi-nomads, and sometimes even nomads. Also, any single member of an alliance unit may at some other time belong to a number of other alliance units in the village, conceivably in different localized dakampungan. If another dimension is added to the above circles, it is possible to illustrate how the alliance units of one village extend to and include members of other villages, thereby revealing the web of kinship ties which connect the five Tawi-Tawi Bajau villages.

Ideally, social stratification in a Bajau village follows a pyramidal structure which ignores localized dakampungan affiliation. At the top of the pyramid is the headman; on the second step are the spiritual leaders, the healers, and the magicians; on the third step are the perma-
nent residents of the village, followed by the semi-nomads, and ending with the true nomads. However, this stratification is artificial in that it fails to account for the many exceptions. For instance, a semi-nomadic man, because of his success as a commercial fisherman, may have considerable wealth which, coupled with a strong personality, may make him one of the most influential persons in the village. Similarly, a very old man although recognized as the village headman, may be mostly disregarded by the villagers because of his senility. Some of the semi-nomadic commercial fishermen who, even though they may be wealthier than some permanent residents of the village, are considered somewhat inferior because of their transitory position in the village based on their nomadic way of life. Likewise, an imam or a djin, whose position has high status, often leads a semi-nomadic life. A sense of prestige is rapidly becoming associated with house-living with a corresponding sense of inferiority connected with boat-living. This will no doubt be a strong influence in accelerating the move to houses within the next few years as more sea folk embrace the house-dwelling habit.

**Inter-Village Activities**

Only on two occasions do the several localized dakampungan of the village act as a unit: 1) during a ceremony to rid the village of disease-causing spirits and 2) during a communal fish drive practiced most commonly in the Bilatan waters. Although a large wedding celebration may attract the entire village to the evening activities, the affair is sponsored by one or two localized dakampungan and not the entire village; most guests are simply passive observers. The curing ceremony and the fish drive cut across localized dakampungan lines and involve active parti-
icipation and planning by almost all the villagers.

During periods of much illness, death, or unusually bad luck, a ceremony is held to rid the village of the evil spirits believed to be causing the misfortune. Each family contributes a small amount of money or goods toward the construction of a small boat to carry away the trouble: one family may provide a sail, another bamboo outriggers, another food offerings, etc. Members of the village representing the several localized dakampungan then construct the boat and place offerings on it. The djin of the village from the several localized dakampungan pull the boat through the village as they chant to attract the disease-causing spirits. After they have traveled through the village waters, the boat is taken to the open sea and set adrift in the belief that the disease-causing spirits have been attracted to the boat and will drift away from the village.

The communal fish drives practiced especially at Tungbangkao also involve the active participation of most villagers as well as any Bajau fishermen who may be fishing nearby waters. As discussed earlier, during the neap tides fish are attracted to the Bilatan reefs for feeding. At this time, if weather conditions permit, the village men, boys, and sometimes a few women leave the village in perhaps a hundred boats to entrap the fish in nets. Certain men, recognized as expert fishermen, act as leaders and the catch is divided equally among the participants. Although most of the participants are related, kinship in itself is not a prerequisite for joining the drive.

**Intra-Village Relationships**

Because of the kinship ties and frequent movement among the villages, in many respects all five of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau boat-villages represent
a single community. Villages in close proximity naturally have more contacts than do distant villages. Frequent, indeed daily, communication exists between Luuk Tulai and Tungkalang, as well as between Tungkalang and Lamiun, and Tungbangkao and Lioboran. Contacts between the Sanga-Sanga villages and the Bilatan villages are less frequent, but as indicated earlier, the rich fishing grounds, as well as the burial islands, attract many of the Sanga-Sanga Bajau to Bilatan. Bajau from Tungbangkao or Lioboran, who have several days' business in Bongao town, generally moor their boats at Tungkalang since many are afraid of possible maltreatment from the non-Bajau population in Bongao. Similarly, Bajau from Luuk Tulai, as well as far-off Siasi and Sitangkai, sometimes prefer to stay at Tungkalang rather than Bongao. As a result, Tungkalang often has a large transient population.

Within the memory of many living people, large Bajau boat villages, moored near land villages, have completely dispersed. As mentioned earlier, a large Bajau flotilla formerly moored near Karundung, a land village on Sanga-Sanga Island across the bay from Bongao. In 1959, 17 Tao-sug were killed near that village by Jolo outlaws; almost overnight the Bajau boats left, many going to Tungkalang and some to Bongao to form the present village of Lamiun. Disagreements over land with their land-dwelling neighbors sometimes cause Bajau to leave a village. However, if the current trend toward house-living continues, the present Bajau settlements will probably become more permanent like those in the Sibutu Islands.

The Tawi-Tawi Bajau recognize the Sibutu Bajau as members of their bangsa, or ethnic group, while the Bajau of Siasi, Jolo, and Zamboanga are viewed as a different albeit closely related group of people. Kinship
ties verify the Bajau view; many, and significant, kinship ties connect the Tawi-Tawi and Sitangkai Bajau, whereas few and insignificant ties extend northward to Siasi and Jolo.
PART III

THE HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU OF SITANGKAI
CHAPTER I

HABITAT

This chapter is a description of the Sibutu Islands, home of the house-dwelling Bajau of Sitangkai. A survey of the geography of the islands is presented, followed by a brief history which concentrates on the emergence of Sitangkai as the urban center of the Sibutu Islands. The chapter concludes with a description of the Bajau community of Sitangkai.

Geography of the Sibutu Islands

Some 40 miles southwest of Tam-Tam Island is the Sibutu Island group, home of the most acculturated Bajau in Sulu. These Bajau, concentrated in the administrative center of Sitangkai, are more closely related to the Tawi-Tawi Bajau through kinship and other cultural features than to any other group of Bajau, excepting perhaps those of Semporna. The scant available evidence indicates that the ancestors of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau once lived in their houseboats in the Sibutu Islands (Nimmo 1968). Long before any of the Sibutu Bajau built houses, a small group of Bajau apparently migrated to the Tawi-Tawi Islands while the remainder continued their boat-dwelling way of life in the Sibutu Islands until some 20 years ago when they began to move to houses.

About 30 miles from Borneo, the Sibutu Islands are the southernmost islands in the Republic of the Philippines. Low coral islands unsuited for any agriculture except copra production, all are plagued with perennial shortages of drinking water. Sibutu, the largest island, is only 16½ miles long with a maximum breadth of 2½ miles, and excepting a hill which rises some 448 feet, is only a few feet above sea level. A narrow channel, about three miles wide, separates Sibutu from Tumindao Island, the second largest
island of the group. Other important islands in the area include Sitangkai, the commercial and administrative center of Sibutu; Buli Nusa, an uninhabited island planted in coconuts, but more important to the Bajau for its sacred grave; Tanduwak, a tiny island off the southern tip of Sibutu and host for a Bajau village; Siculan, site of the only lighthouse in the islands; Sipangkot, home for a village of land-dwelling Samal; and Omapoi, the northernmost Bajau village in the islands (see Map 3). All the islands of the archipelago are low, only a few hundred yards in extent, and surrounded by reefs which are bared at low tide.

South and west of the islands, extensive reefs support an incredibly rich marine life to make the Sibutu Islands one of the most lucrative fishing grounds in Sulu, indeed in all the Philippines. Mariners of Southeast Asia, some through painful experience among the treacherous reefs, view the area less kindly as one of the most hazardous passages in these seas. A long history of shipwrecks, the most recent in 1967, justifies the reefs' reputation. The greatest of these reefs, Tumindao Reef, rises from the sea floor to create about 60 square miles of shallow water, most of which is exposed at low tide. Lesser in size, but no less spectacular in the variety of sea life they support, are the reefs of Sibutu, Omapoi, Meridian, Andulinang, Bajapa, and Boheian. Because of these reefs, most of the waters surrounding the Sibutu Islands are unusually calm and gentle, with an exception in the northern portion of Sibutu Island, which is protected by only a narrow, fringing reef. The extensive reefs make it unnecessary for the Bajau to travel to the open sea for fish, and they are consequently the most confirmed reef-fishermen of all the Sulu Bajau.
FIGURE 4. MAP OF SIBUTU ISLANDS

LEGEND
1. Omapoi
2. Sitangkai
3. Tanduwak
4. Tungnehat
Currents of the spring tides are swift in numerous places throughout the area, but especially so in the channel between Sibutu and Tumindao. At this current's greatest strength, some of the interisland steamers do well to hold ground against it while local sailors never try to oppose the treacherous flow in man- or wind-powered boats. As noted earlier, the infamous Sibutu Current, between Sibutu and Bongao Islands, is one of the swiftest and most dangerous currents in all of Sulu. The islands are influenced by the same monsoon winds described for Tawi-Tawi, and although some months are rainier than others, there are no pronounced wet and dry seasons.

History of Sitangkai

Until fairly recent times, the Sibutu Islands were inhabited exclusively by Samal-speakers, and even today they probably represent over 90 percent of the population. The remaining ten percent consists mostly of Taosug and a few Chinese and northern Filipinos.

The prehistory of the islands is virtually unknown. Earliest written reports of the area are by American administrators who first went to the islands at the turn of the century. The Spaniards never had settlements beyond Bongao, and although scouting parties no doubt visited the Sibutu Islands, they left no known records of their observations. Consequently, the islands were almost completely by-passed by the mainstreams of Western activity in Southeast Asia until fairly recent years.

How long the islands have been inhabited is open to speculation. It would appear that they could not support human populations before the introduction of cassava to Southeast Asia since nothing else but coconuts, scrub brush, and a few trees presently grow in the infertile soil, and
the distance to Tawi-Tawi and Borneo is too great to regularly travel for foodstuffs in wind- or man-powered craft. Probably the area was first visited by Samal fishermen from eastern Borneo, the ancestors of the present Bajau of Sibutu, who were followed by land-dwelling Samal-speakers after the acquisition of cassava allowed them to cultivate the islands. It is unlikely that the present land-dwellers first came to the area as boat-dwellers. If such were the case, they would seemingly have remained more sea-oriented than they currently are; as it is, the land-dwelling Samal of Sibutu are among the most confirmed land-dwellers of all the Sulu Samal. But whatever the prehistory may be, the first written accounts of the islands mention two groups of people— one living in boats on the sea and one living in houses on the land. How long they may have lived as such is still open to speculation.

In the early days of this century, flotilla of boat-dwelling Bajau regularly moored at Bolong-Bulong, Andulingan, Omapoi, and Tanduwak while large communities of land-dwelling Samal were at Sibutu, Turnindao, Tando Banuk, and Tungnehat (see Map 3). Before the commercial contacts of recent years with the outside world, the two peoples apparently carried on a symbiotic relationship, with the boat-dwellers trading their fish and sea products for the cassava and few fruits of the land-dwellers. Today the traditional specializations persist although some Bajau have abandoned fishing and some land-dwellers of Sibutu Island have gained renown throughout Sulu as master launch-builders. Besides their different sea and land orientations, religious differences have also traditionally separated the groups: the Bajau continued to follow their native religious practices long after the land people were converted to Islam.
Politically, the islands were a part of the Sulu Sultanate with several hereditary datas, directly responsible to the sultan, who ruled locally over village headmen, or panglima. It is unclear as to how the Bajau fit into this political structure. The first official Bajau panglima was appointed by the Sultan in about 1920, but prior to that time, the datu periodically demanded tribute from the boat-dwelling people. They were, however, never directly involved in the affairs of the sultanate and apparently were not recruited for the infamous raiding parties of the datu and sultan.

At the beginning of this century, the tiny, uninhabited island of Sitangkai was used as a Bajau burial ground. The nearest Bajau boat village was at Bolong-Bolong, about a mile north while, other Bajau boat villages were located at Andulingan, Omapoi, and Tandowak. According to local lore, sometime around 1900, a Chinese man from Borneo, named Bua, visited the Sibutu Islands to investigate the possibility of setting up a small trading store. He was apparently attracted to the area's commercial potentials and subsequently established a store at Omapoi. For some reason, business failed at Omapoi, so he moved to Sitangkai and built the first house on that island. Well knowing that the success of his venture depended upon his contacts with the Bajau, Bua cultivated close friendships with the nearby Bolong-Bolong Bajau as he traded his manufactured goods for their dried fish. His business attracted a few land-dwelling Samal from Sibutu, and before long a half dozen houses were strung along the eastern side of Sitangkai Island. Soon the population was further increased as the Bolong-Bolong boat-dwellers began to moor regularly at Sitangkai. Bua's success spread throughout the Chinese
community and a couple of years later two other Chinese families arrived to set up shops and buy the dried fish of the Bajau. More land-dwelling Samal moved to Sitangkai and more Bajau boats began to moor there, so that by 1905 when the first American administrator arrived in the Sibutu Islands, Sitangkai was regarded as the commercial center of the archipelago with about 25 houses and a sizeable flotilla of Bajau houseboats. During the same year, i.e. 1905, the first mayor of the Sibutu Islands was appointed by the American administration; before that time the islands had been ruled by the old datu under the watchful eye of the American Army in Bongao. In 1915, the first school was built in Sitangkai and an American customs officer regularly lived in the settlement. The village continued to attract more Bajau and land-dwelling Samal as well as a few Taosug families from Jolo. The present wharf was built in the mid-1930's to facilitate the loading and unloading of the interisland steamers which some years previous had made Sitangkai a port of call to pick up the dried fish of the Chinese fish-buyers. In the late 30's, a few flimsy shacks were the first Bajau houses to appear on the reef in front of the emerging Sitangkai settlement. However, with the outbreak of World War II and the establishment of a Japanese outpost at Sitangkai, the Bajau returned to their boats and fled to the more remote islands and reefs while the Chinese either left the village also, or died at the hands of the Japanese. As a result, Sitangkai almost reverted back to its former uninhabited state.

With the cessation of hostilities and the re-establishment of peace, the Bajau and the Chinese merchants returned to Sitangkai. In 1946, an enterprising and imaginative Bajau headman, named Alari, constructed the
first permanent Bajau house on the reef some 1000 feet in front of the land-houses of Sitangkai. It was an elaborate structure of two storeys with several balconies and ornate carvings throughout, built largely to display the wealth he had somehow managed to accumulate. Within months, another Bajau headman, Alari's rival for leadership among the Sitangkai Bajau, erected an equally impressive edifice a few hundred feet from Alari's original house. Other Bajau began to follow the innovation of their leaders and within a short time a small village of Bajau houses was clustered in front of the Sitangkai land-dwellings. The same Alari apparently learned that house-living per se was not sufficient to qualify him as a respectable member of Sulu society, so a few years after his house-building experiment he built the first Bajau mosque in Sitangkai. He had planned the mosque project for some time, since the previous year he had sent his youngest son to Tawi-Tawi to learn Islamic ritual from an imam who had earlier befriended Alari. With the son's return and the assistances of friendly land-dwellers of Sitangkai, Alari and his kinsmen began to learn Islam and to throw off the pagan shackles that had marked them as outcasts for centuries. Other house-dwelling Bajau observed the metamorphosis of Alari and his family from outcast pagan boat-dwellers to respectable Muslim house-dwellers, and were sufficiently impressed to join the new Islamic Bajau community. The move to houses accelerated with such great speed that by 1963 when I first visited Sitangkai, there were only about 30 families still dwelling in houseboats. In 1966, when I returned for a longer stay, less than a dozen families were still clinging to the boat-dwelling life while over 2400 Bajau were living in houses built over the reef.
It is difficult to pinpoint any single reason as to why the Bajau moved to houses; rather, a series of events, interacting at an appropriate time, seems responsible for the movement. The Bajau were apparently first attracted to Sitangkai by the early Chinese fish-buyers who offered a ready market for their fish as well as a supply of essential small manufactured items, such as clothing, fishing supplies, matches, and tobacco. Hard upon the heels of the Chinese, American administrators arrived to usher in a period of peace and stability, a rare Sulu phenomenon if early sources are to be believed. The northern islands had long been battlefields for countless conflicts between the Spaniards and Muslims, and even before the arrival of the Spaniards, Sulu history was heavily punctuated with petty wars between datu in attempts to usurp one another's power. Add to these hostilities, the piracy endemic to the islands for unknown centuries, and the occasional slave-raiders from Borneo, still remembered by Bajau old people, and some notion of the lawlessness of the area may be gleaned. Probably this lawlessness coupled with their migratory fishing habits encouraged the Bajau to live in boats away from the more heavily populated areas. With the coming of the Americans and their police powers, Sitangkai became a safe as well as a convenient place to live, so Bajau houseboats consequently began to regularly moor there as they rested from their fishing cycles. The intimate contacts with the house-dwellers as well as Sitangkai's new cash economy encouraged some Bajau to experiment with house-living and then with Islam. House-living and Islam had always been the earmarks of their social superiors, and those first few ambitious Bajau who saw a way out of their traditional outcaste, pagan state grasped the opportunity. Their success spurred
others to follow suit until now boat-dwelling pagans have almost completely vanished from the Sibutu waters.

The Bajau move to houses was not limited to Sitangkai, although it began there. The Bajau at Omapoi have almost completely moved to houses while Andulingan and Bolong-Belong no longer have villages of any sort since the boat-dwellers who formerly moored there now live at Sitangkai in houses. Some of the boat-dwellers of Tanduwak built houses there as others moved up to Tungnehat on the eastern shore of Sibutu where they constructed houses to form the second largest Bajau community in Sibutu, second only to Sitangkai.

Today Sitangkai is probably one of the most unique spots in the Philippines, and is blessed with almost everything a village should not have. The island has no drinking water and consequently all water must be caught during the rains or, during droughts, transported from the brackish wells of Sibutu Island. Two miles of shallow reef water separate the town from the wharf and all goods must therefore be moved to and from the ships in small boats. Low tides expose surrounding reefs which completely isolate the community from sea traffic. And finally inadequate, infertile soil on Sitangkai Island discourages any agriculture but copra production, thereby necessitating the importation of all agricultural products from elsewhere, mostly Tawi-Tawi. Nonetheless, tourism promoters have labelled it "the Venice of the Philippines," and although not quite Venice, Sitangkai perhaps warrants the appellation.

A main canal, the continuation of a shallow channel that cuts through the surrounding reef roughly divides Sitangkai's 3400 people into halves. In recent years, walkways of coral rock have been constructed on either
side of the canal while two elevated bridges, high enough to allow the
passage of small motor launches at high tides, connect the two halves of
the village. A large roofed deck adjoins one of the bridges to provide
Sitangkai's elevated counterpart of the village plaza. On either side of
the canal, nearby houses are connected by a maze of bridges and board­
walks while more distantly located houses are unconnected and must depend
upon small boats for access to the main part of town. A few ships are
still housed in the original structures built by the Chinese along the
island shore, but most are scattered on either side of the canal, having
moved to sea to join the rest of Sitangkai's population. The village
boasts two mosques, one for the Bajau and one for the non-Bajau, and
various branches of a public school which offers instruction through grade
six. A small post office and telegraph office keep the community in
touch with the outside world. Some former land-dwellers reveal their
terrestrial origins in the small gardens they have planted on man-made
islets of coral stone and earth carried from neighboring islands. Others
are content with patios of potted plants. A few enterprising individuals,
mostly Chinese and non-Bajau, have capitalized on Sitangkai's water short­
age by constructing large concrete tanks to store water during the rainy
periods to sell at often phenomenally high prices during the droughts.

Tides govern most activity within the community. At lowest tides
it is impossible to move by boat through some sections while during the
highest spring tides water occasionally spills over some of the eight feet
high walkways. Fishermen normally leave on the receding morning tide and
return on the rising evening tide. Traffic to and from the big boats at
the wharf must also await the high tides.
Sitangkai's economy is based almost exclusively upon fishing. In general, the Bajau are fishermen who sell their catches to non-Bajau middle men, mostly Chinese, who ship them to retail outlets in Mindanao. All the stores and shops are managed by Chinese and other non-Bajau while most of the nearby cultivable islands are planted in copra by land-Samal.

**Ethnic Composition of Sitangkai**

Sitangkai's regular contact with the outside world is through the two interisland steamers which call weekly from Zamboanga. In addition, unscheduled steamers occasionally call, and several motor launches make frequent trips to Semporna and Bongao. Launches regularly move passengers and goods within the island group, but the majority of local movement is still wind- and man-powered.

The Bajau are the largest ethnic group in Sitangkai and represent two-thirds of the 3400 population. The second largest group are the land-dwelling Samal, followed by the Taosug, Chinese, and Christian Filipinos.

The Bajau communities in Sibutu have apparently always been more involved in the political and economic affairs of the land-dwelling Samal than has been the case with the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. This is partly related to the larger size of the Sibutu Bajau community. In Sitangkai, they represent about 66 percent of the total population, although this number probably falls to only about 33 percent when placed in the context of the entire Sibutu Islands' population. Nonetheless, the number is considerably greater than the mere four percent which constitutes the Bajau portion of the Tawi-Tawi population. Thus, in terms of sheer size, the Bajau community in Sibutu could not be ignored by the land-dwelling population. The symbiosis noted for the Tawi-Tawi land-dwellers and sea-dwellers is even
more pronounced in Sibutu. This stems partly from the fact that the Sibutu land-dwelling Samal are more confirmed land-dwellers than most of their Tawi-Tawi counterparts whereas the Sibutu Bajau are more confirmed sea-dwellers than their Tawi-Tawi kinsmen. The Sibutu Islands are claimed almost exclusively by the land-dwellers and even if the Bajau so desired, they could not find land for agriculture.

The Bajau community in Sibutu has always been more actively involved in the greater political structure of Sulu. Early visitors to the area (e.g. Taylor) noted that the Bajau owed some sort of ill-defined allegiance to certain land-dwelling datu who in return offered them protection from outside harassment. Old Bajau informants at Sitangkai still recall the early days of this century when they had to pay tribute in dried fish to certain datu. The headman Alari, noted earlier for his important role in initiating the move to houses, was apparently a close friend of a local datu who was interested in gaining the political support of the Bajau community. Today, the Bajau represent an important voting block in Sibutu, and no politician seeking office can ignore them. This is quite a different situation from the one prevailing in Tawi-Tawi where the small Bajau community is almost completely outside the political community of the islands. Obviously, then, the differences in the sizes of the two Bajau communities are (and apparently always have been) important variables in their relationships with the land-dwelling people.

The Bajau community of Sitangkai is variously acculturated to Islam. Immediate relatives of the Bajau who built the first mosque tend to be the most acculturated and also tend to live in the central portion of Sitangkai where many have intimate contacts with non-Bajau. On the other hand, the
more recent Bajau arrivals are the least acculturated, live at the fringes of the village, and have few intimate contacts with non-Bajau. About one-fourth of the Bajau adult male population attends the mosque services fairly regularly whereas that number is no more than one-fifth among the women. If the men who periodically attend mosque services are added, adult male participation rises to almost one-half while if comparable females are added, they still muster little more than one-fourth of their total population. Virtually all the remaining Bajau claim to be Muslims, but they rarely attend mosque services—some are unfamiliar with the ritual, some claim to not have time, and some are simply not interested. Practically all adults, however, observe and variously participate in certain Muslim life cycle ceremonies which some members of all Bajau kin groups have adopted. It appears to be only a matter of time, perhaps no more than 10 or 15 years, before the entire Bajau community at Sitangkai can be legitimately called Muslim—as Islam goes in Sulu.

The Sitangkai Bajau reveal some of the distinctive physical features of their Tawi-Tawi kinsmen, including the sun-darkened skin and the striking, sun-bleached hair. Most noticeable among the younger generation, who have never experienced boat-living, is the absence of the distinctive Bajau gait and underdeveloped lower extremities. Most have well-developed legs, do not have the protruding buttocks characteristic of the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers, and their gait is indistinguishable from other residents of Sitangkai. However, some of the older persons who lived in boats the greater portion of their lives reveal some of the physical adaptations to boat-living found among the Tawi-Tawi people. The Sitangkai Bajau dress is not greatly different from that of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau except that it is gener-
ally cleaner, and among the younger males, more Western. Only the less acculturated, older women go bare-breasted whereas young women, particularly those most acculturated to Islam, never go without a blouse. The greater affluence of the Sitangkai Bajau is revealed in the gold caps worn over the teeth of most teen-agers and adults.

Monthly fishing cycles of the Sitangkai Bajau, in general, follow those of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau except that they are almost completely confined to the surrounding reefs. The communal fish drives, described for the Tungbangkao Bajau, are more popular among the Sitangkai Bajau, largely because the myriad reefs of the area can be more profitably exploited by large groups of fishermen. During the neap tides, flotilla of often well over a hundred boats leave Sitangkai to fish the nearby reefs. During the spring tides of the dark moon, fish are netted by lantern-light in the same manner described for Tawi-Tawi, but with the waxing of the new moon, a type of seine net fishing, not found in Tawi-Tawi is practiced. The full moon normally demands time away from fishing for ceremonies, but those men who do fish practice net fishing in nuclear family units or with one or two male companions. All men, of course, do not always follow these cycles, and many prefer individual net fishing at all times of the month, but nonetheless, the above general patterns characterize most Sitangkai fishing.

The Sitangkai Bajau are less nomadic than the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, partly because of their house-dwelling habit and partly because of the proximity of their homes to rich fishing grounds. In addition, they do not have to travel for water since what water is available in the area is from rain, caught and stored as it flows from the roofs. Nor must they travel for
cassava and other food products which are always available in the Sitangkai market. The occasional trips that the Tawi-Tawi people make to the burial islands are not characteristic of the Sitangkai Bajau since their dead are buried on nearby Sitangkai Island. A cemetery located conveniently between Tanduwak and Tungnehat eliminates the same trips for Bajau in those villages. However, the Omapoi people still use the Sitangkai cemetery and consequently must make periodic visits to it. A trend toward endogamous marriage characterizes the Sitangkai people and thus there are fewer relatives in other Sibutu villages who must be visited. Some Bajau do, however, regularly visit relatives in the Bajau village of Bongau-Bongau, located at the outskirts of Semporna, Sabah, and apparently founded by Sibutu Bajau. Also, many Bajau families periodically return to boat-living for extended fishing trips or when it is necessary to spend several days at wood-working in the Sibutu forests.

But, in general, the Sibutu Bajau are much less nomadic than their Tawi-Tawi kinsmen, and some are unbelievably sedentary, such as the several women I met who, except for brief visits to the very nearby islets, had never left Sitangkai—a far cry from some of the truly nomadic Tawi-Tawi boat dwellers who rarely stay in a single place longer than a couple of weeks.
CHAPTER II

THE HOUSEHOLD

This chapter is a discussion of household composition, residence patterns, marriage patterns, divorce rates, and kinship terminology as found among the Sitangkai house-dwelling Bajau. The seemingly unique features of these aspects of Sitangkai society are shown to have their origin in the boat-dwelling culture as illustrated by the Tawi-Tawi Bajau.

Household Composition

The houses at Sitangkai are, of course, the most glaring difference between this Bajau community and the Bajau communities of Tawi-Tawi. Further inquiry and observation is necessary to uncover the other, more subtle differences between the two groups, but even the most indifferent visitor to Sitangkai cannot help but notice that most of these Bajau are confirmed house-dwellers.

As houses go in Sulu, the Sitangkai houses are well constructed, and reflect the general prosperity for which the community is noted throughout the archipelago. All are, of course, built on piles driven into the reef floor. Atop these piles, the houses are most commonly one storey structures, although the two storeys, balconies, and ostentatious carvings of some of the older ones recall a time when families attempted to out-build one another in elaborateness and ornamentation. The houses vary greatly in size; older houses tend to be larger, some 80 feet by 40 feet by 30 feet high at the gable, while some of the more recent, smaller ones are only 12 by 20 by 10. Most fall somewhere between these two extremes. Except the very poorest houses, all are roofed with corrugated metal in order that the precious rains can be more easily caught and stored for drinking
water. Walls and floors are of commercially-made planks, most of which originate in Zamboanga, or are hand-cut from local trees. Glass windows are non-existent, but all houses have shutters which are closed during inclement weather and nighttime hours. Most houses have extensive, open porches, usually facing to the east, which are used for outdoor household activities, e.g. drying fish, woodworking, preparing cassava, ceremonies, and children's play. Interiors are normally a single room used for daytime activities and sleeping while a small house built on the porch serves as kitchen for the household. Bridges connect the house to neighboring houses which in turn are connected to other houses to form the labyrinth of walkways that is Sitangkai. The more sea-ward houses, however, are often unconnected to neighboring houses and must depend upon boats to visit other parts of the village. Some of the more affluent and aesthetically-minded have painted their houses and keep small verandas of potted flowers; most, however, are unpainted and unflowered.

Composition of the Sitangkai household or dapaningan ("a group living in a single dwelling") hold surprises for one familiar only with the boat-dwelling Bajau. Whereas 77 percent of the boat-dwellers live in single nuclear family households, such a household composition accounts for only 14 percent of the Sitangkai households; all other households in Sitangkai are variations of the extended family. Some of the households are phenomenally large, such as the one-roomed house I often visited which was home for 15 nuclear families, or a total of 46 persons. The average, however, consists of only two or three nuclear families.

As summarized in Table V, the most common household composition among the house-dwelling Bajau is based on female relationships, i.e. uxorilocal-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of household</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uxorilaterial extended family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uxorilineal extended family</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uxorilineal-mixed extended family&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virilateral extended family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virilineal extended family</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virilaterial-mixed extended family&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virilineal-mixed extended family&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>160</td>
<td>100.2 (rounded)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>A household that is predominantly uxorilineal with an additional family related through other kin ties.

<sup>2</sup>Same as 1 except along virilineal and virilaterial lines.

<sup>3</sup>Households for which no dominant patterns emerge from the composition.
ity. Fifty-six percent of the Bajau households reveal this organization. Usually it is an uxorilineal extended family of two or three generations in depth, i.e. a married couple, their married daughters, and possibly their married granddaughters. The next most common household, 16 percent of the total, has a virilocal basis and is typically composed of a married couple, their married sons, and perhaps their married grandsons. The final two household types, the nuclear family and the "Mixed," each accounts for 14 percent of the total number of households.

Households within the "Mixed" category reveal much variation. One such household consisted of a married couple and their married son and married daughter and the children of both; another was two married male first cousins, their married female first cousin and the children of all; a third was a married man and his family who lived with his married maternal aunt and married maternal uncle and their families; another household was composed of three unrelated couples; and still another consisted of several married couples related to one another in differing and overlapping ways.

Residence Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of residence</th>
<th>Number of couples</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Natolocal village/uxorilocal household.</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Natolocal village/virilocal household.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Uxorilocal village/uxorilocal household.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Virilocal village/virilocal household.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>99.9 (rounded)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VI reveals that post-marital household residence of individual couples has, of course, the same tendency toward uxorilocality that is found in household compositions. Over 78 percent of the couples reside uxorilocally, the ideal Bajau residence choice, and exceptions to it are usually based on practical reasons. An elderly couple who had no daughters were quickly approaching the time when they could no longer care for themselves; consequently, their youngest son continued to live with them rather than with his wife's family after his marriage. In another case, a wife was orphaned and rather than live in her deceased mother's uxorilocal household, she chose to live in the household of her husband's parents.

Numerous couples leave the wife's parents' household because of quarrels. One young man told me that he and his wife left his wife's household because it was so crowded that they never had privacy for sexual intercourse. The list of exceptions to the ideal of uxorilocal residence could be expanded, but the preceding illustrate the factors which sometimes interfere with the realization of the ideal.

In terms of village residence, natolocality is far more common than other types, i.e. persons from Sitangkai tend to marry one another more often than they do persons from outside Sitangkai. As could be expected, virilocal village residence is practiced the least often.

Perhaps the most dramatic difference between the households of the boat-dwellers and the house-dwellers is in sheer size. However, if one examines the considerations which have contributed to the household size, he will find that they are not so greatly different from the considerations which determine the boat-dwellers' residence practices. In the first place, the size of the boat-dwelling household is limited by the small size of
the typical houseboat; in most cases, there simply is not space for more than one nuclear family. And if the boat is built large enough to accommodate several families, it becomes awkward to maneuver and loses its efficiency in a nomadic, fishing culture. Nonetheless, as noted earlier, some houseboats are large enough to house more than one family and some extended family households are found among the boat-dwelling Bajau. The more permanent extended family households are limited to the larger houseboats whereas those found in small boats are usually emergency adaptations to housing shortages. Thus, the notion of several related families living together in a single dwelling is certainly not alien to the boat-dwellers.

In many respects, the large, extended households of the SiTangkai Bajau are simply a solidification, under one roof, of the fluid sibling alliance units of the boat-dwelling Bajau. As noted, except when fishing alone away from the moorage, the Bajau family always joins a larger social unit composed ideally of siblings of the husband or wife. It is thus a practiced ideal to live intimately with close relatives whenever possible. Consequently, one could almost predict that given a more sedentary way of life and larger dwellings, the boat-dwelling Bajau would live in large extended households. Such, indeed, is what happened when they moved to houses at SiTangkai. Another, very practical consideration voiced by many Bajau when asked why they prefer to live in extended family households is that if each family lived in a separate house, the house would be vacant several months of the year as the family followed the monthly fishing cycles. As it is, with several families in one dwelling, the house is always occupied by some families while others are away for fishing or woodworking.

The pronounced uxorilocality found at SiTangkai also has its genesis
among the boat-dwellers. As noted, uxorilocality is an ideal among the boat-dwellers. A survey among the boat-dwellers revealed that over 80 percent of them maintain that a couple should practice uxorilocal residence, but more practical problems connected with fishing cycles and other necessary movements discourage such residence. It appears that when the Sitangkai Bajau were faced with the prospect of sedentary residence in one household, the ideal of uxorilocality was called into play. As a result, almost 80 percent of the Sitangkai couples reside uxorilocally. Another factor reinforcing uxorilocality is the fact that Sitangkai men more commonly fish in male groups, rather than with their wives as the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. If women are to be separated periodically from their husbands to reside in an extended household, they would be most compatible and comfortable with their own female siblings. This, too, was observed by many Bajau informants.

The preponderance of natolocal village residence at Sitangkai is due primarily to the large concentration of Bajau in Sitangkai as well as to their more sedentary way of life. Although the boat-dwelling Bajau claims that it is best to marry a well-known girl from his own village, sometimes a youth cannot find a suitable bride among the few unmarried girls in the small boat village he claims as home and he consequently must look beyond the intimate circle of acquaintances. However, his search for a bride is facilitated by his frequent travels whereby he is able to meet numerous girls in different villages—meetings which not uncommonly blossom into romance and eventual marriage. In this respect, his contacts are much more dispersed than his more sedentary house-dwelling counterpart in Sitangkai. But the Sitangkai youth has less trouble finding a marriage partner
in his own community since a large number of unmarried girls are readily available. Thus the trend toward village endogamy.

Marriage Patterns

As the boat-dwelling Bajau of Tawi-Tawi, the Sitangkai Bajau believe that it is best to marry relatives; however, notions as to the best type of relationship differs between the two groups. The boat-dwellers' disapproval of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage has been extended to all first cousin marriage among the more acculturated Sitangkai Bajau. The recency of this disapproval reveals itself in that almost all the first cousin marriages in Table VII are older couples or couples less acculturated to Islam. First cousin marriage, excluding patrilateral parallel cousins, is still fairly common among the less acculturated Bajau. And the fact that 77.5 percent of all married couples in Sitangkai are relatives indicates that the house-dwellers, as their boat-dwelling kinsmen, still prefer to marry relatives. Indeed because of the complex web of kinship ties in Sitangkai, it would probably be difficult to find many potential marriage partners who are not kinsmen.

As noted in the introduction, the emerging prohibition against first cousin marriage among the Sitangkai Bajau cannot be adequately explained as acculturation to the land-dwellers' disapproval of such marriages. Rather it has direct antecedents in the boat-dwelling society. Among the boat-dwellers, marriage between patrilateral parallel cousins is considered incestuous as is marriage between any first cousins who have been raised together intimately or who have been nursed by the same woman. These same prohibitions have been retained by the house-dwellers, and because of the large extended households of the Sitangkai Bajau, the number of first cous-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Matrilateral parallel first cousins</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patrilateral parallel first cousins</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cross cousins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Second cousins</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Third cousins</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fourth cousins</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Second kamanakan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Related, but relationship unknown</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Distant relationship</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. No relationship</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ins raised together intimately in the same household (and thereby improper marriage partners) has been greatly increased. Add to the household mates, those first cousins living in neighboring households who intimately interact with one another, and few first cousins remain as suitable marriage partners by traditional Bajau norms. Acculturation to the land-dwellers' values against first cousin marriage adds a tinge of disapproval to marriage between those few first cousins who would otherwise be approved marriage partners. The combination of all these factors will probably eliminate all first cousin marriage within a couple of generations if present trends continue.

Despite the fact that Sitangkai Bajau couples most commonly share a dwelling with several other nuclear families, the family unit has retained much of the individualism and independence found among the boat-dwellers. At marriage, the young husband and wife typically spend the first few weeks moving between the two parental households to eventually settle as members of the wife's uxorilocal household. During these early months, whatever money the husband earns is normally handed over to his mother-in-law who keeps it with other savings to be used for family expenses. Also, at this time, the newlyweds eat with the wife's family and in general are economically dependent upon them. However, as the husband establishes himself as a bread-winner and the marriage stabilizes with the birth of a child, the young couple tend to break economic ties with the wife's parents and begin to keep their earnings separate. As the other nuclear families in the house, they acquire their own cooking utensils, buy their own food, and eat separately from the other families. Whatever equipment the husband may acquire, such as a boat, outboard motor, or fishing gear, becomes his per-
sonal property. In short, in spite of its membership in a large, extended household, the nuclear family at Sitangkai is almost as independent as its boat-dwelling counterpart in Tawi-Tawi.

**Divorce Patterns**

During the early months of marriage, separations are common and frequently develop into divorces. Some problems are due to incompatible personalities since often the couple are not well acquainted with one another before the marriage. More often, disputes develop between the newly wed and his in-laws. In the event of disagreements between the newly wed and his spouse, members of the household, of course, always side with their kinsmen. Many Bajau, especially young men, often spoke of the intolerable loneliness they felt during the early months in their new households. The birth of a child, however, tends to bridge the emotional gap between the newcomer and the rest of the household.

In the event of immediate divorce, the portion of the bride price not spent on the wedding is refunded to the groom's family. The later the divorce, the less bride price is returned; rarely is any returned if the marriage lasts longer than a year. What property the couple may have accumulated is divided between them, with household items to the wife and fishing equipment and boats to the husband. Children most commonly stay with the wife, although some of them may go with the husband, and in rare cases, the husband may take them all. As among the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers, the spouse responsible for the divorce must pay the fee to the headman; if both press the divorce, the cost is equally divided.

As indicated in Table VIII, the divorce rate in Sitangkai is higher among women than men. This may be partly accounted by the fact that some
## TABLE VIII. DIVORCE RATE AMONG HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU MALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of divorces</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
<th>Percentage of total married males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## DIVORCE RATE AMONG HOUSE-DWELLING BAJAU FEMALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of divorces</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Percentage of total married females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the formerly married young men have migrated to Semporna in search of work and that some men who previously lived uxoriloca\textlly with Sitangkai wives have returned to their home villages since their divorce.

The greater frequency of divorce in Sitangkai appears to be related to the house-dwelling habit, or more specifically to the extended family households. Upon marriage, a young couple resides in an extended family household, most typically an uxorilocal household. Frequently, the young husband and wife have not known one another well before marriage, and one of them is consequently living in the household as an outsider. Whenever disagreements arise, little mutual love or attraction exists to over-ride them, and the household members, of course, always side with their kinsmen. As a result, early marriage is a very brittle period which not uncommonly ends in divorce. The pattern is different among the boat-dwellers. As soon as possible after marriage, the new couple is expected to have its own household where they live to face their marital problems alone. Because of the smaller size of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau population, rarely are a young husband and wife strangers to one another at marriage. And because they live alone in their own houseboat, moving between the relatives of each, they do not have continual residence with one group of in-laws and their accompanying interference. I have no data to suggest that boat-dwelling couples who live in joint family households divorce more frequently, nor would I necessarily expect such to be the case since the two or three family households of the boat-dwellers are usually temporary arrangements and hardly comparable to the permanent joint households of five, six, or even ten families found in Sitangkai. However, the sentiments that lead
to divorce among the house-dwellers are found among the boat-dwellers, namely that a Bajau is expected to be loyal to kinsmen in the event of quarrels and conflicts which involve non-kinsmen, even spouses. And this is indeed usually the case in the early months of marriage before loyalties have been transferred from kinsmen to spouses. And since the large households of Sitangkai appear to generate such conflict, it should not be surprising to find more divorce among the house-dwelling Bajau.

**Interpersonal Relations**

In no sense is the Sitangkai household a corporate group, but rather each family is an economically independent unit as among the boat-dwellers. On rare occasions, brothers-in-law may decide to buy an outboard motor or fishing nets together, but far more commonly such items are owned individually. Men of a household may fish together, but their catches are always equally divided and claimed individually. Household members usually share a water storage tank, but in the event of drought, when water must be purchased, each family purchases and consumes its own. Each family has an area of the house where its daytime activities are localized and where it sleeps on mats at night.

In the case of the larger households, rarely do all members reside in the house at a single time, except during important ceremonies of the household, such as weddings, circumcisions, or healing ceremonies, which all members are expected to attend. More commonly, two or three of the nuclear families are away from the house on fishing trips, or perhaps temporarily residing near Sibutu Island while engaged in wood-working. For some of the more confirmed fishing families, the house is simply a place
to live while resting from fishing activities; for others, however, especially the most acculturated, it is their permanent residence and they seldom, if ever, return to boat-living.

Although each nuclear family functions independently as an economic unit, some household activities are performed in work groups. Females of the household always assist one another in any work that requires more than individual effort, e.g. preparation of cassava or initial stages of mat-making. Those women who collect from the reefs or seek firewood on nearby beaches always do so in household groups. Less consistently, men work as a household unit. Some men always work and fish with other household males whereas others prefer to fish with siblings who live in different households. However, group work directly connected with the household is always done by male members as a group. In general, the sphere of male activity and contacts outside the household are much greater than those of the females; some women rarely leave their neighborhoods whereas men leave daily for work, to visit relatives, or to attend ceremonies.

One man of the household is usually regarded as owner of the house; in many cases he is the one who actually built the original structure or contributed the major finances toward its construction. Most often he is the eldest male member of the household, although house ownership reveals much variation. Each family living in the house contributes to whatever repairs need to be made on the dwelling. In the case of the older houses, which tend to be the largest in physical size and household membership, the dwelling is regarded as the joint property of the inhabitants, consanguineal relatives of the original owner who in most cases has since died.
At the demise of the house-owner, the house passes on to the other residents, ideally the owner's married daughters and granddaughters.

The house-owner is usually also recognized as the head of the household group. Matters of a household nature are handled by him; he mediates in the event of quarrels, organizes household ceremonies, instigates household repairs, and represents the household to the rest of the community. In general, his function is not greatly different from the leader of the sibling alliance unit of the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers.

The extended family household of the Sitangkai Bajau has tended to break down some of the intimacy characteristic of the boat-dwelling nuclear family. Except for occasional fishing trips for some families, the nuclear family never lives separately from other household members. The ties between sisters and between mothers and daughters are never severed and often over-ride those between husband and wife. On the other hand, husband and wife have less opportunity to develop extreme dependence upon one another. Similarly, because siblings almost always share a household with first cousins and a neighborhood with less closely related persons, their ties to one another are less strong than among their boat-dwelling counterparts.

The most intimate and enduring ties within the household are among the female members, excepting, of course, those households which are not based on an uxorilocal axis. In most cases, sisters are raised together as children and continue to live together as married adults until their death. Conversely, adult male members of the household have usually come from outside and boys born into the household know that at marriage they
probably will leave for residence in their respective brides' homes. It should not be surprising then to discover that sentiments between brothers as well as between brothers and sisters tend to weaken and sometimes almost disappear after their marriage. Exceptions, of course, occur when married brothers and sisters continue to live in a single household or when married brothers continue to fish and work together even though they dwell in different households. On the other hand, the intimacy and sentiments men once shared with brothers are often transferred to their brothers-in-law, i.e. husbands of their wives' sisters who also live in the uxori-local household. All in all, adult relationships are not greatly different from those found among the boat-dwellers.

Children are most commonly disciplined by their parents, but in the absence or indifference of a parent, an aunt, uncle or grandparent disciplines them. Children who attend school are frequently left with other household members while their parents may spend a week or so fishing away from the household. As a result, all adults in the household, at one time or another, act in the parental role toward the child. Ties of affection between children who have grown up in the same household, i.e. first cousins, are as strong, and sometimes stronger, than those between siblings.

Kinship Terminology

A change in kinship terminology among the Sitangkai Bajau appears to reflect the change in household composition. In general, terms for the nuclear family have been extended collaterally in both reference and address. The term for mother may also include mother's sisters and father's sisters, similarly, the term for father has been extended to mother's
brothers and father's brothers. "Sibling" includes first cousins while the term for child, or off-spring, may also mean nephew and niece. Grandfather and grandmother are often called, literally, "big father" and "big mother." The terms of endearment used for siblings and offspring, i.e. otoh and arung, have similarly been extended collaterally.

These changes appear to be related to the extended family households, especially in light of the fact that the extension of the terms is made only to those kinsmen with whom one lives intimately. Traditional terms are retained for kinsmen with whom one interacts less intimately. If pressed to define a relationship, a Bajau always falls back on the traditional terms, and for some kinsmen in these categories with whom he is less familiar, he always uses the traditional term for both reference and address. Thus, the nuclear family terms are most often extended to household members or close neighbors.

This change toward a more classificatory kinship terminology at Si-tangkai is not without precedence in the boat-dwelling society. Among the boat-dwellers, the greatest indication of intimacy between two persons is the extension of nuclear family kinship terms to one another. Most often these terms are used between two men, brothers-in-law or perhaps first cousins, who regularly work together and refer to one another by the sibling term. The nuclear family terms are less often extended to other relationships, but when they are they reveal an intimacy between the two persons which is greater than their biological relationship normally warrants. Such relationships usually develop after a long period of intimate living and working together. Given this practice among the nomadic boat-
dwellers, it should come as no great surprise to discover that when several Bajau families live together in a single household, terms of the nuclear family are extended to other members to reflect this intimacy. Aunts become mothers, uncles become fathers, cousins become siblings, nieces become daughters, and nephews become sons. The more common extension of these terms by the Sitangkai Bajau directly reflects the more intimate and enduring ties that characterize most of their social groupings.

**Household Segmentation**

If a Sitangkai Bajau dies, his widow and children are usually cared for by the other household members, and because of the large size of many households, their support is no great burden to any single family. Nonetheless, a young widow expects, and is expected, to remarry after a proper period of mourning, usually about a year. In the case of a wife's death, her husband less commonly remains in the household, but rather returns to his own household. Whether or not his children accompany him depends upon a number of factors. If the children are older, they frequently prefer to stay in their mother's household, or if the father's household has no one to care for them, or is already over-crowded, the children may remain in their mother's household. If the father or his deceased wife have childless married siblings, the children may be adopted by them. I encountered four widowers who married either their wives' sisters or first cousins, and thereby continued to live in the same household. This would seemingly be the best solution but is not, of course, always feasible.

As households become excessively large and crowded, they tend to segment. Most often this segmentation occurs when a child or two of a nuclear family unit continues to live in the household after marriage, and the
cramped quarters encourage the newlyweds and the parental family to form their own household. Quarrels among household members also account for some segmentation. When such segmentation does occur, the new house is usually built near the parent house. As a result, the entire Bajau section of Sitangkai can be blocked off into kin neighborhoods. This same sort of segmentation has been described for the sibling alliance units of the boat-dwelling Bajau, but because of their nomadic movements, neighborhoods do not develop.

A definite trend toward smaller households is evident at Sitangkai. The first Bajau houses were large structures built by the three headmen of the three dakampungan then residing at Sitangkai. These three houses are still the largest in Sitangkai and have the largest household memberships. They were apparently built large in order to display the wealth of the families as well as to serve as family meeting halls where all the boat-dwelling kinsmen could rest from fishing activities and attend ceremonies. The houses still partly serve these functions. Later houses were made smaller since they were not needed as family meeting places, but rather to house only a few nuclear families. The most recent houses, especially those of the most acculturated Bajau, are even smaller and are obviously intended to house only a nuclear family unit which many of them do. Most of the young, acculturated couples desire their own houses and often mentioned the difficulties of living in households run by the traditional notions of the older members. The trend toward single family households, actually a return to the boat-dwelling pattern, appears to have been partly influenced by the land-dwelling people who typically live in nuclear family households. Equally contributive is the greater wealth enjoyed by
the present generation of Bajau--wealth which may be displayed in individual family homes.
CHAPTER III
THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND ACTION GROUPS

The structure and activities of neighborhoods and action groups are discussed in this chapter. The neighborhoods and action groups are first discussed as found at Sitangkai and then related to their counterparts in the boat-dwelling society.

The Neighborhood

If things were as the Bajau profess them to be, each household in Sitangkai would be uxorilocal and surrounded by other households related to one another through female kin ties. And although this seems to be the case at first glance, the reality of residence patterns rarely adheres to this ideal. The Bajau neighborhood often has a preponderance of related uxorilocal households, but in all neighborhoods the uxorilocal ideal gives way to more practical considerations—-not greatly different from those which account for the deviance from the ideal of uxorilocal household composition. Nonetheless, the houses comprising a neighborhood, usually four or five, are closely related to one another although the geneological relationship has considerable variation.

In contrast to Sitangkai, the boat-dwellers' neighborhood is a fairly insignificant social unit, and may be said to exist only in that sibling alliance units tend to rather consistently moor their houseboats in the same part of the moorage near other sibling alliance units which they recognize as more closely related to them than other units of the village. Interaction between the units, however, is at a minimum except for occasional large ceremonies and the rare communal fish drives of some of the villages. And since members of the units are constantly moving in and
out, little opportunity exists to develop intimacy beyond one's own alliance unit. In many ways, the Sitangkai neighborhood is simply a crystallization of the clusters of related sibling alliance units found in the boat-villages. The sibling alliance unit has become a household, and the several sibling alliance units have become a neighborhood; however, because of the sedentary life of these people, the neighborhood is a permanent social grouping with enduring social ties that intensify the ties of kinship which unite the several different households. And, of course, as noted, the Sitangkai neighborhoods are predominantly uxorilocal.

An examination of 22 Sitangkai neighborhoods, constituting slightly over half of the Bajau neighborhoods in Sitangkai, reveals several structural types. Only two have an exclusive uxorilocal organization, nine are predominantly uxorilocal with various exceptional individual households, three are predominantly virilocal with individual household exceptions, and the remaining eight reveal no dominant pattern of organization. Sizes of neighborhoods range from three to eight houses with an average of five, or from 16 to 74 persons with an average of 46. The households are usually, but not always, connected to one another by bridges. Adult members visit back and forth freely while work groups and ceremonies which extend beyond the household are often composed of neighbors. The neighborhood also, of course, comprises children's play groups.

Even though households within a neighborhood are related and generally interact with one another more frequently than with households outside the neighborhood, they are in no sense isolated social islands within the Bajau community. Each household has members who have left the household, and often neighborhood, for marriage, and each, of course, has members who
have married into that household from outside that neighborhood. These members who marry outside or into each household relate it to other neighborhoods in the Bajau community with whom they form work and ceremonial alliances.

Variation is the keynote to the structure of all Bajau action groups, but nonetheless certain common features may be abstracted. In the case of work alliances, compatibility is the most important criteria for membership; the men must get along well to work together, and if they do not, they simply do not form alliances. Other criteria for membership include acculturation to Islam, occupational preferences, age, and, of course, sex. Men acculturated to Islam choose to work with other acculturated men. Obviously, only persons who work at the same occupation, e.g. fishing, form work groups. Age is important in that the work of certain action groups demands able bodied men and is too strenuous for older men. On the other hand ceremonial action groups usually recruit older, more learned men. And because of the nature of the work, almost all action groups, excepting some ceremonial groups, exclude members of the opposite sex.

Ideally, one works with his siblings or parent or other members of his natal household if these meet the above criteria, since these are the persons who can always be trusted and with whom one has learned to work. If for some reason these people are not available, one works with one's household mates (if these are different from the preceding people)--often because of the convenience of the alliance, the trust and intimacy that develops between members of a household, and common interests. If additional men are needed, members are recruited from the neighborhood of one's own household or one's affinal household--again because kinsmen are those
most dependable and trustworthy. In all action groups, the closer the re-
lationship of the two men, the better; if closely related persons are not
available, then one looks further in the kinship field, or even beyond the
kinship field.

Compatibility is less important in ceremonial action groups, although
persons openly hostile to one another avoid actively participating in the
same ceremony. A core of closely related kinsmen, often composed of mem-
ers of work alliances, form the nucleus of every Bajau ceremony. If
additional participants are desired, invitations are extended further in-
to the kin field or even to non-kinsmen. Peripheral guests at the larger
ceremonies, e.g. weddings or circumcisions, may include even non-Bajau.

Women's action groups are fewer and reveal less variation than the
male alliances. Work groups always consist of household or neighborhood
members. Women attend ceremonies away from the household less commonly
than men, and when they do, the ceremonies are usually those of siblings
or siblings-in-law. They rarely actively participate in most ceremonies,
but rather assist other females in preparing food.

Male members of a common household may regularly work together in an
action group or they may each more frequently establish alliances beyond
the household. And although two men may more often work with one another
than with anyone else, they nonetheless sometimes form alliances with
different men for different activities. The following brief history of
the adult alliances of one household will illustrate the great variation
of the Bajau action group.

When I first became acquainted with this household, it consisted of
an aged couple and their three married daughters and the latter's husbands
and children. The old man was recognized as head of the household although it was apparent that leadership was quickly passing into the hands of his eldest son-in-law. This eldest son-in-law was a boat-builder who usually worked alone; another was a smuggler who operated with his two brothers, both of whom lived in different neighborhoods; and the third was a fisherman who regularly fished with his brother who lived in a neighboring house. Shortly after I arrived, the household decided to replace the rotted piles under a portion of the house. Each of the three families prepared its boat for boat-living and sailed to Sibutu where the men spent about a week cutting trees for piles. The old parents stayed at home to watch the house and care for those children who remained behind to attend school. Upon their return to Sitangkai, the three brothers-in-law worked together for about a week to repair the house. Following this, the boat-builder returned to his own work, the smuggler left for a trip to Sabah with his two brothers, and the fisherman fished for a week with his wife and small children while the older children remained at home to attend school. After this fishing trip, the fisherman fished daily with his brother for about a week until the neap tides, at which time the two of them joined a fish drive composed mostly of his wife's relatives which took them away from the village for six days. When he returned from this trip, the smuggler had returned and was peddling his goods in Sitangkai while the boat-builder was still engaged in his own work. At this time, the old man became critically ill and a ceremony was held to remove the curse believed to be causing his illness. The ceremony was attended by almost everyone in the neighborhood as well as a good many kinsmen from other neighborhoods. Two days later, the old man died. Neighborhood members assisted in the funeral
arrangements which were directed by the eldest son-in-law of the household. Persons from at least eight different neighborhoods attended the services, while six different neighborhoods were represented at the seven nights of services following his death. About a week after the old man's death, the nephew of the smuggler (his sister's son) was married. Both the smuggler and his wife spent several days at the wedding household to assist in the preparations and ceremonies. At this same time, a circumcision ceremony was held in a neighboring household (the son of a female first cousin of the three married sisters) and the fisherman and boat-builder and their wives participated in that celebration. A few days later, the fisherman began lantern-fishing each night for about a week with a crew of fishermen recruited from the neighborhood. Meanwhile, the boat-builder had completed a boat and decided to rest from his profession for awhile to join a stevedore crew composed primarily of his brothers and first cousins.

The similarities between this household group and the boat-dweller's sibling alliance unit should be apparent. Membership in both groups is usually based on consanguinal or affinal sibling relationships, or the most immediate extension of these relationships. And although both the Tawi-Tawi and Sitangkai Bajau tend to work fairly regularly in a group with two or three other persons, they both periodically change alliances to engage in different activities. In general, Sitangkai women more consistently work in the same action groups and range afield less than the men. The following discussion outlines in greater detail the nature of the Sitangkai work and ceremonial action groups.

Work Action Groups

Less acculturated Bajau tend to fish with their wives, whereas the
more acculturated fish with other males, their wives having accepted the land-dwellers' notion that fishing is unfit work for women. The type of gill-net fishing most frequently practiced by the Bajau can efficiently be done by two or three persons and consequently most fishing alliances between men consist of these small groups. The composition of these groups reveals great variation. In some cases, men married to sisters in a common household fish together exclusively, whereas other men in a similar household situation may all have fishing partners from outside the household and even outside the neighborhood. Obviously, personal factors determine each case.

If a man enters a household that has only one other adult male, and he has no other fishing partner, most likely he will fish rather consistently with that man unless the two personalities prove incompatible. Quite often the newly arrived man discovers that the other household men already have fishing alliances. He has the alternative of either joining one of the household action groups or continuing his fishing habits with his own male kinsmen. Frequently in the early months, and even years, of marriage, a man does the latter. As his ties in his wife's household become stronger and more intimate, he may dissolve the alliance with his consanguines in favor of his affines. Or he may continue to fish with his own kinsmen until such time that he begins to fish with his son or sons-in-law. Men who continue to live in their parental household after marriage, of course, continue to fish with the other males of the household. Frequently, men from other households of the neighborhood prove more compatible as fishing companions; often these are men who fished together before marriage and married into the same neighborhood. Whatever the relationship, it
rarely extends beyond the first degree of collaterality, affinal or consanguinal, and most commonly is a sibling-sibling, sibling-in-law--sibling-in-law, father-son, or father-in-law--son-in-law relationship.

Other types of fishing practiced in the Sitangkai waters demand more participants than the two or three persons usually involved in gill-net fishing. Among these is the so-called magsauk, or seine net, fishing practiced during the periods of no moon and new moon. Anywhere from four to eight boats, each usually with two men, participate in magsauk fishing. After arriving at a promising fishing spot, the large net is submerged between two boats. Other participating boats leave with lighted lanterns to attract schools of fish which they then direct over the seine net. After all lanterns have returned and a sizeable school of fish is above the net, dynamite is exploded and the stunned fish raised in the net. The fish are scooped up in five gallon tins and equally divided among the participants. The net and dynamite used in this type of fishing is usually owned by one man who acts as leader. At dawn, the boats all return to Sitangkai and take their catches to the fish-buyer regularly patronized by the net-owner. The net-owner gets about one-fourth of the price received for each of the participant's tins as his payment for furnishing the net and dynamite. In addition, he, of course, receives payment from the fish-buyer for his own share of the catch. The crews are usually organized along kin lines. The fishermen of each boat are usually men who regularly fish together with gill-nets; thus the group is simply a collection of the boat crews discussed previously. Although the majority of a magsauk crew are often drawn from a single neighborhood, there are usually some non-neighborhood men related in varying ways to members of the neigh-
Another type of net fishing, the **sinsoro**, also demands the efforts of a group of fishermen. This method may be practiced either night or day. Once a school of fish is spotted, it is surrounded by the large nylon mesh net which is then pulled to the boat with the entrapped fish. The net itself is usually owned by one man who receives a larger share of the catch. Sinsoro fishing demands no more than two or three boats, and as the magsauk crews, these crews are simply combinations of the gill-net crews and are frequently neighborhood based.

The second most important male action groups in Sitangkai, second only to the fishing units, are those of the stevedores. A few stevedores also fish, but most find stevedoring a full-time job that provides a sufficient income. Ten merchants in Sitangkai regularly employ crews of stevedores to transport their merchandise to and from the interisland steamers that call at the wharf. Crews range from three to six members with an average of five. They are paid a fixed price for each item, e.g. tins of fish, crates of dried fish, bags of copra, cases of soft drinks, that is moved to and from the wharf. Each crew has a leader who coordinates activities with the merchant and ship's captain. He and the merchant both keep account of all items transferred, and after each ship, they compare notes and once a month, the merchant pays the leader who in turn divides the cash equally among his fellow crew members. Other than prestige, the leader receives no additional compensation for his extra duties as leader. The only requirement for the position, besides personal leadership abilities, is literacy since he must keep account of the cargo.

As other action groups, the stevedore crews display much individual
structural variation. They almost always consist of kinsmen, e.g. brothers, fathers, first cousins, and the affinal counterparts. Only one of the ten crews is composed exclusively of a single household; members of three of the crews are all from different households, one represents a single neighborhood, and the remaining two each represents two neighborhoods; the other crews have members who represent from two to five households distributed among two to four neighborhoods.

Other action groups are formed to make wooden boxes which are sold to the Chinese fish-buyers who use them for packing dried fish for shipment. Box-making action groups take two forms, a large flotilla of related persons and smaller groups of workers. A large group of related families, sometimes as many as 20 couples, periodically leaves Sitangkai for several days of houseboat-living near the forests of Sibutu Island. During the daytime the women do enough fishing and collecting to keep the family in fish, while the men go to the forests in groups of three or four to fell trees which are cut into boards. After a sizeable number of boards has been cut, the flotilla returns to Sitangkai where each man makes boxes which he sells to the resident fish-buyer. The flotilla reveal no consistent structural type; the majority of the members are usually from one neighborhood and the non-neighbors who join are often related in some fashion. However, some unrelated houseboats sometimes join the flotilla rather than moor alone. The flotilla convenes largely for companionship, whereas the male work groups are utilitarian in that members assist one another in the tedious business of felling and splitting trees. These work groups reveal the same familiar varied structure of other Bajau work groups.
Six Bajau men who own motor launches regularly employ small crews. These crews range from two to four members, are kin-based, and are structurally similar to other Bajau action groups. Members of two of the crews are all from different households, members of one crew are all from the same household, while the remaining three represent two and three different households. One man, the owner of the launch, acts as captain. Usually several other persons, variously related to the crew members, accompany the launch, but they are not regular crew members and always have some other occupation at which they work more consistently.

A few Bajau who are engaged in small-time smuggling between Semporna and Sitangkai constitute three action groups. All of these men are from the most acculturated segment of Sitangkai and, because of their profession, are among the wealthiest and most respected members of the community. One distinctive feature of these smugglers' action groups is the closeness of the relationship of the men, a feature possibly explainable by the fact that since smuggling is illegal it is best to work with persons, such as siblings, whom one can always trust. One unit consists of a father and

\[1\] It is perhaps necessary to note here that "smuggling" does not have the same connotations in Sulu that it has in other parts of the Philippines. In Sulu, it is simply a continuation of age-old trade relations between the archipelago and Borneo. The national boundary which separates Sulu and Borneo has tended to make this trade more difficult and considerably more profitable, but has not detracted from the prestige of the profession. Thus the status of smugglers in Sulu is comparable to that of successful businessmen elsewhere.
his two married sons; another two married brothers and the husband of their sister; and the third, three married brothers. No members of any of the groups share a household. Again, one man usually acts as leader and is responsible for making the Borneo contacts for buying and the Sulu contacts for selling.

Female action groups are considerably fewer and simpler than those of the men. The women who occasionally fish always do so with their husbands, or if they are widowed or divorced, with a brother or father from their household. Women who collect from the reef or gather firewood from the beaches usually do so with other household women and children. Few other duties take women away from the house. When household chores require assistance, other female members are readily available. In the larger households, women, of course, form closer relationships with some members than others, and more consistently work together. In the event of a ceremony which involves neighborhood participation, neighboring women assist the sponsoring household women in preparing food, playing music, and decorating the house.

Ceremonial Action Groups

As noted previously, few Bajau ceremonies involve the participation of only the members of a single household. Perhaps the simplest of all Bajau ceremonies is when a lone individual, or with one or two housemates, leaves a small offering of betel or cigarettes for a deceased relative at the graveside, followed by a short prayer. All other ceremonies demand attendance by most adult household members as well as persons from outside the household and even the neighborhood.

The simplest of the curing ceremonies, usually the first stage of
treatment for any illness, involves only a handful of people. Rarely do all household members attend such a ceremony, but almost always two or three people from outside the household and, possibly, neighborhood are in attendance. A young wife who resided in the household of her father-in-law had suffered for several days from a painful toothache. Older members of the household decided that it might be the result of a curse from her recently deceased father, and arranged a ceremony to remove the curse. One of the older men of the household, a shaman, conducted the ceremony; others in attendance included the patient's husband, another adult man and two adult women from the household, a neighboring adult woman, the patient's mother and married sister from a different household and neighborhood, as well as a number of children who had accompanied the adults. Such ceremonies recruit those persons most intimately concerned with the patient's welfare who happen to be available at the time.

The more critical the illness, the more persons attend the curing ceremony. If the first ceremony does not remove the illness, succeeding ceremonies become more elaborate, and, of course, as the gravity of the illness becomes apparent, more persons become concerned over the patient—particularly if the patient is an adult. At such a ceremony, all adult household members are usually present as well as a majority of the neighborhood adults. Also in attendance, are those close relatives of the patient (e.g. siblings, siblings-in-law, parents, parents-in-law) who live in different neighborhoods. One such ceremony I attended for a critically ill man who later died was attended by all adults from his household, his aged mother and three married brothers (all from different households and neighborhoods), and several adults from each of the neighboring households.
Certain of the selamat ceremonies rely more heavily upon exclusive neighborhood participation. The range of invitations depends largely upon the reasons for the ceremony. While I was in Sitangkai, a group of men heard that an approaching tidal wave threatened to wipe out the village. When the wave failed to arrive, a selamat ceremony was held in the mosque by the entire Muslim Bajau community since God had saved all from the disaster. On another occasion, the roof of a house was torn off by a freak wind that passed through a section of Sitangkai. No one was injured in the household, so a selamat was held to which the neighborhood and other kinsmen of the household were invited. These people were those most grateful for the safety of the household members; non-relatives in other parts of Sitangkai were less concerned and consequently did not attend.

Persons most intimately involved in the marriage of an individual are, of course, those members of his household. Once the bride price has been agreed upon, members of the household of the groom-to-be (never his parents) set about to collect the money. His parents provide the largest contribution while the remaining amount is collected equally from their siblings unless some are unusually poor or unusually wealthy, in which cases they may be expected to contribute less or more than others. Siblings split by personal quarrels rarely contribute to the bride price of one another's children. Should the groom's parents have no or few siblings, first cousins or uncles and aunts may be asked to contribute. Rarely, however, is the collection extended to this degree. Each contribution is noted by the groom's parents so that equal amounts may be returned when the contributors must raise a bride price for their own sons.

Distribution of the bride price among the bride's family follows
similar lines. After wedding expenses are deducted, the money is distributed among the bride's parents' siblings according to what they have contributed to past ceremonies sponsored by the bride's parents. What is left is kept by the bride's parents.

Preparations for the actual wedding celebration are mostly in the household where it will be held, although some siblings of the parents of both the bride and groom usually assist. Also, neighbors of the sponsoring household usually help decorate the house, cook food, or play music. Attendance at the evening celebration which precedes the ceremony and the actual ceremony always includes a much wider group of kinsmen as well as non-kinsmen and even some non-Bajau. Circumcision ceremonies and some of the more elaborate healing ceremonies follow the same pattern. If money is needed, it is collected from the most immediate kinsmen who also assist in the planning and organization. The actual ceremony is attended by less closely related or even unrelated persons, and sometimes even non-Bajau.

At death, too, household members call upon other kinsmen to mourn their loss. Usually a person, or persons, within the household supervises the funeral activities, but in a small household where all members are sorely grieved at the death, outside persons must sometimes take over the arrangements. Household members, other immediate kinsmen, and neighbors are most intimately involved in the funeral, but all relatives and sometimes non-kinsmen drop by the house to pay their final respects to the deceased. Mourners leave money at the household to help defray the funeral expenses; the household keeps a record of the money in the event of a death in the donating household. Again the pattern is the same; organization and preparations are in the hands of nuclear kinsmen whereas other participation
extends to less closely related persons and even non-kinsmen. Anyone may attend the ceremonies before and after burial, but in the event of succeeding ceremonies, the household extends invitations only to certain persons.

**Relationship to the Boat-dwellers' Action Groups**

In some ways the action groups at Sitangkai are simply a solidification of the fluid, ephemeral alliances characteristic of the boat-dwelling Bajau of Tawi-Tawi. Differences, however, distinguish each group.

The boat-dwellers' action groups more typically consist of a single nuclear family than is the case among the house-dwellers. This is partly due to the more migratory nature of the boat-dwellers' lives which in turn is related to ecological factors. Fishing grounds are more dispersed in Tawi-Tawi and to fully exploit the monthly fishing cycles, it is necessary for a family to cover a large sea area. On the other hand, Sitangkai is surrounded by a huge reef which can be fished at all times of the month without traveling great distances from the village. As a result, a Sitangkai fisherman is usually away from his house for no longer than a day or two at a stretch, and he consequently leaves his wife and children at home. But to most profitably exploit the Tawi-Tawi fishing grounds, a Bajau must sometimes be a week or two, or even longer, away from his home village. And since his fishing boat is also his home, his wife and children travel with him—sometimes with other houseboats, but frequently alone. And even if the Tawi-Tawi Bajau lived in a house, most likely his wife and children would accompany him on extended fishing trips; at any rate, this is what happens among the Sitangkai Bajau who always take wives and children with them if they expect to be away from the village for any length of time. If the boat-dwellers fish the nearby village waters, they usually do so
alone or with another male companion or two in a small boat while wives and children remain at home. This pattern has persisted among the Sitangkai Bajau who not only can conveniently daily fish nearby waters without their families but also have full access to fishing boats for such trips since they no longer serve as the family dwelling. Thus, perhaps ecology, which demands a more migratory life in Tawi-Tawi than in Sitangkai, is more important in determining the structure of Bajau fishing action groups than the house-dwelling habit per se.

Another distinctive feature of the Sitangkai male work action groups is their uxorilocal bias, a bias not found among the boat-dwellers. This is, of course, determined by the uxorilocal residence practiced in Sitangkai which, as noted several times previously, has been partially determined by the boat-dwellers' ideal of residence.

Sitangkai female action groups are even more exclusively uxorilocal and more permanent than is the case among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau females. This is, of course, due to the uxorilocal and sedentary nature of the Sitangkai households.

Excepting this uxorilocal bias, the alliances of the two groups are not greatly different structurally, i.e. they tend to be based on sibling-sibling, or child-parent relationships or their affinal counterparts. The Sitangkai align for a greater variety of tasks than do their Tawi-Tawi kinsmen who are, for the most part, fishermen. But when aligning for these other tasks, such as stevedoring or box-making, the familiar structure of the boat-dwellers' alliances prevails.

The fact that ceremonial action groups at Sitangkai consist almost exclusively of men is definitely an indication of Islamic influence. However,
even among the boat-dwellers, ceremonies are usually led by males who are familiar with bits of Islamic ritual, with an occasional important female shaman who also actively participates. Given this bias toward male leadership and Islamic ritual, it is not surprising to discover that when exposed to more orthodox Islam, the Bajau elaborated this traditional theme since it was already in keeping with acceptable Islamic patterns.
CHAPTER IV
THE DAKAMPUNGAN

In this chapter, the dakampungan, in both its generalized and localized forms, is discussed in relation to the boat-dwelling dakampungan. The differences between the dakampungan of the Sitangkai and Tawi-Tawi Bajau is related to the different environments of the two groups as well as to the sedentary life of the Sitangkai Bajau. It is noted that the Sitangkai dakampungan is simply an elaboration of traditional patterns of the boat-dwelling society.

The Generalized Dakampungan

Although it is impossible to draw bold lines around any one dakampungan in Sitangkai, those of the house-dwellers in Sitangkai, are easier to discern than those of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. This is mostly due to the more sedentary life of the Sitangkai people. Upon marriage, a young couple chooses the parental household where they will probably remain most of their lives, the household of the wife. The child born of the marriage will have two large groups of kinsmen, i.e. his father's and his mother's generalized dakampungan. However, because of the nature of his parents' residence, he will usually be more intimately involved in the affairs of his mother's localized dakampungan than those of his father's. When the boy reaches adulthood and if he marries a girl who is not a member of his mother's localized dakampungan, he will most likely reside in her household which most often will be in a different part of the village. On the other hand, most of the female children will remain in their mother's localized dakampungan upon marriage. The members of one's generalized dakampungan are scattered throughout Sitangkai, but the practice of uxori-
local residence has localized a solid core of closely related persons in three different residential areas of the village, and it is one of these three localized dakampungan that a Bajau identifies as his kin group. Keep in mind, however, that he may have just as many, and possibly more, members of his generalized dakampungan scattered throughout the other two localized dakampungan as well as the other Bajau villages in Sibutu, Tawi-Tawi, and Semporna.

The Localized Dakampungan

Geographically, the three localized dakampungan are fairly distinct from one another, although households at the borders sometimes hold allegiances to two groups. Connected by boardwalks to the heart of town, one localized dakampungan is located south of the main canal that runs east-west, while the other two are located on the northern side of the canal, one almost completely connected by boardwalks to the main part of town, and the other is at sea, unconnected to the other houses. The two localized dakampungan connected to the town by boardwalks are, perhaps not surprisingly, those most acculturated to Islam and furnish the majority of the mosque congregation, whereas the most seaward one is the least acculturated. Only a few of its younger members regularly attend the mosque services. The less acculturated localized dakampungan, originally from Omapoi, was the last to arrive at Sioyngkai, apparently only about ten years ago, and is the only one with some full-time boat-dwellers.

A fourth localized dakampungan is emerging and possibly will be recognizable as distinct from the others within a few years. The acculturated localized dakampungan north of the canal originally came from Tando-wak; the first arrivals came shortly before World War II, while other
members are still arriving. The later arrivals are less acculturated to Islam and the urban life of Sitangkai, and consequently have built their houses some distance seaward of the early immigrants. Members of this less acculturated segment feel uncomfortable around their more sophisticated kinsmen who in general view them as country cousins. These differing degrees of acculturation have tended to split the group, and although they still identify as members of a single localized dakampungan, their work and ceremonial alliances indicate a cleavage. Either the less acculturated group will identify more closely with the other half as they become more acculturated to Islam, or the separation will continue and a fourth localized dakampungan will emerge.

Structurally, each localized dakampungan can be divided into single nuclear families with the husband acting as head of the unit; several nuclear families dwell together, usually uxorilocally, in one house with one of the men recognized as the household head; in turn, each household is a member of a neighborhood consisting of four to eight houses, connected by various kin ties (usually uxorilineal) and headed by one of the older men; the neighborhoods interact with one another through the various kin-based work and ceremonial alliances, and together form a localized dakampungan, each of which has a headman. And the three localized dakampungan form the Bajau community of Sitangkai.

In addition to geography and structure, certain social activities identify the individual localized dakampungan. Each has a headman who lives in the largest house with the largest household membership within the group. He handles any serious disputes, sometimes solemnizes weddings, and his home serves as the central gathering place for the localized dakam-
pungan. The maggambit, fish drives, described earlier, are organized and are predominantly composed of a single localized dakampungan. Anyone in the community is welcome to join the drive, but its leaders as well as most of its members come from one localized dakampungan. Every fourth lunar month at full moon, the shaman of each dakampungan dance at the household of the headman in order to capture the supernatural power believed to be flowing through the universe at such times. Each localized dakampungan holds its dances at the headman's house on one of three succeeding nights. Shamans of the three different localized dakampungan dance at one another's dances, but the majority of each dancing group is from the sponsoring localized dakampungan. Persons also reveal their localized dakampungan affiliations at the annual maggomboh, or first fruits, ceremony held after the dry rice harvest. A main ceremony is held at the house of the headman and attended by most of the heads of the other localized dakampungan households. Following this, smaller ceremonies are held in other households. Many members who have married into another localized dakampungan return to attend their natal localized dakampungan's ceremonies, but for the most part, attendance is drawn from the residential area.

Another feature of the maggomboh celebration, the magkanduli, a religious ceremony held on Siculan Island also reveals localized dakampungan affiliation. The shamans of the localized dakampungan, and most other adult members, travel to the island to honor ancestral spirits at the special ceremony. Each localized dakampungan goes to the island on different days.

Two features perhaps most sharply distinguish the Sitangkai localized dakampungan from its boat-dwelling counterpart in Tawi-Tawi, namely its uxorilocal bias and its larger size. As many seemingly new features in
Sitangkai social organization, however, these are innate to the boat-dwelling society.

The uxorilocality characteristic of the Sitangkai Bajau community has been mentioned throughout this dissertation and little need be added at this point to preceding discussions. Suffice it to repeat that the uxorilocality displayed at Sitangkai is the realization of an unrealizable ideal residence pattern voiced by the Tawi-Tawi boat dwellers.

The larger size of the Sitangkai dakampungan is primarily due to the great concentration of Bajau in that community. As noted, ecological factors allow for a greater population concentration in Sitangkai than is the case in Tawi-Tawi. Because of the dispersed nature of the Bajau community of Tawi-Tawi, members of a single generalized dakampungan are scattered over a wider area than is the case in Sitangkai. As a result, any one family usually identifies with at least two, and sometimes three, localized dakampungan in as many different boat-villages. In many respects these several localized dakampungan are sub-divisions of what has become a single large localized dakampungan in Sitangkai. If the Tawi-Tawi Bajau were all attracted to a single village, as has happened at Sitangkai, many of the presently identifiable localized dakampungan would merge to form larger localized dakampungan. At present, the boat-dwelling localized dakampungan recognize close kin affinities with localized dakampungan of other villages, and the movements of individual members verify this relationship. It is, of course, the nomadic, boat-dwelling habit that keeps the branches of the localized dakampungan separated from one another. Eliminate the need to wander a sea area, eliminate the boat-dwelling life, and provide an attraction to a central area, and the Tawi-Tawi boat-dwellers would
replicate the Sitangkai pattern, i.e., as peripheral dakampungan members moved to Sitangkai from other Bajau villages, they tended to become incorporated into an existing localized dakampungan rather than form their own.

The Headman

The Sitangkai headman, or panglima, has jurisdiction not unlike that of his boat-dwelling counterpart except that he tends to be more specialized as an arbitrator. This greater specialization seems related to the greater size of the Sitangkai dakampungan and the general trend toward occupational specialization found among the Sitangkai Bajau. As noted, the boat-dwelling panglima always has duties beyond his judicial role as headman; he frequently solemnizes weddings, acts as shaman, officiates at circumcision ceremonies, and sometimes leads fishing groups. However, in Sitangkai, he serves almost full-time as an arbitrator and leaves other duties to other specialists, primarily because the larger population results in more disputes which he must settle. And since his chief function, even among the boat-dwellers, is that of arbitration, it may be expected that as the need for arbitration increases, his role in other activities decreases. Such is what has happened at Sitangkai.

Most household quarrels in Sitangkai are handled by the household members themselves, or sometimes neighbors may be called in to arbitrate. Should the members be unable to reach any agreement, or if the matter is of a serious nature or extends beyond the household or neighborhood, it is taken to the headman. The disputants present their sides to the headman, who after discussion with all present, gives his decision. When the case is especially difficult, the headman calls in several other older
men of the localized dakampungan to hear the case and offer advice. If a fine is levied, half of it goes to the offended person and the other half to the headman. The following examples illustrate the types of cases handled by the headman.

For some time a Bajau man, about 50 years old, had wanted to take a second wife. His wife, however, had been adamant in her refusal to consent to the marriage, and said she would divorce him if he followed his plans. The man apparently decided to test his wife's word and eloped with the woman of his choice. When the first wife heard of the elopement, she angrily went to the headman and asked for a divorce from her husband. The husband was called in and the headman, three older men, and relatives of both the husband and wife tried to talk the first wife into accepting the second wife, or at least to try the situation for a couple of weeks before pursuing the divorce plans. The woman was outraged, however, and had no intentions of tolerating the second wife. After several hours of quarreling, the headman finally agreed to grant the divorce for which the husband paid since he had caused the split.

One early morning a Bajau man went to his brother's house to awaken him for a fishing trip they had planned the day before. The awakened brother had been up late the previous night and was angry at being awakened so early. He told his brother that he was not going fishing, and went back into the house to sleep. The brother was angered at his change of mind and began shouting insults from his boat outside the house. After about five minutes of this, the awakened man came from the house and challenged his brother to a fight. The second brother jumped from his boat to the porch and the two men were soon fighting in earnest. The neigh-
borhood was awakened, and within a matter of minutes the fighting men were separated. Sides were soon taken and a loud quarrel ensued as to which brother had been in the wrong. It became immediately apparent that neither side was willing to back down, so it was suggested that the case be taken to the panglima. So at that early hour, the entire group of about 40 people went to the headman's house. After awakening himself with a leisurely chew of betel, the headman began listening to sides. After about a half hour of bickering, he apparently became fully awakened and realized the folly of the case. He stopped the discussion and proceeded to give the brothers a lecture on the evils of fraternal quarrels, made them formally apologize to one another for their ill behavior, and sent the entire group home as he went back to his interrupted sleep.

I was inadvertently involved in one case. One morning I awakened to discover that the small dugout I used for moving about the village was missing from its usual moorage. I reported the loss to the man of the house where I was staying and he sent the household members to find the boat. It was not found that morning, but two days later a boy of my household reported that he had seen it tied to a house not far away. Much to my chagrin, my household mates, apparently to prove their loyalty to me as well as to reopen an old feud with the household where the boat had been found, accused them of stealing the boat. They denied the charge and insisted that they had found the boat drifting at sea. My household, however, pushed the charge, so the accused took the case to the panglima. From the beginning, I had accepted the word of the accused, and announced that I believed their story and did not want the case taken to the headman. However, I had become insignificant in the case; the old feud be-
tween the two households had been reopened. The headman, a wise man familiar with the feud between the two households, listened to the arguments and had already heard from me that I accepted the explanation and was grateful to the family for having retrieved my boat. The headman cut the hearing short, pronounced the accused party not guilty, and gave all present a stinging lecture on the evils of quarreling and especially chastised the people of my household for using me as a way to get back at their enemies. Fortunately, I was considered an innocent victim by all concerned and was able to maintain the rapport I had earlier established with both households.

Ideally, the panglimaship passes from father to eldest son, but, as most ideals, this does not always reflect reality. In fact, only one of the three major panglima in Sitangkai inherited his position this way. In one case the position went to the youngest of seven brothers, partly because the older brothers were not interested in the position or had married outside the residential area of the localized dakampungan, and partly because the youngest had attended school and was exceptionally bright. In the other case, the old panglima had only one son who, although he lived in the residential area of the localized dakampungan, was not at all qualified for the position. Consequently, the position passed on to the eldest son-in-law of the old panglima who was only distantly related to the old man, but had outstanding leadership qualities. **Intra-Localized Dakampungan Relationships**

Although there is much interaction among the localized dakampungan, nonetheless, each could be fairly self-sufficient. Each has a headman to arbitrate in the event of serious disputes among the members. Each
has shamans to take care of illnesses of a supernatural nature, while herbalists attend to physical illnesses. Excepting the unaculturated localized dakampungan, each has an imam to handle Islamic ritual. Boat-builders within the localized dakampungan are contracted for new boats and boat repairs. Members of work and ceremonial alliances are generally drawn from the localized dakampungan, and marriage partners may be taken from the same group.

In no sense, however, are localized dakampungan closed social units. Marriages between the localized dakampungan tend to unite them; the shaman cult has members from all localized dakampungan; the fish drives, although localized dakampungan-sponsored, always have some outside participants; large ceremonies, e.g. weddings and circumcisions, always have outside guests; the major Islamic celebrations held in the mosque always cross localized dakampungan lines; and the public school classes, of course, indiscriminately mix the children of the several localized dakampungan.
CHAPTER V
THE VILLAGE

This chapter discusses the village structure of the Bajau community at Sitangkai and notes that its chief distinctions from the boat-dwelling Bajau village are in its greater number of non-kin groups and village activities as well as more formal political structure. These features of the Sitangkai village structure are then traced to their origins in the boat-dwelling society.

Village Activities

The three Bajau localized dakampungan comprise two-thirds of Sitangkai's total population. And although each Bajau's activities are normally confined to his dakampungan, there are occasions when non-kin, or village associations emerge. In this respect, he differs from the Tawi-Tawi Bajau who rarely, almost never, aligns with non-kinsmen.

More than anything else in Sitangkai, the mosque most effectively crosses kin lines. Although the original mosque was built by one localized dakampungan, the present mosque was constructed with donations from all three localized dakampungan, especially the two most acculturated ones. Persons from all three localized dakampungan regularly attend the Friday services and other Muslim celebrations, and all three localized dakampungan are represented on the board of directors that attends to mosque matters. Any mosque repairs are made by work groups which disregard dakampungan affiliation.

The leading members of the mosque are regularly invited to attend and perform Islamic ceremonies, even if they are not members of the sponsoring localized dakampungan. The less acculturated localized dakampungan,
especially, depends upon the more learned men of the mosque personnel to officiate at its Islamic ceremonies which its members have only recently begun to observe and learn. Although few members of this less acculturated localized dakampungan take active part in the mosque services, many, especially the younger men, regularly attend and sit at the sides to observe the ritual. It seems only a matter of a few years before this localized dakampungan is as acculturated to Islam as the other two.

It should be remembered, however, that participation in Islamic ritual is limited almost exclusively to males. A few females, because of their fine chanting voices, are sometimes invited to participate in ceremonies, but for the most part, the ceremonies are male affairs. Women's participation is usually limited to preparing refreshments, and most often the women are from one neighborhood, or closely related to one another but from different neighborhoods, and not non-kinsmen. Only at community services held in the mosque do unrelated women work together to prepare refreshments. Such unrelated women, of course, pray together during the mosque services, but they usually attend the mosque in small kin groups, pray in these groups, and leave together with little interaction with other women. Such is not the case with the men who range further in the social field and have many non-kinsmen friends whom they have met in fishing or at the wharf while stevedoring.

The shaman cult also effectively cuts localized dakampungan lines. Although each localized dakampungan has its own shamans who take care of its supernatural matters, the shamans themselves, especially the men, identify closely to one another because of their common interests and the dances they perform together every four months. The shamans occasionally
confer on particularly grave matters. While I was in Sitangkai, a rash of personal quarrels broke out between members of the different localized dakampungan. Rumor spread that evil spirits were causing the quarrels, so the leading shamans of the three localized dakampungan met to conduct a ceremony to rid the village of the malevolent spirits. The spirit boat described for the Tawi-Tawi Bajau is also constructed by the Sitangkai shamans for the same purpose, i.e. to rid the village of evil spirits. The leading shamans of all three localized dakampungan organize the construction of the boat. Upon completion, they pull it throughout the village waters as they dance and chant to attract the disease-causing spirits. It is then taken to the open sea and set adrift in hopes that the disease-causing spirits are aboard and will drift away from the village.

This unifying aspect of religion, both Islam and shamanism, is not unique to the house-dwelling Bajau. As noted, of the only two activities which effectively cross kin-lines to unify the boat-dwelling villagers, one of these is the religious ceremony held periodically to rid the community of evil spirits. In addition, funeral ceremonies and certain healing ceremonies among the boat-dwellers are often composed of non-kinsmen. Religion, then, is important for community organization among both groups. It reaches its greatest manifestation at Sitangkai because of the more formal organization of religion found there, both Islam and the shaman cult, and because of the more scheduled and frequent performance of religious ritual, e.g. the weekly mosque services and the annual cycle of Islamic ceremonies. Both Islam and shamanism at Sitangkai are, however, aspects of the boat-dwelling culture which have simply been formalized and expanded.
Although the guests for Sitangkai wedding and circumcision celebrations are drawn largely from the sponsoring localized dakampungan, Bajau from other dakampungan and even non-Bajau are always present. Also, as noted earlier, the fish drives attract persons from other localized dakampungan even though they are sponsored by one localized dakampungan and most of the fishermen come from that group.

The public schools have also been effective in breaking through kin walls. At school, children frequently develop close friendships with non-kinsmen that extend into adulthood. And since social stratification among the Bajau is partly determined by education, and education and Islam tend to go hand in hand, a Bajau may identify more closely with an educated, Muslim non-kinsmen than with an uneducated, non-Muslim kinsmen.

The school cliques also have their parallel among the boat-dwellers. Although because of the nomadic life of the Tawi-Tawi Bajau, most children's play groups are composed of siblings or first cousins, children of the more sedentary families who remain in one village for a long period of time often develop friendships with non-kinsmen who are also sedentary members of the village. I do not have the time depth to estimate the duration or strength of these friendships, but judging from adult patterns of friendship and association, they do not extend too strongly into adulthood as they frequently do in Sitangkai. Nonetheless, the basis for such non-kin associations is found among the boat-dwellers, at Sitangkai they have been elaborated through a thoroughly sedentary life and the public school system.

**Political Structure**

Bajau political structure also tends to unite the three localized
dakampungan. As noted, each localized dakampungan has a headman who handles problems that arise within his kin group. However, when problems cross localized dakampungan lines, other political machinery begins to operate. A brief historical sketch will explain the evolution of the system.

The old headman, Alari, who built the first Bajau house in Sitangkai was one of the strongest leaders ever known among the Bajau. Although his localized dakampungan originally came from Tandowak and is not considered the "first family" of Sitangkai, his own strong personality elevated him to a position of leadership over all the Sitangkai Bajau. American administrators early recognized this, and all their dealings with the Bajau were via Alari. During Alari's time, each headman handled the disputes of his own localized dakampungan, but if these disputes crossed localized dakampungan lines, Alari was called in to arbitrate. Thus, he came to be recognized by both the American administrators and the Bajau as the headman of Sitangkai. Upon his death, his position of leadership passed to his youngest son, Ingguan, who, in addition to having inherited his father's strong personality, was also one of the few Bajau at that time who had attended school. As with Alari, it was through Ingguan that the rest of Sitangkai's officials communicated to the Bajau community. However, this informal arrangement had to be formalized during the late 1950's when Sulu Province elected its first political officers; before that time, officers had been appointed by representatives of the national government in Jolo. The existing village political structure of the rest of the Philippines was, of course, the model after which Sulu was patterned, i.e. an elected village council,
headed by a headman. The first such administrative body in Sitangkai was appointed in the late forties and the first elected group went to office in 1959. Whoever appointed the first council, wisely appointed Ingguan as one of the members; the other four and the headman were non-Bajau. These same men were elected to office at the first elections, and as a result, the traditional Bajau political system has been little altered by the new system. Headmen still handle problems within their own localized dakampungan; if the problems are too grave to be handled by them or if they cross localized dakampungan lines, they are taken to Ingguan; if they are too grave for Ingguan to handle or if they involve non-Bajau, they are taken to the village council. If the village council cannot reach an agreement or needs higher authority, the mayor of Sitangkai is consulted. Examples will best illustrate how the system currently operates.

A young Bajau woman wanted to attend a wedding celebration but felt that she had no decent jewelry to wear. A kindly older woman, distantly related to her, heard her complaint and offered to loan her own jewelry for the occasion. The young woman accepted her offer and wore the jewelry that night. The young woman's husband, from a different localized dakampungan, was in desperate financial straits and needed money in a hurry. The next morning, he stole the jewelry and pawned it to a local Chinese merchant. After a few days, when her jewelry was not returned, the older woman went to the younger one's house to claim it. Reluctantly, the young woman told her what had happened, and the older woman immediately took the case to her headman. The headman recognized the gravity of the offense and called in Ingguan. Ingguan realized that the
offense was too great for him to handle, so he called a meeting of the Sitangkai village council. The young woman and her husband appeared before the council, and after a brief interrogation, were told to produce the jewelry or money immediately, or they would go to jail. They could not produce the jewelry or money, so were sentenced to the Sitangkai jail until their kinsmen could raise the money. Within a few days, the money was raised and the couple was released.

On another occasion, the offense was also too grave for the localized dakampungan headman to handle. A young Bajau man, recently married, could do nothing to please his in-laws. He was desperately in love with his new wife, but her parents seemed determined to separate them. Eventually the parents talked the girl into pressing divorce charges against the boy. He tried to talk his wife into reconsidering, but she apparently had made up her mind and would have nothing to do with him. In his crazed grief, he went to his house and prepared a dynamite charge. That night he slipped to the house of his in-laws, ignited the charge, and threw it into their sleeping quarters. His wife and her mother were killed instantly and three others of the household were seriously injured. Meanwhile, the young man had escaped to a home of relatives where he was concealed. No one had seen the young man throw the charge, although all suspicions were directed toward him—especially since he had disappeared. Finally, the young man's mother went to her headman and told him the entire story and that the young man was hiding in her house. The headman immediately went to Ingguan, who in turn went to the village council. The Sitangkai mayor was notified and he sent the police force to apprehend the youth. Eventually the case went to the provincial court and
the man was sentenced to the national prison in Luzon. A melancholy foot-
note to the affair: The young wife had decided to return to her husband
and planned to escape her parents' household the night of her murder.

Within Sitangkai, the mayor is the strongest political figure. Theo-
retically the village council governs Sitangkai and they, as other vil-
lage councils in Sibutu, are accountable to the mayor who governs the
Sibutu Islands district. However, in reality the mayor heads the Sitang-
kai village council and rules Sitangkai with no weak hand. To the Bajau
he is the final word and the court of last appeal. And because in many
respects he is a continuation of the old datu system that operated under
the sultanate, his autocratic tactics are in keeping with traditional
patterns.

Two important features distinguish the Sitangkai Bajau political
structure from that of the boat-dwellers, namely the greater authority
vested in the leaders and the more formal nature of its structure. As
noted, the headman among the boat-dwellers acts primarily as an adviser
or consultant; he hears the case (if the case is even taken to him),
offers a verdict (which may or may not be accepted), and levies a fine
(which most frequently is never paid). His lack of power seems due pri-
marily to the nomadic life of these Bajau. The boat-dwellers normally
divide their allegiance between two villages (that of the husband and
that of the wife), and should the headman of one of these villages prove
too demanding the couple can easily move on to another village and a less
demanding headman. Consequently, the headman exerts little authority.
Such is not the case, however, among the house-dwelling Bajau. These
Bajau cannot so easily pick up and leave and therefore must follow the
decision of the headman, a decision which usually has the consensus of
the group, or suffer the social ostracism their disobedience might other-
wise bring. Because of the larger size of the Sitangkai localized dakam-
pungan and the greater numbers of individuals under one headman, the Si-
tangkai headman more commonly calls in other older men to assist in deci-
sion-making than is the case of the Tawi-Tawi headman. This is especially
ture in the event of cases involving persons whom the headman does not
know intimately. As a result, the headman's decision has even more weight
by the backing of a group of respected elders. And since the Sitangkai
headmen are recognized by the mayor of Sitangkai as the leaders of their
localized dakampungan, they can always call in his authority to back their
decisions. The decision of the leading headman of Sitangkai, the one who
holds a seat on the village council, is almost always respected since he
not only represents the highest authority in the Bajau community, but al-
so has the support of the village council, the mayor, and ultimately the
governor of Sulu. As a result of these two factors, i.e. the sedentary
way of life and the power structure of the political system, the house-
dwelling Bajau tend to heed the decisions of their headman more often than
do their Tawi-Tawi kinsmen.

The boat-dwelling political structure is much more amorphous, although
it contains hazy outlines of the formal structure that has emerged at Si-
tangkai. Each localized dakampungan has a headman. Each boat village with
more than one localized dakampungan recognizes one of its headmen as head
of the entire village when such recognition is necessary. Traditionally,
the boat-dwellers held some sort of unclear allegiance to local datus who
in turn owed allegiance to the Sultan of Sulu. However, in reality, the
Bajau were beyond the pale of the Sultanate's concerns and were allowed to follow their sea-borne lives with little interference. This same pattern has continued in Tawi-Tawi through the present political system. Nonetheless, Sitangkai's political system has its outlines in the traditional structure of the boat-dwelling society and is in no sense original.

Social Stratification

Social stratification is more pronounced among the Sitangkai Bajau than among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. Class lines are determined by wealth and acculturation to Islam; frequently the two go hand in hand, but not always. The five Bajau hadji and their families form the elite of Sitangkai Bajau society. They, or their immediate ancestors, were the first Bajau to build houses and embrace Islam. Few of them are fishermen, and almost all were at one time involved in smuggling from which they accumulated considerable wealth. Many of them have attended school, and all their children presently attend. Beneath them are the other Muslim Bajau who regularly attend the mosque services; some of them are still fishermen, but many are stevedores, or in other non-fishing jobs. Most of the children of this group also attend school, but fewer of their parents have attended. The next group consists of the large number of families who only occasionally, or never, attend the mosque; most of these are fishermen who live at the peripheries of the physical, as well as the Islamic, community. At the very bottom of Sitangkai society are those few fishing families who still dwell in boats. They never attend the mosque, never send their children to school, and are considered pagans by the acculturated Bajau as well as the non-Bajau of Sitangkai. Only about ten such families, however, still live in boats, and probably within a year or two, they will
have abandoned the boat-dwelling habit and thereby climb a round up the social ladder. It need only be stated here that this stratification is no more than an elaboration of traditional Bajau patterns of Tawi-Tawi.

Bajau relations with the non-Bajau people of Sitangkai are for the most part smooth and friendly, especially compared to some other parts of Sulu where the Bajau are considered untouchables by their neighbors. This seems partly due to the fact that the Bajau comprise the majority of the Sitangkai population, and partly because the Sitangkai Bajau are more acculturated to Islam than any other Bajau group in Sulu. As noted, the majority of non-Bajau live in the houses and shops along the main canal, or immediately adjacent, and the houses that still fringe Sitangkai Island. A few other non-Bajau houses, especially those of fish-buyers, are scattered among the Bajau houses at sea.

As a group, the Bajau still suffer social discrimination because of their former, and in some cases, present, "pagan" religious beliefs. Even though some Bajau are more devout Muslims than many land-dwellers, their mosque is sometimes referred to by the land-dwellers as the "mosque of the pagans." Nonetheless, the most acculturated Bajau elite are regularly invited to attend ceremonies of the land-dwellers and a few have married into land-dwelling families. One Bajau woman is married to a Chinese, an unheard of proposition in other parts of Sulu, and another is one of the five wives of the mayor—an obvious political marriage.

**Inter-Village Relations**

Inter-village kin ties are fewer and less important among the Sibutu Bajau than among the Tawi-Tawi Bajau. Part of this is because Sitangkai has such a large concentration of Bajau and virtually all of one's signi-
ficant kinsmen live in Sitangkai if one is from Sitangkai. If the present trend of migration to Sitangkai from the outer villages continues, the Bajau villages at Omapoi and Tandowak will probably disappear within the next decade. Tungnihat is still a sizeable Bajau community, and most likely will remain so unless unforeseeable events cause a movement to Sitangkai. With the abandonment of the boat-dwelling habit, related persons have become localized in a single village and kin ties to other villages have become less significant. Inter-village marriage is still fairly common, and the villages retain kin ties through the maggombok ceremony. Nonetheless, one cannot discuss all the Bajau villages in Sibutu as a single community as may be done for all the Tawi-Tawi Bajau villages; each Sibutu Bajau village views itself as unique from the other Bajau villages. Such cannot be said for the Tawi-Tawi villages.

Many Sitangkai Bajau have kinsmen in Tawi-Tawi, but they normally are not close kinsmen, except among those few families who have recently married Tawi-Tawi people. The greater acculturation to Islam of the Sitangkai people has been effective in bringing about a cleavage between themselves and the Tawi-Tawi people. Should the Tawi-Tawi people accept Islam, as they doubtlessly will within the next couple of decades or so, possibly their ties to Sitangkai will become closer. As it is, they are still considered a pagan, almost untouchable group by the Tawi-Tawi land-dwellers, and the Sitangkai Bajau are none too eager to claim them as kinsmen.

On the other hand, the Sitangkai people closely identify with the small Bajau village of Bangau-Bangau on the outskirts of Semporna, Sabah. Many of the Bangau-Bangau Bajau have only recently moved to Sabah from Sitangkai and still regularly visit their Sitangkai kinsmen. They, as
the Sitangkai people, are acculturated to Islam, and are, in general, regarded as sophisticated urbanites by their Sitangkai relatives.
PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER I

SUMMARY

This study compares and contrasts two groups of Bajau of the Sulu Islands, namely the boat-dwellers of Tawi-Tawi and the house-dwellers of Sitangkai, in order to discover the changes which have occurred in Bajau society as a result of the abandonment of the nomadic boat life and the acceptance of the sedentary house-dwelling life. The recurring theme throughout this study has been that the seemingly new patterns of social behavior found among the house-dwelling Sitangkai Bajau are actually not new to Bajau society but are found, albeit less elaborated, in the traditional boat-dwelling society. This position assumes the fairly obvious fact that every society has certain forms of behavior that it regards as preferable, and that may actually dominate in practice, which are based on the jural rules of the society. As noted in the Introduction, this particular feature of society has traditionally been called "social structure," but every society also reveals behavioral patterns which deviate from these preferred forms, but which are tolerated as legitimate practices when the ideals cannot be practiced. The possibility of choosing among alternative patterns of behavior, or what Firth calls "social organization," is the genesis for change in the dominant behavior patterns and ultimately possibly in the structure. When members of the society find themselves in a new position where the preferred forms cannot be followed, they turn to those sanctioned alternatives which are most congruent to the new social milieu. And since the new social milieu is often the result of contact with a superordinate, imposing society, those patterns of traditional behavior which most closely
approximate the models of the imposing group will be those chosen by the changing society. Only if the traditionally preferred patterns and all the traditionally sanctioned patterns can no longer be practiced does the society look elsewhere to perhaps "borrow" from other societies. I contend, however, that "borrowing" of this sort is not common.

This view of society, that is, as having dominant as well as alternative patterns of behavior, is preferable to more traditional notions which assume that only one pattern of behavior can arise from a given social structure since it can better illustrate the ways by which structural change occurs. As noted, the traditional concept of social structure as expressed by Radcliffe-Brown and his immediate students failed to explain how change in structure occurs. These traditionalists fail to see that a structural form may allow for various behavioral patterns so long as they are congruent to the form. Even the majority of anthropological studies purporting to deal with social change give little understanding of the processes of change, but rather tell only that one social form became another social form with little explanation as to why the change followed the particular patterns it did (Barth 1967). Most commonly, "acculturation" is said to have occurred, i.e. the changing social forms are due to the influence of an intruding society, and the new forms may have, in fact, been borrowed from the new society. Even if this may be the case, such studies fail to account for the operating processes underlying the changing behavioral patterns. Firth's concept of "structure" and "organization," and the presence of what I have called "preferred" and "alternative" patterns of social behavior, overcomes this dilemma. Not only do the concepts more realistically reveal
patterns of social behavior as flexible and dynamic, but they also offer an explanation as to why social change follows the particular patterns that it does.

The preceding comparative analysis of the traditional boat-dwelling Bajau society with the house-dwelling Bajau society has demonstrated the validity of this position as will now be illustrated by reviewing eleven aspects of Bajau society, namely household composition, household residence, village residence, marriage, divorce, kinship terminology, the neighborhood, action groups, the kindred, political structure, and religion.

1. Household composition. The boat-dwelling Bajau household is typically a single nuclear family whereas that of the house-dwelling Bajau is more typically an extended uxorilocal household. Some few boat-dwellers live in extended family households if the houseboat is large enough or if a newly married couple has not yet acquired its own houseboat, but the size of the houseboat generally limits the size of the household to a single nuclear family. It is nonetheless a commonly voiced ideal among the boat-dwellers that it is best to live intimately with one's kinsmen, ideally one's uxorilateral kinsmen—ideals which, however, as noted, for the most part cannot be practiced. Given these ideals it would seem likely that if the boat people had larger dwellings and if circumstances altered so that they could practice uxorilocal residence, they would live in uxorilocal extended family households. Such is precisely what has happened at Sitangkai. This form of extended family is not a case of acculturation to the Islamic neighbors for they, in contrast to the Bajau pattern, tend to live in single nuclear family households.
2. Uxorilocal residence. Among the house-dwelling Bajau, the residence patterns of individual couples, also, tend to reflect a preference for uxorilocality. As my data have revealed, this preference has its genesis in the boat-dwelling society as an ideal where it cannot be practiced; in Sitangkai, however, the ideal pattern has been realized. Because the Muslim land-dwellers more commonly reside virilocally, uxorilocal residence among the Bajau cannot be considered acculturation, but is more empirically demonstrated as the realization of a pre-existing Bajau ideal.

3. Natolocal village residence. The greater percentage of natolocal village residence at Sitangkai is in great contrast to the varied village residence found among the boat-dwellers. The Sitangkai pattern is primarily the result of the large concentration of Bajau in a single village. Such a population concentration allows the house-dwelling youth to easily find a marriage partner in his home village whereas the smaller populations of the villages of the boat-dwellers make it less easy for a boat-dwelling youth to find a bride in his home village much as he would prefer it, and he consequently must more commonly marry outside. Although the land-dwelling Muslims more commonly practice natolocal village residence than do the boat-dwelling Bajau, the high percentage of such residence among the Sitangkai Bajau cannot be convincingly explained as acculturation to the Muslims, but is more understandable as the result of the increased village size that enables these Bajau to more often follow a preferred pattern.

4. First cousin marriage. The boat-dwelling Bajau are free to marry any first cousins excepting patrilateral parallel cousins or those
with whom they have been reared intimately. Among the Sitangkai house-dwelling Bajau, a general disapproval of all first cousin marriage is emerging. The Sitangkai pattern is mostly an intensification of the traditional patterns. Since the Sitangkai Bajau most commonly live in uxorilocal households, first cousins of the household are raised together intimately and are thereby improper marriage partners by traditional mores. In addition, the traditional prohibition against patrilateral parallel cousin marriage has been retained at Sitangkai. As a result, a good share of one’s first cousins are improper marriage partners—more than is the case among the boat-dwellers because of their smaller households and nomadic movements. The strong disapproval of all first cousin marriage by land-dwelling Muslims has no doubt been a factor in the Sitangkai extension of the prohibition to all first cousins. Nonetheless, acculturation alone does not explain the emerging prohibition. The Muslims presented to the Sitangkai Bajau a model partly in keeping with their traditional preferences with the result that they reworked their traditional patterns of cousin marriage to more closely approximate the Muslim model.

5. Divorce. The house-dwelling Bajau have a much higher divorce rate than do the boat-dwelling Bajau. However, the sentiments which lead to divorce among the house-dwellers can be found in the boat-dwelling society, namely that one’s loyalty belongs first and primarily to kinsmen. This loyalty is more often threatened by house-dwelling than by boat-dwelling. The house-dwelling Bajau groom most commonly goes to live in his bride’s extended uxorilocal household; he frequently does not
now his bride nor her kinsmen well and is consequently a stranger in
the household. Thus, whenever conflicts arise between him and his bride
or between him and his bride's kinsmen, the household unites against him
and he commonly leaves in frustration to seek a divorce. On the other
hand, the boat-dwelling couple lives alone in their own boat and do not
have the large group of kinsmen to meddle in their early marital quarrels.
Partly because of this, their marriages tend to be more stable than those
of the house-dwellers. Nonetheless, in both societies, one's loyalties
are expected to remain with one's kinsmen and such is usually the case
in the early days of marriage before loyalties are transferred to
spouses. But because of the different household compositions and kin
relationships, loyalties differently conflict in the two societies. The
increase in divorce at Sitangkai cannot be explained as acculturation to
Muslim society, because the Muslims divorce even less than the boat-
dwelling Bajau and often criticize the frequent divorce of the Sitangkai
Bajau.

6. Kinship terminology. Kinship terminology among the house-
dwellers tends to be more classificatory than that of the boat-dwellers.
Only on rare occasions do the boat-dwellers extend kin terms of the nu-
clear family to more distantly related kinsmen or even to non-kinsmen
to indicate intimate relationships. Among the house-dwellers, on the
other hand, nuclear family kin terms are commonly extended collaterally
to household mates. The principle involved is that both groups extend
nuclear family terms to reflect intimacy, and since among the house-
dwellers several nuclear families live intimately in a single household,
it should come as no surprise that they more commonly extend the terms
beyond the nuclear family. This extension of kin terms by the house-
dwellers has not been borrowed from the Muslims who employ a descrip-
tive kinship terminology, and who, in fact, often express astonishment
at the manner in which the Bajau casually extend nuclear family terms.

7. The neighborhood. The kin-based neighborhood is much more im-
portant as a social group among the house-dwellers than among the boat-
dwellers. Nonetheless, shades of the concept of the neighborhood are
found among the boat-dwellers. In their society, the most important social
unit above the nuclear family is the sibling alliance unit; they have no
important social group between this unit and the localized dakampungan.
However, within the boat-villages, the sibling alliance units tend to
moor their houseboats near other sibling alliance units whom they recog-
nize as kinsmen. Essentially, the same pattern was followed when the
Sitangkai Bajau moved to houses; in general, the sibling alliance units
moved to a single house which was built near other, related households
to form a kin-based neighborhood. And because of the sedentary life of
the Sitangkai Bajau, the neighborhood has become a permanent, social
group—unlike the boat-dwelling counterpart, that of a few boats moored
near each other, which is extremely impermanent and ephemeral. As a
result, the Sitangkai neighborhood units cannot be considered the result
of acculturation to land-dwelling Muslim practices; in fact, because many
of the Muslim families have only recently arrived in Sitangkai as immi-
grants, they do not have many kinsmen there near whom they could dwell,
even if they wanted to do so.

8. Action groups. The two groups of Bajau reveal differences in
both their work groups and their ceremonial action groups. Among the
boat-dwellers, the most common work group is the fishing unit which normally consists of a man, his wife, and possibly their children. Their less common work groups for wood-working or boat-building consist of a man and his brothers or brothers-in-law. Among the house-dwellers, women less often fish with their husbands who usually prefer brothers or brothers-in-law in their stead—as they also do for other work alliances. The elimination of women from the fishing groups seems demonstrably related to three factors, namely ecology, house-dwelling, and acculturation. The sea environment of Tawi-Tawi demands that the boat-dwellers follow a monthly cycle that covers a fairly extensive area; consequently, it is necessary for most families who fish commercially to be away from their home village for a couple of weeks of each month. Rather than leave his wife and family at home for such a long period (which would be almost impossible anyway since their home is also the fishing boat), a man usually prefers to take them with him—even though he may have other male companions to assist him in fishing. In Sitangkai, the major fishing grounds are easily accessible to the village and as a result, it is unnecessary to be away from the village for more than a day or so at a time. Consequently, a man is never separated from his family for long periods. Also, since the fishing boat is no longer the living quarters at Sitangkai, the wife and children may remain in the house while the husband uses the boat for fishing. An important factor that discourages the more acculturated women from fishing is the land-dwellers' notion that such work is unsuited for women; not surprisingly, the most acculturated women are those who fish least with their husbands. The uxorilocal bias of the male action groups reflects this same bias that
permeates much of Sitangkai social organization. Ceremonial action
groups at Sitangkai are more exclusively male than is the case in Tawi-
Tawi. This seems largely due to the influence of Islam whereby ritual is
almost exclusively in male hands. However, the Muslim model simply tends
to intensify the traditional Bajau practice whereby males hold the leader-
ship positions in ritual but permit females to actively participate.
Thus the changes in the Sitangkai action groups can be attributed in
part to acculturation to the land-dwelling Muslim society, in the course
of which the traditional Bajau dominant pattern has been reoriented.

9. The localized dakampungan. Two features distinguish the house-
dwelling Sitangkai localized dakampungan from those found among the
boat-dwelling Tawi-Tawi Bajau, namely their larger size and their uxoriloca-
locality. The greater size is related both to the Sitangkai abandonment
of the traditional nomadic boat-life and to the ecology of the Sibutu
Islands, their present habitat. As noted, the fishing reefs in Tawi-
Tawi are more dispersed than is the case in Sibutu, and as a result, in
order to profitably exploit the fishing grounds it is necessary for the
boat-dwelling Bajau to move throughout the month. Consequently, their
numbers are always scattered among several moorages throughout the area
where localized dakampungan congregate. However, in Sitangkai because
of the greater accessibility and concentration of fishing grounds as well
as the sedentary way of life, these Bajau are able to congregate in a
central area. As a result, the formerly dispersed, but related, localized
dakampungan have combined to form fewer and larger, localized dakampungan.
The uxorilocal nature of the Sitangkai dakampungan cannot be attributed
to acculturation to the Muslim peoples, since such large localized
uxorilocal groupings of kinsmen are not characteristic of the land-dwelling Muslims of Sitangkai.

10. Political structure. The outlines of the Sitangkai political structure are evident in the traditional boat-dwelling society of Tawi-Tawi. The chief difference between the two groups is that the Sitangkai pattern has become more formalized and has been fully incorporated into the recent political system of Sulu Province which essentially follows the lines of the old Sultanate. But even this is not truly unique to Sitangkai Bajau social organization since even in traditional society the boat-dwelling Bajau owed an ill-defined allegiance to local datus and ultimately to the Sultan. In Sitangkai, they have been more completely incorporated into the dominant political system, but nonetheless their present participation is simply an intensification of a less elaborated, traditional pattern.

11. Islam. Although I have not separately discussed religion per se, it should be fairly obvious that many of the changes which have occurred at Sitangkai are variously related to Islamic influence. But to say that the Bajau have "borrowed" Islam from the land-dwellers is misleading. Before Islam was introduced to Sulu, the religious beliefs and practices of both the Bajau and the non-Bajau land-dwellers were not significantly different, and the two groups still share a sub-stratum of pre-Islamic beliefs. When the land-dwellers of Sulu accepted Islam, they interpreted most of it to fit existing patterns of religious belief, and their present system represents a syncretism of their traditional beliefs and those of Islam. This folk Islam then became the model which was presented to those Bajau who moved to houses in Sitangkai near the
Muslim land-dwellers. Because the Bajau share the traditional substratum of religious beliefs with the Sulu land-dwelling Muslims and because the Bajau themselves have for many years been incorporating bits and pieces of Islam into their own religious system, it could be predicted that more intimate contact with Sulu's folk Islam would not require drastic alterations in traditional Bajau beliefs. Such has been the case among the Sitangkai house-dwelling Bajau. The Bajau there have simply intensified those aspects of their traditional system which best approximate the acceptable Muslim model of the land-dwellers. As a result, the Islamization of the Sitangkai Bajau has been an easy, non-disruptive process.

Changes resulting from Islamization appear to be more in the realm of values than structure. Although I made no systematic investigation of changing values, such changes are noticeable at Sitangkai where the house-dwelling Bajau in comparison with the boat-dwellers are more hospitable, cleaner, less shy, and have stricter pre-marital and extramarital sex prohibitions. These are only some of the most obvious values they have learned from their Muslim neighbors. So far these new values have not had a significant influence on social structure but most likely will have some effect as they are more rigidly followed.
CHAPTER II
CONCLUSIONS

I do not contend that all social change occurs as described for this one society, that of the Bajau, for each case is obviously somewhat different from all others. I do contend, however, that when societies find it is no longer possible to practice their preferred behavioral patterns, they tend first to resort to their sanctioned alternative patterns in order to adapt to the new situation. Only if none of these can be practiced does the group look elsewhere for models. However, the Bajau case is somewhat unusual in two respects. First, the society with which they came into more intimate contact was not alien to them. In fact, most of Bajau history has been passed at the peripheries of the land-dwelling, non-Bajau peoples; indeed, they and the land-dwellers probably once lived as a single people (Nimmo 1968). Such a contact situation is obviously quite different from a case like that of the Manus Islanders who lived in relative isolation until World War II when they were suddenly invaded by thousands of American troops. Secondly, the Bajau were never forced to abandon the nomadic boat-dwelling life to become sedentary house-dwellers. And because there was little pressure on them from outside to conform to imposed behavioral patterns, they were able to continue to follow those traditional practices that proved congruent to the new, house-dwelling way of life. Obviously, the processes of change operating in such a situation are different from those which occur in societies which have been forced to adopt a particular pattern of living. But nonetheless even if a society is
invaded by a dominant alien group or even if it is forced to adopt an alien pattern, the initial stages of the change will be characterized by those adjustments compatible with existing patterns in the traditional society.

If the house-dwelling Sitangkai Bajau society continues to follow its new patterns, some of the present alternatives (which were preferred patterns in the boat-dwelling society) may no longer be sanctioned as approved behavior. In other words, an actual change in structure will occur. Indications suggesting this are present in regard to residence, marriage, and religion. For example, some of the Sitangkai families still occasionally return to boat-living for fishing trips or for special ceremonies. Even such temporary sort of boat-living is beginning to meet with disapproval by the more acculturated members of the community who relegate such families to the lowest social positions in the Bajau community since boat-dwelling has traditionally identified the Bajau as a pagan, outcast group—a tradition they would like to forget. Similarly, the growing Sitangkai disapproval of any kind of first cousin marriage will probably eventually result in the norm that all first cousin marriage is incestuous. This growing disapproval is partly due to the influence of the land-dwellers' values and partly a result of the earlier mentioned structural features which make such marriages infeasible even by traditional Bajau norms. Some of the traditional religious beliefs which are still practiced by even some of the more acculturated Sitangkai Bajau are beginning to meet with disapproval and probably will eventually be condemned. Again, this is primarily due to the acceptance of the land-dwellers' notions about the proper sort of religious behavior. Thus,
former preferred patterns of behavior which are currently alternatives
to new preferred patterns will eventually be eliminated as even alternative
behavioral patterns since new values are evolving which do not condone them.

I do not intend to imply, however, that such a situation is a trans-
itional period unique to a society undergoing change as a result of
culture contact. Rather, this flexible, dynamic aspect is always charac-
teristic of societies and is responsible for bringing about and allow-
ing change. Only when the concept of social structure is viewed as
involving such a flexible, dynamic process can it be adequately used to
deal with the problem of change. Otherwise, one must be content to use
it to describe static, unreal societies frozen at a moment in time.

The Bajau case has a further feature that is somewhat uncommon in
the anthropological literature in that it illustrates changes resulting
from the meeting of two non-Western, "simple" societies. The bulk of
anthropological literature on social change deals with the impact of
advanced, Western societies on small, non-Western societies. It would
seem, however, that in the long history of man, the Bajau case is the
more usual. Until the improvements in transportation during the past
two or three centuries, it was unusual for totally alien societies to
encounter one another. As the culture area concept illustrated some
years ago, individual societies do not exist as closed, unique units
but rather tend to share many cultural items with neighboring societies.
Societies separated by several hundred miles may be drastically different
from one another, but because of their separation, they would rarely have
occasion to directly interact. Their common interaction is with
neighboring societies which are more like themselves. Thus changes resulting from greater interaction between societies would not be of the dramatic sort of the last few centuries when West met non-West, but the less revolutionary sort of changes which occur when two very similar societies begin to interact more intimately, as the Bajau and their land-dwelling neighbors.

It is perhaps a legitimate question to ask whether or not indeed the society of the Sitangkai Bajau has undergone structural change as a result of the move from boats to houses, a question which may appear a bit delayed at the conclusion of a study claiming to deal with structural change. But the question is nonetheless a relevant one, and the answer largely rests upon the position one takes in views on the meaning of "social structure." If social structure is defined as a model constructed from the preferred patterns of behavior within a society then clearly there has been a change in social structure among the Sitangkai Bajau—the composition of household and action groups, residence and marriage patterns, and kinship terminology have all changed. On the other hand, if social structure is a model that attempts to describe the rules which apply to the total range of social behavior within a society, then one may hesitate in calling the change at Sitangkai a structural change. Essentially, the structural patterns which are found in the boat-dwelling society are still operating to produce the behavioral patterns of the house-dwelling society; in fact, it is for this very reason that the alterations at Sitangkai have taken the particular direction they have. The seemingly new behavior at Sitangkai has
always been sanctioned in traditional Bajau society. Thus, there have been few additions of new social behavior, but rather simply a reorientation of behavior. But, nonetheless, with the reorientation, the resulting behavioral patterns among the house-dwellers have brought about a system of interpersonal relations considerably different from the system that was operative among the boat-dwellers. Whether or not there has been a change in structure, there has been a change in behavioral patterns.

Perhaps the more important problem rests in the types of models that anthropologists construct to describe societies rather than in which of these models is to be called "social structure." The crucial matter is that models be constructed which can be used to deal with social change by revealing the dynamics of social life. It would seem that unless such models be used for describing social structure, the anthropologist will find the concept inapplicable to the dynamics of social life. Only such models reveal the variety of behavior which may serve as alternatives to the preferred patterns, i.e. the varied and dynamic aspects of societies. Without revealing both these preferred and alternative patterns, the social anthropologist cannot hope to deal with social change.

Furthermore, it would seem that by building such models which reveal the gamut of variation in social life, the general direction of change could be indicated by the anthropologist once he has an understanding of the catalyst of change. If the model statistically displays both the preferred and alternative patterns of social behavior, it should be possible to indicate within a finite number of possibilities the direction which social behavior will take when its preferred patterns
have been blocked or condemned. Prediction of this sort cannot be precise but rather can only indicate the general direction of change within a fairly large, albeit finite, number of possibilities. But at least such prediction is removed from the realm of complete guesswork and impression.
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