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Health and Labor Situation of Bajau Mothers and Children in Iligan City, Philippines

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Abstract

The Bajau is one of the ethno-linguistic groups who lives in Southern Philippines whose livelihood is mainly fishing. Security problems in their original abode coerced them to become migratory and settle in different urban centers in the Philippines. This study examines the health and labor situation of 75 Bajau mothers and selected children engaged in child labor in Iligan City. Employing a descriptive research design, this study makes use of survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussion. Findings reveal that the respondents belong to the sub-class of poverty who are mainly illiterate, have large families and survive mainly by begging (*pag amuh*) although a few are into small business activities like selling food and fancy jewelry. They live in extreme poverty and could not modestly eat 3 square meals a day. Settled at the shores of Barangay Tambacan, the respondents' environment is plagued with sanitation problems: limited access to safe water for hygiene and drinking purposes, absence of toilets and carpet of garbage. The children roam around (usually barefoot) stepping on human and solid wastes. Despite the presence of health center and health care providers in the barangay, only a few Bajau subscribe to their services. The children informants, on the other hand, help their families by begging, coin diving (*angedjo*), and selling cellophanes. Like their parents, half of these school-age children do not have formal education. These children suffered from several physical pains related to their economic activities while a few encountered harassments and discrimination simply because they are Bajau. The study concluded that the Bajau in Tambacan produced a poor ethnic enclave where women and children become the front liners of the family's economic survival- a manifestation of the changes in their family role structure as a form of urban adaptation.

Keywords: Bajau, discrimination, begging, extreme poverty, ethno -linguistic group

Introduction

Health is an integral part of everyday life. It is not simply viewed as the absence of illness. In regard to the reproductive health, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 has defined it as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of infirmity in all matters related to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.”

The Bajau is classified as one of the 13 Muslim ethno-linguistic groupings. A number of scholars classify them as a sociocultural subgrouping of the Sama tribe. Yet, it has been noted that except for its geographic location and language affinity with the Sama Moros, the Bajau seems to be at the outer edge of the Moro society, be it politically, socially, culturally and economically.

The different groups of Bajau, whether land-based or boat-dwelling generally speak a language called “*Sinama*” (as called by the Samal) or “*Siamal*” (as called by the Tausug). Although some have reportedly embraced Islam or Christianity, most of them still practice some of their animistic and old practices. They believe in *M’boh Tuhan* as their God and creator of the world. Considered as the supreme ruler, He made the animals, plants, and human beings equal. They also believe that their world is divided into two: physical and spiritual world. The physical world comprises the land and water (Hope for Change, Inc., 2001).

The massive influx of the Bajau¹ to the cities indicates there is something happening in their places of origin. Related literatures show the Bajau is basically nomadic and highly mobile. With the problems of access to sea resources, they have to go where the resources are. Thus, the movement to the urban centers.

Due to the violent clashes between government forces and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) armed groups in the 1970s, a number reportedly fled to many parts of Sabah and several areas in the country. The loss of their traditional fishing grounds to big commercial fishing has also exacerbated their dismal state. They have taken refuge in big cities of the Visayas and Luzon.

Indeed, the Bajau has taken shelter in urban centers to engage in begging and become more marginalized in the process. In the same vein, Sather in Bottignolo (1995: vi-vii) said:

...everywhere the Badjao, as a sea people, have tended to be marginalized, excluded from positions of power, despised, and confined to the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Part of their denigration has traditionally been framed in religious terms. Hence, neighboring groups have typically viewed them as a people “without religion” (halam agama).

In general, the primary problems perceived by the Sama Dilaut/Bajau community members were as follows: lack of livelihood and employment, poor health and sanitation, financial problem—no regular income both from street begging (*ag-pangamuh*) and coin-diving at the port area (*anged-jo*), (Bracamonte, 2011; Daug, 2013). Children who work at an early age constitute child labor.

Since food need is determined on a day-to day basis among the Bajau, mealtime depended on every day income from begging usually done by children. Thus, they suffered from lack of food in the family. Due to the terrible health and sanitation situation in the settlement, the rate of infection was high. Severe cases had been brought to Cagayan de Oro City through the facilitation of an NGO. The common cases among mothers involved placenta discharge. There were also reported cases of death among children usually due to dehydration/diarrhea, fever, or bronchopneumonia.

However, there appears to be no comprehensive picture of their health and nutrition condition and child labor despite a number of researches done on the Bajau in Tambacan (cf Bracamonte, 2011; Pahunang et al., 2012; Daug, 2013). The settlement has tremendously grown to about 100 households since the establishment of 4 Bajau houses in the site in the late 1990s. It is more sad to note also that no clear development intervention for the Bajau has lasted and succeeded. The Bajau mothers and children continue to roam the busy streets of Iligan City to eke out a living.

The right interventions for this indigenous group can only succeed if information is made available through a scientific investigation to fully understand their condition. Early labor, health and nutritional status among women and children need to be assessed to have a scientific basis for any development interventions for the group. This becomes more urgent now with the recent measles outbreak in the area which killed mostly children. Given these conditions, this study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To describe the labor situation of the mother and children respondents.
2. To examine the health and nutritional status of Bajau mothers and children.
3. To identify common health problems encountered by Bajau mothers and children in their community.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The sociological imagination by C Wright Mills refers to the "quality of mind" that allows one to grasp "history (events that have shaped the society's values and beliefs) and biography (an individual's life experience within a particular society) and the relations between the two within society." (Thompson and Hickey 2005). In order to see the connection between biography and history, we have to focus upon substantive problems that relate to structural and historical features of the sociocultural system that have meanings for individuals, and shape the values, character, and the behavior of the men and women who make up that sociocultural system..

Looking at poverty as a social problem, its understanding shall go beyond income sufficiency. Measuring poverty is not easy as it can be viewed as a general phenomenon of insufficient development. This means that a person is poor when he is in a precarious situation which renders him incapable to change his condition due to lack of abilities or opportunities of development. This can be seen in situations of inadequate income, unhealthy life, malnutrition or vulnerability to disease that adversely affect their chances of surviving or improving his quality of life (Jimenez et al 2016).

Elbers (2003) tries to measure the poverty of income at three levels: a. The food poverty: Incapacity of the total household income to obtain a basket of basic food;. b. The capacity poverty: insufficiency of the total income of the household to acquire the food basket and carry out the necessary expenses in health and education; c. The poverty of patrimony: Insufficiency of the total household income to acquire the food basket, as well as carrying out the necessary expenses in greetings, doting, housing, transport and education.

The Bajaus in Iligan City can be categorized under the subclass of poverty. They lack the capacities and abilities to compete for a modest survival in an urban environment being generally illiterate and unskilled. In their place of origin which is in Southern Philippines, men assumed the breadwinner function of the family. Security challenges forced the Bajaus who were mainly living in the seas to the streets of urban centers in the Philippines. The diasporic situation of the Bajau families uproot basically their economic footholds in their place of origin and created changes in the economic structure of the respondents' households in their new ecological niche.

The Bajau women and children manifested active economic participation for the survival of their families. They are visible in the streets, either begging or selling items under the scorching sun, and are exposed to various physical and health hazards. The shift in the economic roles of family members put the women and children in the buffer zone for economic survival in an urban setting.

Review of Literature

Studies on Bajau: Health, Nutrition and Child Labor

While scanty materials deal with the Bajau, a few describes their health and social condition. Their mobility can be gleaned in the following: “Being a sea-oriented people, and because of their difficulty in meeting the bare needs of economic subsistence, a number of them have consistently transferred from one of the smaller islands in Sulu group to another and some have gone as far away as other parts of Mindanao or even in Metro Manila. They wander around easily because they only own a small amount of property” (Teo, 1989:3). It is not uncommon to find them anywhere begging. Survival is synonymous with begging. Worst, this is done by children and when done by adults, they use the naked infants as props to gain sympathy from the onlookers. At a young age, when children are supposed to be in school, play, and enjoy child life under the protection of adults, they are earning a living making themselves vulnerable to the hazards of life. In this aspect, the Bajau children are doubly marginalized.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer cited in the Asia Pacific Forum of the National Human Rights Institutions (2009) mentioned Buhali Adjilani, the tribal chieftain of the Sama Dilaut in Basilan, who hoped that through the Philippine-New Zealand tie up project, their children would be given access to education and that their “*panglima*” justice system be recognized by mainstream society. The same source also mentioned that this boat-dwelling Sama Dilauts or the Badjaos remain in the “fringes” of Muslim society and “are experiencing multi-tiered discrimination as indigenous peoples and as minorities as well.” The persisting conflict in Mindanao, which disturbs its waters, has rendered the tribe susceptible to aggression and violence, driving Bajau out into the land where they have formed squatter colonies according to the Human Rights Commission in the country.

In a research conducted by an NGO in “*Evolving a Development Framework for the Sama Dilaut in Iligan City, Southern Philippines*” undertaken by Bracamonte *et al.* (2001) with the assistance of HAGS, Inc., a portion of the report deals with health and sanitation. The following are the salient findings of the study: From a total of 150 respondents, no one was literate among the adults. The Sama Dilaut were rejected with the vehement initial opposition from Tambacan community and were called dirty, squatters, and mendicants by the latter. The Sama Dilaut children were stoned by Bisaya children, hard-earned money confiscated, taunted as *Bajau*, boys insulted and physically attacked while the girls were sexually harassed.

The study of Pahunang *et al.* (2012) in the Bajau settlement in Tambacan triangulates the survey and key informant interviews. The respondents were 30 Bajau mothers, *panday* (TBA’s), community leaders and Barangay Health Workers (BHWs). Their findings show that among the Bajau mothers in this study, their age reckoning was based on their physical appearance and from the assessment of the community guide since the Bajau do not know the exact date when they were born. Majority of them are young mothers who are below 21 years old (estimated age) because of early marriage. Begging is their major occupation and they have big household size. Population in the Bajau settlement is fast growing due to high fertility rate since the Bajau do not use contraceptives nor practice abortion.

In regard to health and environmental sanitation, findings of the study show that they were heavily dependent on public water system connection of their Christian neighbors. For medical treatment on their ailments, they resorted to “spiritual healing” method and used traditional or herbal medicines. None obtained the services of the health center in the barangay except for the medical intervention facilitated/provided by an NGO. The common ailments included fever, cough, colds, sore eyes, and diarrhea. Scabies and skin-related diseases (boils and ringworm) also afflicted them. Children were at high risk of infection. The adults/elderly were most susceptible to respiratory infection and have symptoms of primary tuberculosis.

The Bajau have various access to social services such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS), health services provided by the health center, and water facilities. They were not able to avail of any other social services because they are discriminated simply because they are beggars. Most of the respondents preferred home delivery and a “*panday*” (traditional birth attendant) is the one attending to child delivery of mothers.

The Bajau mothers still observe traditional beliefs and practices during pregnancy and delivery. However, they also combine traditional with modern health practices in health management. They also face problems in environmental sanitation because of improper waste disposal. Most of the respondents were aspiring for a good health, providence of their material needs, peace in their community, and a clean environment.

Methodology

The research design was descriptive in nature and employed a mixed method of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group discussion/FGD and key informant interviews/KII) approaches. Secondary data collection and analysis were also employed.

The Bajau settlement is geographically located in Purok 4 of Barangay Tambacan, Iligan City. This is a coastal community closely located at the mouth of Iligan River and connected to the city's central market area at Barangay Poblacion by a hanging bridge. The area comprises of Bisaya, Maranao and Bajau residents. Flowing along with waters in the river are garbage coming from the upland communities that are dumped at the shorelines.

Purok 4 is classified as an urban poor area where gambling, petty thievery and alcoholism exist. Yet, it is observed that people continually strive hard to earn their daily living to survive. Majority of the residents in the purok are engaged in different types of socio-economic and income-generating activities pediab/motor driving; fish and vegetable vending; carpentry; plumbing; labor for hire at fish landing at the nearby port areas; employment as salesladies at local business establishments, and other sort of livelihood activities

There were 75 Bajau mothers in the reproductive age group 15-49 who have children engaged in child labor and are living in Tambacan settlement, Iligan City, Mindanao who were the survey respondents in the study. However, in order to conduct data triangulation, a focus group discussion of 20 mothers in the aforementioned reproductive age group was also done. An in-depth interview was also made among 5 Bajau boys and 5 girls who are 7-14 years old and engaged in child labor. Research ethics, particularly informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity were strictly observed during the stages of data collection and data analysis.

Results and Discussions

Profile of the Respondents. The respondents have stayed in Tambacan for an average of 12 years although the pioneer Bajau settlers in this barangay have been in the area for about three decades. The average Bajau household is composed of 6 members. It is big considering that this group has a joint household pattern, that is, 2 or more households stay under one roof. Also, the mean household dependent size is 3.

Begging is the main source of income among half of the respondents. Roughly, one-third survive by selling, and a few are doing traditional occupation found in their original abode in Basilan and Jolo which is fishing. As of the recent count, there are more than 10 families who have been engaged in fishing. The majority, however, do not have other sources of income. On the average, the mean daily income of the respondents is P118.17, (\$2.45) or a

monthly income of P3,545.10 (\$ 73.85) which is way below the poverty threshold set by NEDA which is at least P9,140 (\$190) a month for its basic food and non-food needs by the year 2015 for a family of 5. Poverty threshold includes non-food needs such as “clothing, housing, transportation, health, and education expenses.



Fish caught by a few Bajau fishermen in Tambacan Settlement .

This goes to show that the income of the Bajau families is even below the subsistence level or those experiencing extreme poverty. Moreover, the findings are relatively similar to the income of the Bajau in other regions where they are located based on the study of the Department of Social Welfare in 2014.

Community Facilities. Almost everyone use community faucet for drinking water and the rest utilize mineral or bottled water. The average cost of water consumption is P10. In 2013, there was a water connection provided by the Friends of Bajau Iligan, Inc. (FBII), an NGO currently supporting the Bajau community. However, the problem of collecting P10 monthly for water consumption caused its on- and-off water disconnection forcing the community to find potable water from other sources. Moreover, slightly over half of the respondents use kerosene for lighting and the rest use electricity for the same purpose.

Although majority use comfort room for defecation upon payment of P1 per use, a few others admitted that they throw their human wastes at the seashore or drop the same in the holes of the bamboo floors of their house.

Based on observation, the absence of private toilet at home predisposes the Bajau families to unsanitary practices in human waste disposal. While there are efforts done by a civic organization to answer this community need through the construction of 2 communal toilets at the site, the absence of water to maintain its cleanliness and its untimely destruction due to strong waves rendered this effort futile.

Around the settlement, scattered and smaller heaps of garbage can be seen but the Bajau asserted that these are carried by the waves from other places . The waves also brought their solid wastes away from their site . Thus, they do not generally take full responsibility of all garbage located in the settlement.

Basic services for public use is important for health care maintenance, nutrition and early childhood and educational development of mothers and children. On this aspect, half of the respondents are aware of the available health care facilities in the area. When they are ill, half of them go to the hospitals or health centers. However, there are also those who prefer to consult the traditional health practitioners called *panday* or traditional birth attendant (TBA), especially the pregnant mothers.

Children's Health

Immunization. One of the primary health care services provided by barangay health centers are free immunization of 0-age children. In fact, 7 out of 10 mother respondents admitted to have immunized their children. Unfortunately, the rest do not send their children for immunization due to the notion that immunizing their children predispose them to illnesses (*magdaot ang bata kon e immunize*).

When asked about the vaccines received by their children, half said that it was for measles and a handful recalled that it was tetanus toxoid. Two in 10 respondents have no idea of the vaccine given to their children. However, only one-fifth of children 4 years and below in the settlement received immunization and the rest did not. Moreover, there are indications that the immunization received by children was not complete since the majority of the immunized children only received this service once.



Immunization of Bajau children in the settlement

Child Mortality. Among the 75 respondents, 3 out of 10 of them experienced child mortality in the households. There are 2 average deaths in these households. Mortality data is predominantly male children aging 4 years and below and older Bajau who are 60 years old and above.

Perceived Cause of Death. The most common thing the respondents know about the cause of death of their family member is fever/illness (50%). It is followed by measles (17.86%), cough (7.14%), and 3.57% each for diarrhea, kidney failure, miscarriage, and stroke. There are 3 cases (10.72%) who do not know the cause of the death of their family members (see Table 1).

Table 1. Perceived Cause of Death

Cause of Death	Frequency	Percent
Fever/Illness	14	50.00
Measles	5	17.86
Cough	2	7.14
Diarrhea	1	3.57
Kidney Failure	1	3.57
Miscarriage	1	3.57
Stroke	1	3.57
Don't know	3	10.72
Total	28	100.0

Nutrition. A total of 37 children were weighed during the “Operation Timbang” which was done in November 2015. These children comprise of 22 females and 15 males. Using weight and height standards, 32 of them are normal, 2 are underweight (all girls) and 3 are severely underweight (1 girl and 2 boys). Overall, 9 in 10 children are normal while the rest are malnourished.

Physical Conditions of Children 0-6 Years Old. Although weight and height are good measures of children’s health, observation of the physical condition of the child also gives wealth of information. During the children’s weighing activity, the nurse volunteers also used checklist to observe the dental, hair, eye, nose, skin, and other physical conditions of the children. The results indicate that oral care of children is poor with 75% having dental carries. Their hair condition is generally dry with roughly 20% having hair lice. Generally, these children have normal eye vision except for 2 cases whose eyes were damaged. One was a girl who lost her vision due to high fever complication when she suffered from measles. The other one was a boy whose one eye is now blind because it was hit accidentally by an object.

When the nasal cavity of these children were inspected, 48% of them have chronic colds evident through the irritated nasal passage and the dripping of discharge due to cold. There are 33% of children who have unclean ears, indicating the absence of ear care. Most of the children have dry skin, with 1 case exhibiting paleness and another having skin rashes on her feet. Two children have skin diseases. Most of the mothers also reported to have children suffering from cough. A mother also said her child had a fever at that time. Two children also have big stomach which is a symptom of having been infected with parasites (see Table 2).

Table 2. Physical Conditions of Bajau Children (0-6 years old)

Description	Yes	No	Total
Clean teeth	7	3	10
Presence of cavity	13	3	16
Dry hair	7	2	9
Absence of hair lice	21	4	25
Having normal eye vision	18	2	20
Nose is clean	13	12	25
Ears are clean	14	7	21
Skin is dry	7	1	8
Skin is pale	1	1	2
Shows big stomach	2		2
Has cough	11	2	13
Has cold	14	2	16
Has fever	1		1
Has diarrhea	3		3
Has skin disease	2		2
No physical complaints	11		11
Others,			
-abdominal pain	1		1
-skin rashes	1		1
-parasite	1		1



The Bajau children living in a typical bamboo stilt house (left) and a skin disease suffered by a Bajau child (right) being exposed to the unsanitary environment of the settlement.

Maternal Health

The mean age of the mother respondents is 33 years old and 90% got married in their teens. The mean age of marriage is 16 years old which is below 18 years old, the legal age allowed to sign a marriage contract as enshrined in the Philippine law. The Bajau also practice parentally-arranged marriage and collect bride price on the groom-to-be. Informants said that the bride price could be as low as P15,000 (\$312.5). Poverty leads the parents to agree to the early marriage proposal of the guy.

Moreover, all of them, except one, did not use contraceptive. The major reasons why the mother respondents do not subscribe to contraceptive are rooted on their fear of its use (44.73%) or lack of knowledge on its use (34.21%). Other reasons cited could be complimentary to their common reasons like it is against the will of God (8%) and openly admitting that Bajau do not use contraceptives (8%) (see Table 3). Their answers have implications to education campaign pertaining to the benefits and related knowledge on contraceptive use.

Table 3. Reason for not using Contraceptive

Response	Frequency	%
Afraid to use it	17	44.73%
No idea/No knowledge of its use	13	34.21%
Against the will of God	3	7.90%
Bajau does not use contraceptives	3	7.90%
Likes to produce more babies	1	2.64%
Fear of side effects/present disease	1	2.64%
Total:	38	100%

Pregnancies and Miscarriages. With respect to the number of pregnancies experienced by the respondents, the mode (28 cases or 37.3%) indicate that they have 5-6 pregnancies already. It is followed by 29.3% who have 1-2 pregnancies and 24% having 3-4 pregnancies (see Table 4). Those having more than 7 pregnancies comprise 8%. Of mothers who have 1-2 pregnancies, 7 cases experienced abortion. There are also 2 cases each, respectively, who have 3-4 and 5-6 pregnancies who had miscarriages (see Table 5). The average abortion incidents experienced was 2 children.

Table 4. Number of Pregnancies

Response	Frequency	Percent
1-2	22	29.3
3-4	18	24.0
5-6	28	37.3
7-8	4	5.3
9-10	2	2.7
No Response	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0
Mean	4.04	

Table 5. Number of Miscarriage/Abortion Experienced

Number of Miscarriage	Frequency	Percent
0	62	82.7
1-2	7	9.3
3-4	2	2.7
5-6	2	2.7
No response	2	2.7
Total	73	97.3
Total	75	100.0
Mean	2	



Above Photos show the physical check up of mothers (Left photo) and the coastal clean up involving the Bajau families (Right)

Food Intake and Adequacy. Spending about Php 50-100 (\$1-\$2) a day for food, they usually eat cassava “panggi”, rice and fish. However, there are 7 in 10 respondents who shared that they usually miss a meal for about once or twice a week. If they have no food, they would just sleep, beg or rest. Others have nothing to do with the situation. These data would reveal that the Bajau are really food-poor people. Perhaps this is the reason why they usually complain of head ache and stomach ache as their common health problem because of chronic hunger.

Health Complaints. Respondents who indicated to have health complaints (see Table 6) registered headache (12.9%), stomach ache (7%), shortness of breath (5.9%), painful eyes and cough with 3.5% each, respectively, as their top 6 problems. Most of these women said that their headache and stomach ache are due to their inability to eat regular meals which is common among people suffering from extreme poverty.

Table 6 . Health Complaints Experienced in the Family

Response	Frequency	Percent
Body pain	13	15.3
Head ache	11	12.9
Stomach ache	6	7.0
Shortness of breath	5	5.9
Painful eyes	3	3.5
Cough	3	3.5
Tooth ache	2	2.4
Dizziness	1	1.2
Arthritis	1	1.2
Painful breast	1	1.2
No Response	39	45.9
Total	85	100.0

Medications. When asked about their medication when ill (see Table 7), their common response is pain reliever or paracetamol (14.7%), alaxan and solmux (4%), amoxicillin (4%). These are mainly over the counter drugs which are accessible by anyone for minor health concerns.

Table 7. Medication Used When Ill

Response	Frequency	Percent
Paracetamol	11	14.7
Alaxan and solmux	3	4.0
Amoxicilin	3	4.0
Alaxan	2	2.7
Alaxan, bio flu	1	1.3
No response	31	41.3
None	24	32.0
Total	75	100.0

Maternal Labor

Mother's Source of Income. There are 45.3% mothers who earn a living by begging, 16% selling only and more than one-third (37.3%) do not have earnings. For those who have work, their average daily estimated income is P110.50. Those who earned less than P100 daily constitute 45.3% which is very small to live decently on a daily basis. In fact, only 8 respondent (10.7%) have other source of income and the rest do not have (see Table 8)..

Table 8. Mother's Source of Income

Response	Frequency	Percent
Begging	34	45.3
Selling	12	16.0
none	28	37.3
No response	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

Table 9. Mother's Daily income

Response	Frequency	Percent
Below P49.00	10	13.3
P50.00-P99.00	24	32.0
P100.00-P149.00	9	12.0
P150.00-P199.00	1	1.3
P200.00-P249.00	2	2.7
P250.00-P299.00	1	1.3
P300.00 above	1	1.3
No response	27	36.0
Total	75	100.0
Mean	P110.50	

Hours Spent on Working for a Living. As indicated in Table 10, 50.7% of the respondents work for 3-4 hours which is also the mode in the distribution. Another 26.7% work for 1-2. hours. The rest of the cases work for more than 5 hours. The begging mothers are usually seen in the urban alleys after lunch up to sunset. Those that come earlier are those who experience the scorching sun. They return home as soon as their income can already provide for what they need for a day's meal.

Table 10. Number of Hours Spent in Working

Hours Spent	Frequency	Percent
1-2 hours	20	26.7
3-4 hours	38	50.7
5-6 hours	4	5.3
7-8 hours	4	5.3
9-10 hours	1	1.3
11 above	2	2.7
No response	6	8.0
Total	75	100.0

Why Should Women Work?. The most common reasons cited for working is to buy food (82.7%) and to survive (12%) which are basically economic reasons (see Table 11). Begging is a form of urban adaptation in order to survive in a new environment because they lack the educational qualifications and skills to get a better job. Structural discrimination and marginalization put these women in a disadvantaged position in a male-dominated society. The feminization of poverty becomes the lot of women who are taking over the breadwinner role of men whose economic base was displaced due to the security problems in their home of origin in Jolo/Sulu.

Table 11. Why do you Need to Work?

Response	Frequency	Percent
For food	62	82.7
To survive	9	12.0
To gain money	2	2.7
No response	2	2.7
Total	75	100.0

Child Labor

Profile of Children Informants. Of the 10 children informants interviewed who are engaged in child labor, only 4 have formal schooling and the rest are illiterate. Of the 4 who are schooled, only 2 go to school continuously. Half of these children are migrants from Jolo and Sulu, mostly the boys. The Bajau children live in big families with 5 to 9 siblings. The average siblings they have is 6 which is bigger than the mean Filipino family size which is 5.

Engagement in Labor. Among the 5 boys, 3 of them are selling plastics while 2 are diving coins (angedjo)- which is still a form of begging. On the other hand, 3 out of the five girls are begging, one is doing both begging and selling plastics and one is mainly into selling cellophanes. The average hours they spend for this purpose is 4 hours.

The most common labor-related risks encountered by children is the threat posed by bullies who physically hurt them if they refuse to give their income from begging. These bullies are members of gangs, some of whom are armed, who get their money to buy prohibited drugs, mainly shabu. Another risk identified is related to the danger of children crossing the street because of fast vehicles that might hit them. The danger of diving coins in the deep sea is also mentioned by a coin diver who experienced the coldness of the environment and tiredness related to that labor. He even told us that the only way he could fight against the coldness he felt is to put on a dismantled box (karton) on his body to protect himself.

These children bring home at least P20 to as big as P100 per day (less than \$1 to \$2). Their average daily income is P53.00 (roughly \$1). From the money they obtained from the streets they would buy bread and juice which is quite affordable given their minimal income. Others find opportunity to eat protein-rich foods like pork and chicken and carbohydrates like rice and noodles which can be bought in the streets.

Health. The illnesses commonly mentioned among the children are fever and all forms of aches in the body: stomach ache, tooth ache, headache and aching feet. These children are very familiar with over the counter drugs like paracetamol, mefenamic acid and amoxicillin to cure their illnesses.

Recreation. The Bajau children still find time to play and rest despite their engagement in various economic activities. The boys usually play computer games or engage in gambling (*cara y cruz*) at an early age. The mother respondents also validated that both adult and children are engaged in gambling at the Bajau settlement. The girls play a lot of stuffs like Chinese garter, high jump and ball games. It is observed that the parents in the Bajau settlement tolerate the involvement of children in gambling activities which has a significant effect on the formative socialization experience of the children.

Conclusions

The shift in the ecological niche of the Bajau has adversely affected their socioeconomic well-being. The push factors of unfavourable security conditions in their original abode drove them away from their traditional and modest economic environment. The Bajau are victims of circumstances that are beyond their capacity to intervene.. Thus, living in a marginalized way of life in their current urban destination make them unable to join the mainstream because of their disadvantaged condition- being unskilled, less educated and absence of political empowerment.

In their original abode, men performed the primary productive role in the family by engaging in fishing. Women just played auxiliary roles in the household supporting the husband. However, there is a shift in the role of women in the new urban environment as economic providers in the family to supplement family income. Women, including the children, are pushed into the frontline of working for the family. But despite this structural change, the traditional/reproductive role of women in the family remains the same. Women still play multiple roles, overburdened, yet they possess less power in terms of important decision-making aspects in the family.

The situation is more challenging to the women and children who have to exert extra effort to feed a hungry family. These women and children were exposed to extreme physical and shameful emotional hardships and stress because of the only economically viable thing they know which is begging. The goal for survival becomes their primary aim. Going to school is already a luxury to children who are hard-pressed by difficult family circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Research

1. An impact study may be conducted to assess the level of commitment and participation of the Bajau residents in Tambacan to the intervention programs introduced in the community. This study is significant to identify the sensitivity of these projects to the needs of the clients.
2. There are emerging social problems in the Bajau settlement in Tambacan. It is significant to know the proliferation of these problems and do these problems affect the lives of the Bajau.
3. A study may be conducted to examine the success stories of Bajau urban migrants who are able to rise above their deplorable conditions.

For Development Intervention

1. The committee on indigenous people in the Sangguniang Panlungsod must focus on poverty alleviation/livelihood programs for the Bajau in Tambacan.
2. The City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) of Iligan City must identify Bajau residents in Tambacan who will qualify for the CCT Program of the government or Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to make a difference in their lives.

3. Sanitation drive for the Bajau must be implemented on regular basis to develop their cleanliness and sanitation awareness. Water and community toilets must be provided to improve the sanitation quality in the settlement.
4. Sponsoring scholarships for the Bajau children enrolled in the formal school assures increased and sustained enrolment rates of these children. Food incentives given to the enrolled children will attract more school age children to enroll in formal school.
5. Getting Bajau mothers and children off the streets require a long-term and holistic process which can be facilitated by guaranteeing them steady source of income and educational opportunities.
6. Introduce the importance of responsible parenthood, family planning and gender sensitivity trainings to the residents.
7. With the proliferation of other social problems in the area related to drugs and ethnic bickering, police visibility post may be installed near the settlement..

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ORDER IN PARADOX: an anthropological enquire on spirit possession cults

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Abstract

Possession, as the belief that a spiritual or a para-human entity entered our body, is presented in many civilizations, constituting a traditional *logos/τόπος* of anthropological research. As suggested by the original Greek etymon, enthusiasm (ἐνθουσιάζω) gives us inspiration (ἐνθουσιασμός), a condition of physical and psychic enlightenment. The status of feeling an alterity (The Greek word θεός/theos means both a god or a powerful human) within one own self, was thought to confer magic or thaumaturgic powers, opening a path to super-mundane realities. Traditionally regarded only as *locus commune* of (a-scientific) ground, it is also present in modern societies, where the proliferation of cults attests its actability and adaptability (Spector, 2002; Bellah, 1991; Maslow, 1964; Goodman, 1988). The “vitality” of entrancement and its traducibility, as the ability to perforate cognitional walls, are products of a rationality that exposes the errantry of evolutionism, the long acclaimed credo that interpreted religious and rituals settings as elements of a past won by an evolution of rationality. Nowadays, we assist the rising of new forms of ceremonies in a spiritual marketplace (Roof, 2001) whence the interplay of syncretism and ethnic retention redesign the dichotomy laity-spirituality (Gans, 1997).

Keywords: rituals, knowledge, possession, cultural anthropology, modernity

INTRODUCTION

Among the most spectacular and fascinating events that an ethnologist can assist and partake with, there are probably spirit-possession rites and trance cults. Numerous works in the last year have considered them in urban and emigrational settings: among many it is worth noticing Gibbal (1982), Sharp (1993) and Somer (1998). Expressed in altered or euphoric states of consciousness (public or private), they evoke a domain with a plurality of meanings, whose ineffability embarrasses the outsider who looks at it. In fact, traditional Western particularistic interpretative accounts on aesthetic, rhetoric, dramaturgic and pathologic dispositive are often inadequate, inducing misunderstandings while limiting the accuracy of a generalizable definition (Cohen, 2008, p. 73). As emphasized by Bachelard (1958), the rites are not located in homorganic and monotonous dimensions but, on the contrary, in loci full of qualities. Henceforth, it is needed a summa of discourses built on an epistemological field that makes possible simultaneous descriptions on a game of differences and similitudes.

Methodology

The following article critically discusses spirit-possession, in the light of deep epistemological and ethical changes happened in our contemporaneity. Confronting classic monographies and modern theories, it conjugates on a transversal perspective, social and psychological inquiries. Building from the concept of constructionism (dating back to Emil Durkheim) and a long standing body of ethnological literature, the author outlines a theoretical model of the dialectic relationship occurring between spirit-possession rites and cultures. Therefore, it is presented to the reader what can be considered an anthropological excursus on particular body techniques that far from being extinct are still pervasive in many modern settings, defining self and social symbolism.

Results

Ambiguous by nature, the phenomenon keeps eluding a satisficing and coherent description. It belongs to a liminal area where beliefs and rituals are intertwined with mental mechanisms, that are yet to be clearly understood. Known to go back to a remote antiquity where it was used as mechanism to approach supernatural realities on a political discursive regime, it still constitutes a (trans-) cultural response to existential problems. Between theatre and anthropology, mimetic mechanisms, as the attribution of imaginary characteristics to Otherness, constitute dynamics whose main dispositive is the formation of cultural resources. The representation of Otherness in action, changes individuals into altars, divinities and emblematic figures in which, by semantic disguise or masquerade, terror, parody and sadness merge. Importantly, the aesthetic drama unfolded in the rite activates symbolic permutations and discusses hierarchies (Kapferer, 1979), in an interplay of actors and socially invisible forces. Membership of the cult balances possible social shrinkages and inequalities, counteracting normal push pull factors, as suggested by Costantinides (1985). The Spirit possession idiom reminds us the importance of recouping a more complete vision of personhood (Douglas, 197), to create an episteme conscious of human existence, as a summa of body, soma and polis (Geertz, 1962). Besides, we cannot forget that in numerous culture, the magic-mythological sphere includes the notion itself of identity, thus opening human agencies to religious and sacred dimensions.

THE RITUAL COMEDY OF POSSESSION

In 1955, anthropologist Alfred Metraux (1902–1963) while studying Haitian ceremonies, noted dramatic elements present in the behavior of tranced individuals and their semblance of theatrical representations. Performances that underlined an intense communicative rapport between the subject and the audience, in a mixture of sublime and ridicule. The supplicants were understood to perform a grotesque pantomime, in which the corporality of their suffering recalled the ancient Greek τέμενος (temenos), the sacred space (altar, ground or theatre) where divinities acted (Tedlock, 1992, p. 257), speaking to humanity.

An extraordinary spectacle made possible by a mimetic and metaphorical apparatus that accurately reproduced the symptoms of an emotional crisis, using cognitional restructuring to dissolve the hermeneutic alternative between sincerity and fiction. Implied here, it is a dramaturgic/aesthetic structure that while demythologizing the cult, it does not emasculate the poignancy of its appeal (Metraux, 1973, p. 102). From antiquity to present, the ritual is characterized by an altered state of consciousness and frightening experiences of cathartic breakdown, through *a communally shared self-discipline to remain in a place that suspend reality*” (Kokken, 2015, p. 135)

Haitian function has social value and the re-production is controlled by a corpus of political speeches and narratives that sustain the performative power of the act itself. Importantly, its reducibility as political event does not wring incoherence out of it. In fact, the sacred theater and the space-temporal contour of its mimetic mechanism (polysemic and multi-referential) are the arenas of substantial modification on social ecologies, enhancing or depressing the quasi-stationary inter-group equilibrium. The transformational process, entangled with a permeability to otherness, deeply marked biographies, re-articulating personal space and the relationship with cultural order (Lambek, 1998, p. 89).

MOVING BEYOND WESTERN COGITO

Spirit-possession cores a symbolic liquidity that challenges the rigidity of conceptualizations and schemes, making it a not easy subject to investigate. Its autonomy lays upon an almost absolute semantic autarchy, a condition that subtly frames social construction with the carnal crudeness of the acting. Importantly, the phenomonic contiguity amidst dissociation and trance, forms an epistemological area where diagnostic misinterpretations occur frequently, due to the persistence of heteroclitic manifestations.

For Ernesto de Martino and Edmond Ortigues (1960), pathologizing *-emic* representations with arbitral transpositions of (medical) concepts gives origin to wronged socio-cognitive considerations that lose sight of symbolic concatenations of events (Ortigues, 1984, p. 237). A distortion that subdues to Western jargon, extraneous religious lexemes in what Oliver de Sardan (1994) considered a *surinterpretation* (political or therapeutic). Consequentially, methodological fallacies that supersede the reciprocal inherency of self and context, frame etiological and gnoseological abstractions that cannot embrace the infinitude of cultural pluralism.

Like other powerful symbolic devices, the praxis casts on both subjects and spectators, an emotional vertigo that blurs reality and narration, by a hybridization of acting and living. The liturgy is a locus tremendous, with a performativity that on an equal footing with the experiential Gestalt therapy, forces subjects to face a plurality of visions, voices and questions. In specific narrative formulae, we witness an aesthetic of transcendence where the dimension of suffering is part of continuous dialogue between society and personhood.

In Frobenius’s *Die Masken und Geheimbünde Afrikas* (1898), it is evinced that, aside ritual time and its symbolic absconding, the ceremonial apparatus casts a shadow over the psychological

makeup of day-life performances, impregnating and wrapping existences. Inferred here, it is an irreversible *continuum* and a masquerade that do not permit escape points, readjusting (on an ontological level), performers into living memorials of an unsolvable ritual debt. Needless to say, the *mise en scene*, presents a unique opportunity for inquiries on impersonation and derangement, moved by memo-technic and mimetic vectors. A gnosis that, in the light of a shareability of contents, frees border-line climacteric occurrences from pathological connotations. From the points of view of comparative ethnological studies, the cognitive restructuring and personality reorganization belongs to a rhetoric of transformation common in healing rituals (as psychological management of collectively held repressed emotions and distress).

BIJAGOS

Apropos possession, in Africa, spirit mediumship (like witchcraft) is no archaic past but rather an interpretation of modernity, investing local performances with a characteristic cultural idiom. *Prima facie*, with the apparent backtracking of a divine authority, the power posited in some individuals generate political singularities: persons whose appurtenance to an a-cognitional realm, grants special authority. As Schirripa observed (1970), the entrenchment of the supernatural in everydayness is experienced as a complex form of knowledge, inheritable and transmittable, offering impetus for (public) participation (Margaret Rausch, 2000: 201). In the Western world, the development of Illumistic rationalism (directly from the empiricism of John Lock, Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton) and the pragmatic exaltation of causal reasoning, opened the doors to (restricted) field of studies centered only on realities scientifically approachable, leaving behind more supra-rational and emotional ways of comprehension. African rites cross the limits of object-relations to recoup in a vortex of creative energy the primordial essence of things. Coming up to the George Berkeley' maxim "*esse est percipi*", the reality is envisioned as defined by sensations, hence the *ict at nunc* of any instinctual moment, is considered to represent the true interpretational act experienced by men. On a semiotic framework, the constitutive role of otherness as foundational dimension of the Self, instead of construing reality upon discrete stable representational elements, it frames it on a cascade of patterns reciprocally related (Salvatore, 2013, p. 24). Myths and stories maintains the participatory aspects of identity, pooled and shared in a socially invested ritual environment. Contingent to the mutability of the present, they are not sclerotized in fixed formulations but modeled by irregular twists that can fail *ex ante* expectations. The product of artistic realization becomes an intimate and sensible imaginative derivate of mankind: because if matters does not exist *per se*, what the eyes see is an objectification of thoughts, a transubstantiation of substances.

The above undifferentiated totality is context-container of Bijagos theology and political thought. Bijagos are an ethnic group of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, dwelling in the vast remoteness of the sub-tropical national archipelagos (mostly in Bubaque), notorious for having one of the most intriguing practices described in the anthropological literature. Whereas elsewhere, spiritual communion is used mostly within a therapeutic framework, among them, it serves primarily the collective construction of adulthood and motherhood. Interestingly, it is a non-pathological performance put on scene by female individuals, acting in unison, to gain social recognizance. In this matriarchal tribe, the incorporation/reincarnation symbolically structures a process in which possessors (shadows of defunct men) are turned into ancestors (through the female body). Furthermore, the communal folk-religious practice while permitting restless souls to find peace, enables women to fulfill their primary role as mothers, directly operating on their genre and status. The tribe walks in a sacralized universe whence celestial beings, physically partake with public and private human activities. A *forma mentis* that relates nature to a magic world, leading

them to be if not timorous (ceremonies and rites of passages articulate communal wellbeing), at least superstitious toward the invisible realm. Buried under the deposits of time, it is a history of supra-rational understanding of reality and animistic tendencies (wrongly considered a child-like anthropological status) that shown a world where animals and spirits can be judged as if they were human outfits with will and moral responsibility (Oesterdiekhoff, 2011, p. 10)

LOST CHILDREN

To look at the cultural schema as a dilemma of knowing, means to acknowledge the presence of an *actio* ambivalent and ambiguous, enlaced with ethical and phenomenological trespassing. A game of mirrors that leads us to question our anthropological consciousness and to venture, but only on tiptoes, in the realm of improvability.

Contemporary scholars have by necessity, become aware and sensitive to the necessity of enlarging the discussion of relations between spirits and human beings, incorporating conditions of existence that usually fall outside classic definitions of possession, shamanism and mediumship. Alongside this novel patterning, it worth a mention the case of Nigerian Igbo people and their belief in reincarnation of revenge-driven souls of children (Onyekwere, 1990). The returning infants are considered cursed, doomed to endless cycles of birth and death, to honor a pact contracted with malevolent entities. To grasp more fully this dynamic, as construed in Igbo cosmogony, the preternatural companionship coaxes individuals, to accept (pre-natal) agreements/allegiances (life covenant pacts) and then causing premature death (skewing natural balance). Some children are believed to be communed with land or water spirits, born to torment their parents (Nwosu, 2010) by bouts of illness. From this point of view, existential discomfiture in bambini is interpreted as the presence of spectral divinities acting upon their bodies. While modernization has partially altered dogmas, modifying praxes and pushing the public domain into a *spatio*-temporally neutral model, a good number of Nigerian people are still influenced by historical animist heritages. The autochthon credos adapted to the new introduced conceptual horizon in a new aesthetically inspired ethos that conjugates Western elements and African memories, in a nonsynchronous development. From villages, sorcery moved to the cities, counting students, doctors and businessmen as pious followers. Having acknowledged the performativity of these cultural movements, it is not scholarly acceptable to perceive the narratives of the invisible as products of a (past) irrationality but to consider them as coherent systems of meaning with a policies governing logic. Thence, not backward cultural steps but dynamic/conflictual interpretations and re-adjustments of modernity¹.

MAMI WATA

Σειρήνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξειαι, αἶ ῥά τε πάντας
ἀνθρώπους θέλγουσιν, ὅτις σφεας εἰσαφίκηται.
ὅς τις ἀϊδρεῖη πελάση καὶ φθόγγον ἀκούση
Σειρήνων, τῶ δ' οὐ τι γυνή καὶ νήπια τέκνα
οἴκαδε νοστήσαντι παρίσταται οὐδὲ γάννυνται,
ἀλλὰ τε Σειρήνες λιγυρῆ θέλγουσιν ἀοιδῆ,
ἦμεναι ἐν λειμῶνι· πολὺς δ' ἄμφ' ὀστεόφιν θίς
ἀνδρῶν πυθομένων, περὶ δὲ ῥινοὶ μινύθουσιν²

¹ In that regard, Jean Comaroff (2004) brought forward the example of magistrates who faced criminal cases with displays of mystical beliefs, without belittling the subject or shrouding it in prejudice (Dickson, 2014, p. 9)

² Odyssey XII, 39-46. Translation from Old Greek: "You will first face the sirens that bewitch all the men who dare to confront them. The man who ignores their powers will be lost and never return back home, because they beguile him with their beautiful voice. They are sitting in a meadow, surrounded by bones and skins of men" (Murray, 1995)

Mami Wata (also mentioned as Dona fish) and her mermaid-like daughters are other recurrent motifs in popular African narratives and music (Isichei, 2002). They are verbally and iconically presented as luring (hideous) creatures that disdains maternity, marriages and any other form of human kinship. The cult is community-based and de-localized, being it present in many geographical areas of the African Atlantic world, as the schema proposed by Werbner and Pennacini (1998), indicated. The territorial trespassing of alterity is made more clamant by iconographic descriptions of a woman with fair skin and Indo-European traits (Caucasian and not Negroid). In oral testimonies, *Mami Wata* and the Nigerian *Ogbanje*, are polyformic entities: hybrid creatures (the hindquarters of *Mami Wata* are the ones of a fish or a snake) whose transient nature makes them more than specters but less than humans, lacked neither kin nor history. They belong to a third genre, outside Western comprehension that at any tentative to cognitively grasp its reconditeness, it slips through the fingers, leaving the observer dismayed. The data that, in the mechanism of possession, posits problems is not the genre binary (dichotomy duality) of femininity and masculinity (that can always be re-conceptualized) and never the less the presumptuousness of a historical metaphorical vicinity of womanhood to nature but, generally, any relations between humanity and spirituality. It is the creation of a self-contradictory instances (the siren or the enchanted individual) that spawns (for us) logical incongruences. Incomplete individuals, whose bodies or souls, partially belong to a not human dimension, to a space not domesticated by rationality and for that, uncontrollable.

Judy Rosenthal (1998, p. 166), noted that, during the process of spirit indwelling, when a divinity materialized, (con)fusing itself with the person, semantic distinctions between metaphor and metonymy are generally inapt to describe the metousiosis, being placed in a borderland of “between(s)”.

There are various scholarly explanations of the cults, from a psychopathological impromptu that reads them as synonymic of disturbed parental relations, to sociological perspectives that found in their cores, unsolved aspirations. Especially the figure of *Mami Wata*, call our attention to, the underlying symbolic importance given to whiteness, as a matrix of (coveted) power and privilege. The ubiquitous presence and the versatility of its imago, make it a global chimera: metaphor of consumerism and objectivisation of womanhood. Gore and Newedomsky (1997) connected its genesis to far-reaching social practices that cannot be easily reduced to uniformity of (analytical) judgement, due to fragmentariness and multifaceted construction, reflecting local declinations and practices.

In Africa, the socio-economic discrepancies created by a superimposed Western cultures are embodied in its ontological ambiguity. A siren that in a post-colonial continent, emerges in every context: from religious areas to artistic environments. *De facto*, it is more important as metonymic representation of a progressive semantic/cognitive shifting than for phenomenological and iconoclast characterizations³.

³ *Mami Wata* should not be considered a contested expression of modern femininity but more broadly, the (dialogic) confrontation of traditional values with modernity. Noticeably, in Benin, it has been chosen as positive eidolon for campaigns against trafficking of children. It is a case of great anthropological interest because its traditional negative attributions are reversed. Being this deity of mixed African and Caucasian ancestry, usually portrayed in liaison with capitalism, it comes as surprise a reconfiguration/restaging of the mytheme, without harmful attributes. A paradox that transforms the old deceiver into an honest protector who guards children

VODU

In Guinea Bissau and Haiti, *vodu* are entities of an invisible world, idolatrized in many national ceremonies (Stein, 2010). Literature and cinema have nourished legends that only recently have left space for more meaningful ethnological insights. *Vodu* worship is reserved to groups of devotees who follow the charismatic authority of a diviner, in a *humfo* (literally, house of mystery). The priest is called *hungan*, the priestess, *mambo*; together they belong to a non-hierarchical syncretic apparatus that articulates and practices sacred time and space. The collegiality of the divining framework (as a public forum) is normative in spiritual agencies. Spirit possession thus provides a method of carving up religious domains, to foster a cultural amalgam covering all social directions.

In the transfer of knowledge and power, following Sh. Walker (1978), we can evict two different types of possessorship:

- ✓ In the first one, the subject is in a hypnotic-somnambulistic state, obeying his/her possessors *perinde ac cadaver*. In this liturgical theatre, actors are marionettes, reproducing what can be defined as a hysteric attack. Tranced individuals give the impression of a loss in body control/awareness. A tempo broken by consequential muscular spasms and tremors. Sometimes, there are physical preludes to the gravity of the play, hints that makes the collapse foreseeable; other times the condition cannot be predicted. Copious sweating and distorted face expressions poignantly contribute to the drama. The modalities of the crises depend on the qualities of the inviable foe (s).
- ✓ The second one is a ritual comedy, where persons play a role without psychological stressors. It consists in an “*acting out*” of emotional pulses, via staged provocations. The Self disappears to the point of making the audience believe that the (acting) body has been captured and controlled by an alien will, albeit the cognitional distortion is mostly inducted by hypnotic dances and particular chants.

The Parousia (arrival) is a syncretic practice, involving an intermingling of religious images. Synthesis and renovations of sacred phenomena, offer the audience, spirits that share overlaps in agency with mythemes of different pantheons and mythologies. The permutation, that makes “*the exotic familiar and the familiar exotic*” (Eric James Montgomery, 2016:18) pervades the eve of ascension, where foreign archetypal structures and liturgical elements are paired with local chants, in a sort of ethnographical montage. The occupancy is the moment that enshrines the highest point of intimacy in the mundane-godly relationship but the immanence of their doings permeates entirely the archeus (*archaeus*, a life-force) of those who submit themselves (to have their personas expanded or to negotiate solutions of domestic problems).

TRANSLATING THE DEVIL

Modern psychiatric science (psycho-anthropological perspective) can be used to clarify the presumptuousness of spirit/demonic hold. Transcendental philosophies and religious doctrines pose the presence of intruding spirits (ontologically and ethnically aliens) as part of their credo, decoding an etiological context of hallucinosis and impairments of consciousness as locus of divine (or supernatural) action. A majored physical strength (Mark 5:4), tremors, heteroglossia (Acts 16:16-17) and aversion for sacred tokens are some of the symptoms that Christian theology considers possible signs of bedevilment. A spectrum of experiences felt particularly in South European and American countries (Wilkinson, 2015; Colby, 1996) where, shrouded in suspicion or certitude, thousands of people turn to religious services to have their lives bettered and spirits, cured⁴.

Foreshadowed here is an elaborated form of knowledge that explores personhood (and its pathologies) through a (magic-)symbolic repertoire that contests rational explanatory models of medical literature, providing alternative readings of mental derangement.

In Christendom, demons⁵ belong to a pre-evangelical tradition, a cultural scheme that falls outside the *mysterium fidei*/τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως (Vulgate, Timothy 3:9). Absorbed inside the Patristics/Patrology with evident proto-Christian mythical residuals, it was successively elaborated by Medieval catechistic and homiletic traditions. The existence of angelic or demonic agency, the Aristotelian “*occult qualities*”, are present throughout history (Brian P. Levack, 2001), in contiguity with more strictly *upo nomon* (under the law) positions. Like African Spiritism, the Judeo-Christian culture is not a homogenous field of meaning, showing indeed a tapestry of thoughts and attitudes. Nowadays, the dilemma of this observance can be found in the urban micro-cosmos in a variety of patterns, juxtaposed from various folklores: it is not objectified or crystalized but transcribed in many different words (Oscar Skarsaune, 2000). A supposed product of lingering irrationality (even occasionally merging with collective derangement) or superstition, that against the tenacious epistemology of biological reductionism, can still be traced in many households. *Miracula* (miracles) and *mira* (wonders) of a pre-modern Thomistic natural philosophy are part of a multi-faceted modernity where physicians co-live with specialized priests trained to fight demons and occult worshippers. Despite the thought-provoking perspective, the ἐξορκισμός (exorcism) narratives need to be approached as documentation based-decisions to support a specific category of disease, having as a frame of reference the acting of paranormal forces. In a struggle between self-determination, medicine and what Latin writer Tertullian considered *Daemone agi* (from Latin: demoniacal action), the globalization discourse presents itself as a creolization of practices, methodological enquiries, ontological stances and results, in a cultural push-and-pull.

Over the past few years, the notion of dissociation, considered in relation with the psychic mechanisms of trance has become the subject of many anthropological and psychiatric investigations.

⁴ Italy has seen a boom in exoteric practices and Esotericism, as affirmed by psychiatrist Valter Cascioli, spokesperson of the Roman Catholic AIE (2015)

⁵Against the non-critical δόξα/doxa, social scientists, in analyzing Christian allegiances and social entzauberung (detachment/disenchantment) underline the presence of a Curial νόμος /nomos (law) that skeptically embrace popular beliefs: an episteme that divides the (true/official) doctrine of the Church from from lay-believers

CONCLUSION

Presently, the world can be seen as conditioned by disparaging pressures that break forth from Globalization and cultural encounters. The unpredictable creativity of human acting originates a dimension in which gather a polyhydic and complex inheritance of narratives, identities and memories. It a borderless phenomenon that stretches from the ancient remoteness of African villages to our cities. In point of fact, for decades' *topos* of anthropological investigations in "traditional" societies, it does not lose meaningfulness in Europe and America, where migration fluxes are re-defying the religious horizon, forming spurious variabilities.

Recurring to different theoretical perspectives, my work aimed to highlight the symbolic richness and ambiguity of a cultural situs close to psychology, anthropology and dramaturgy, having the attributes of a heterotopia.

Unlike utopias, imaginary lands of an an irretrievable past, it has true concreteness as a space of exception, on a dimension of inquietude and otherness, emerged from a rupture with normative reality. It unsettles the spectator, because it weakens the semantic net that holds words and things together. If a utopia is consolatory, spirit possession will be marked by misery.

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Forms of Sexual Intimacy, Factors and Health Risks: The Case of Selected Teenagers in Iligan City, Philippines

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Abstract

This study intends to examine the sexual behavior of 30 teenagers living in 3 selected barangays in Iligan City. The objectives of the study are to describe the forms of sexual intimacy (permissible and actual experiences) of the respondents during acquaintance and dating stages, factors responsible for their sexual behavior and health issues/risks they encountered. The findings indicate that the respondents are conservative during acquaintance stage but become permissive when they are already steadies where they allowed intimate sexual experiences to happen. Moreover, males have the proclivity to take sexual advances even during acquaintance period. The study also found out some critical factors that account for their sexual behavior, namely: influence of mass media and technology, socio-economic factor, and influence of friends. Furthermore, since the respondents predominantly use unprotected sex, they faced issues like contracting sexually transmitted disease, early pregnancy and abortion which have serious health implications.

Keywords: sexual behavior, sexual intimacy, unprotected sex, sexually transmitted disease

INTRODUCTION

Sexuality is often a vital aspect of teenager's lives. Adolescents are oftentimes characterized as risk-takers and pleasure-seekers with sex, as one of the array of risky behaviors which they engage in. The increasing prevalence sexual practices among the young are associated with a host of deleterious consequences which may severely compromise their health, education, economic situation and general wellbeing (De Silva, 1998).

In addition, early entrance into family life as a result of teen pregnancy can have serious implications such as early termination of formal education and limited employment opportunities as well as greater financial difficulties and marital conflict. Young unmarried mothers also face social stigmas that can have harmful psychological and social impact (Family Health, International, n.d.). Unprotected sex and sex with either casual partners, commercial sex workers or multiple are risk markers for exposure and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV-AIDS. Premarital sex is generally viewed as socially unacceptable and undermines traditional moral values which may be psychologically damaging to young people especially in a Catholic country such as the Philippines (East-West Center, 2002; Werner-Wilson, 1998).

Data from Young Adult Fertility Survey (YAFS 4) indicate that 32 percent of young Filipinos between the ages of 15 to 24 have had sex before marriage. This shows a significant increase from 17.8 percent in 1994 and 23.2 percent in 2002. By age groups, more of those in the 20-24 age group had sex before marriage (54 percent) than those aged 15-19 (17 percent). There is no escaping the conclusion that despite people's insistence that young people should not be educated on sexuality matters because they are, well, young and supposed to be innocent, more and more of them are having premarital sex (PMS) anyway.

Some of the local studies related to youth sexuality in Iligan City (Lumakin et al. 2009; Bacalso et al. 1998) identified the factors responsible for early sexual engagement which included unprotected sex, irresponsible sexual behavior, peer pressure, parental control, money, and seeking attention. Since no study has been done to establish the forms of sexual intimacy (permissible and actual experiences) are allowed during acquaintance and dating stages as well as the factors that may shape the sexual behavior of teenagers like familial structure, religiosity and control of parents, the researchers focus their attention on these aspects.

Statement of the Problem

This study intends to examine the forms of sexual intimacy experienced by the selected teenagers in Iligan City particularly in Barangay Tambacan, Santiago and Saray. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the familial structure of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Living arrangement
 - b. Parenting style
 - c. Family composition
2. What forms of sexual intimacy is permissible by the respondents in the following stages of courtship/relationship:
 - a. Acquaintance
 - b. Dating/Wooing
 - c. Going steady

3. What is the form of sexual intimacy experienced by the selected teenagers in the different stages of courtship, namely:
 - a. Acquaintance
 - b. Dating/Wooing
 - c. Going steady
4. Is there congruence between the permissible sexual intimacy and the actual sexual experiences of the respondents?
5. Are there differences among male and female respondents on the sexual intimacy permissible and their sexual experiences during stages of courtship?
6. What factors influence the sexual intimacy of the respondents?
 - a. Family factors
 - b. Social factors
 - c. Influence of mass media
7. What reproductive health issues/health risks do they experience in relation to their sexual intimacy?

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The family is the basic unit in a society and it performs its function to run a system as a whole. The family setting is the first social group to which the individual is exposed and it is the earliest and longest experience in living. Because of this, the experiences in the family setting make a lasting impression on each individual. However, modernization, industrialization, and urbanization brought rapid changes in social and economic structures and altered the cultural environment of the adolescent. Parents on the other hand, have become more permissive and liberal with their children who allow their children to reason out and express themselves, to raise questions, think for themselves, and plan their own future. Thus the children today enjoy more freedom from parental control (Medina, 1991).

Symbolic interaction theory presents a way which an individual interprets and gives meaning to the world through interaction with other people. Sexual behavior being not different with all human behavior has a certain symbolic value to it as well. Men and women use symbols and exist in a world meaning created by those symbols. Sexual behavior is associated with a variety of activities, each with different meanings, including but not limited to having children, attaining physical pleasure, having fun, creating intimacy, achieving spirituality and exerting power (Laumann et al., 1994). The symbolic meanings associated with sexuality affect how they think about themselves, how they relate to others, and how others think and relate to them.

Another theory that tests the correlation of illicit sexual behaviors with crime is the self-control theory which measures one's self-control. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), all deviance is subsumed under self-control theory and that individuals who commit any one deviant act will tend to commit other deviant acts as well. Their theory is a "general theory" and predicts all forms of deviance whereby low self-control is the beginning of illicit sexual behaviors and crime. These analyses report illicit sexual behaviors are positively correlated with criminal behaviors providing support for Self-Control Theory.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design employing survey method. There were thirty (30) samples included in this study obtained using snowball sampling in which 10 respondents were chosen from each of the following barangays: Brgy. Tambacan, Brgy. Santiago, and Brgy. Saray. The ten respondents chosen from each barangay comprised of 5 male and 5 female teenagers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Ethical considerations were observed in the entire conduct of the study.

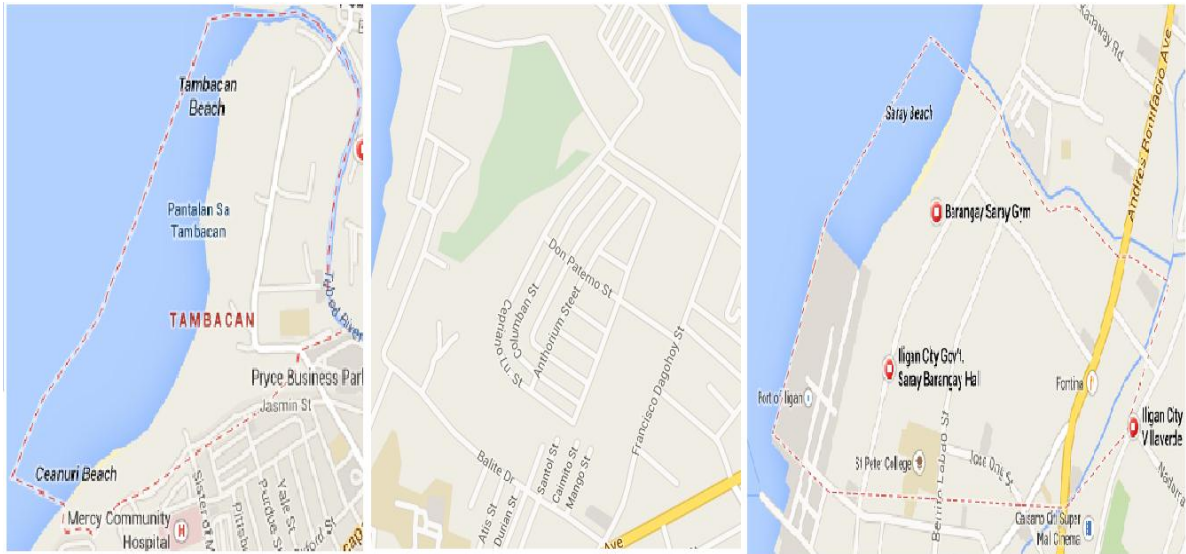


Figure 3.2 Map of Brgy. Tambacan, Santiago and Saray.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Looking at the respondents' personal information, it was gathered that their mean age is 18 years old and their education attainment is mostly college level. In terms in number of siblings, the mode is four (4) and the mean number of siblings is 5. They generally live in intact families: their parents are authoritarian and the family composition is nuclear.

In terms of information on sexual relation of the respondents, it was learned that they had their first boyfriends/girlfriends at the age of 14, and as of the time of the study they had five (5) relationships already. Their shortest duration of courtship is Days and the longest duration is Weeks. In the aspect of mode/ manner of courtship, respondents used mainly cell phones to court their partners. They often go on dating during weekends usually at their girlfriends' homes.

Table 1. Summary Table of Selected Variables

Profile of respondents	Average/Mode
Mean Age	18
Education	College Level
Number of Siblings:	5
Familial Structure: they live in intact families, nuclear, and their parents are authoritarian.	
	Average/Mode
Sexual relation of the respondents	
Age when having first bf/gf	14
Number of Past relationships	5
Shortest courtship	Days
Longest courtship	Weeks
Mode of Courtship	Use of mobile phones

Knowledge about Sex

Female respondents' have little knowledge concerning sex. In general, they define sex as normal thing to do and its basically part of the relationship. They learned about it through their friends. How about their feeling after doing sex? It was gathered that they felt great and some got nervous after having sex.

Comparing Permissible Behavior versus Actual Sexual Experiences of Respondents

This portion presents data comparing responses of the respondents as to what behaviors are considered permissible versus their actual sexual experiences in the various stages of courtship.

Acquaintance Stage

During the acquaintance stage, these were the experiences of the respondents: the males experienced no physical contact (4 cases), holding hands (5 cases), hugging (2 cases) and kissing (2 cases). These were also the experiences of the females: no physical contact (6 cases), holding hands (4 cases), hugging (2 cases) and kissing (3 cases). The modal behavior for males is hugging while for the females, it is the absence of physical contact but holding hands and kissing also happened.

Permissible sexual behavior is culturally determined and part of the cognitive structure of the person while actual sexual experiences of the male and female respondents was defined by situational circumstances. Both aspects manifested in different shades when the data are compared (see Table 2). Conservatism tends to prevail in the permissible sexual behavior during acquaintance in both male and female respondents as the mode suggests that 10 in 15 males and 13 in 15 females said that no physical contact should happen between the opposite sexes at this encounter. However, males tend to make sexual advances by exploring on other forms of sexual intimacy at this stage.

Dating/wooing Stage

Under permissible behavior during dating stage, the mode is hugging for the males (5 cases) and holding hands for females (5 cases). The males also mentioned holding hands (4 cases) and kissing (4 cases). The females, on the other hand, allowed hugging (4 cases) kissing (2 cases) and even sex (2 cases).

With respect to their actual sexual experience, there seems to be congruence with what they considered permissible and their actual experiences. The males were able to hold hands (5 cases), hug (4 cases) and kiss (3 cases) their partner. On the other hand, the females experienced kissing (4 cases), holding hands (4 cases), and hugging (3 cases).

Going Steady Stage

More sexual permissiveness is noted among male and female respondents at this stage. In fact more females believed that petting is allowed (mode: 6) and males also believe so (mode: 4 cases). The males permit holding hands (3 cases), hugging (3 cases), and kissing (3 cases) at this stage. On the other hand, the females allow sexual intercourse (3 cases), hugging hands (3 cases) and holding hands (2 cases) at this stage.

Interestingly, the actual sexual experiences of respondents show the normal occurrence of sexual intercourse for both male and female respondents which obtain a similar mode of 5 cases. They also admitted to have done kissing and petting with their partners (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary Table Comparing Permissible Behavior versus Actual Sexual Experiences of Respondents

Stages of courtship	Permissible Behavior		Actual Sexual Experiences	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Acquaintance				
*No physical contact	10	13	4	6
*Holding hands				
*Hugging	1	2	5	4
*Kissing	1		2	2
*Petting	1		2	3
*Sexual intercourse	1		1	
	1		1	
TOTAL	15	15	15	15
Dating/wooing	Permissible Male	Permissible Female	Actual Male	Actual Female
*No physical contact	1	1	1	3
*Holding hands				
*Hugging	4	5	5	4
*Kissing	5	4	4	3
*Petting	4	2	3	4
*Sexual intercourse		1	1	1
	1	2	1	
TOTAL	15	15	15	15

Going steady	Permissible Male	Permissible Female	Actual Male	Actual Female
*No physical contact	1			1
*Holding hands				
*Hugging	3	2	1	1
*Kissing	3	3	2	1
*Petting	3	1	5	4
*Sexual intercourse	4	6	3	2
	1	3	5	5
TOTAL	15	15	15	15

Legend ()- only inferred/a hypothetical stage which might not be the actual experience of the respondents*

Age at First Sexual Encounter

The data in table 3 below present the age when the respondents had their first sexual experiences with their partners. For the male respondents, the mode and mean is at the age of 17. For the females, the mean and mode is 16. The others had their first sexual intercourse when they were younger; 14 years old (2 cases each for males and females) and 15 years old (3 cases each for males and females). Among the females, the trend is bimodal: having sex when they were 16 (4 cases) and 18 years old (3 cases). However, a female respondent lost her virginity when she was 12 years old. Overall, initiation to sexual activity is older among males and younger among females based on the mean results.

The age at which teenagers begin to engage in sexual activity is a critical stage because early onset of sexual activity is associated with higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), teen pregnancy, depression, suicide, and other adverse consequences (Kelly 2008).

Table 3. Age at First Sexual Encounter

Age	Frequency		Percent
	Male	Female	
12		1	1 (3.3%)
14	2	2	4 (13.3%)
15	2	1	3(6.7%)
16	3	4	7 (23.3%)
17	5	2	7 (23.3%)
18	1	3	4 (13.3%)
19	2	2	4(13.3%)
Total	15	15	30(100%)
Mean	17	16	

Factors that Account for the Respondents' Sexual Behavior

This portion discusses the factors that account for the respondent's sexual behavior: the influence of friends, parental control, and influence of mass media, and religiosity.

Table 4 presents the data on the influence of friends in their sexual experiences. As shown in the table, the respondents were told by friends that sexual experience with the partner is not a big deal (mean: 2.03: SD .809); their friends have already an experience on sex (mean: 2.30: SD .988) or very open about discussion on sex (mean: 2.07: SD 1.015). These are the statements which indicated the general agreement of the respondents which also show lower degree of variability based on the standard deviations.

Table 4. Influence of Friends (Mean Distribution)

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Some of my friends are really sexually liberated.	2.63	1.159
2. Most of my friends have already experience on sex.	2.30	.988
3. My friends are very open when we're talking about sex.	2.07	1.015
4. My friends keep on telling me that it's not a big deal having sex with your partner.	2.03	.809
5. My friends discuss their sexual experience with me.	2.40	1.248
Overall mean	2.28	

Teenagers can learn not only from their parents but also from other means. Bandura's observational theory states that a person may learn to perform behavior or actions which are openly displayed in the magazines, movie, etc. because of curiosity without realizing the later consequences (Miller and Sion, 1971:75).

Table 5 presents the data on the factors that influence the respondents to engage in premarital sex. As shown in the table, 43.3% (13 cases) were influenced by their friends. It is followed by 26.7 % (8 cases) who watch pornographic sites and magazines, 13.3 % (4 respondents) were forced by social pressure or referred to as masculinity contest, and the same percent (13.3 %: 4 cases) are drawn by curiosity.

Table 5. Factors that Influence the Respondents into Engagement in Premarital Sex

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Watching Pornographic sites & magazines	8	26.7%
Influence of peers (friends. Relatives)	13	43.3%
Peer pressure	4	13.3%
Curiosity	4	13.3%
No answer	1	3.3%
Total	30	100%

Parental Control

Table 6 presents the parental control as a factor in exposing/averting to do sexual acts. The general trend shown by the data is the low agreement among the respondents that ($\bar{X} = 1.89$) parental control has a role in refraining/allowing themselves to engage in sex because their parents give them good advice, or they are strict, or they cannot open up with them.

Table 6. Parental Control (Mean Distribution)

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
1. I live in the same household with my parents.	2.40	1.248
2. My parents are very strict when it comes to premarital sex.	1.77	1.040
3. My parents give a lot of advice especially related to having a boyfriend/girlfriend.	1.83	.874
4. I find it difficult to talk with my parents about things that are important to me.	1.73	.740
5. It's very hard for me to discuss sex-related matters with them.	1.73	1.048
Over all mean	1.89	

Parental control often varies with the amount of education and social standing. Race also contributes to changing premarital sexual norms. Another reason for early sexual activity among adolescents could be modeling some of the adult behavior they observe, despite efforts on the part of parents to maintain privacy and be good role models (Greenberg, 1971).

It is common to understand that adolescence can be a time when teens attempt to reconcile their own desires and needs with the wishes of their parents. While some adolescents get through this period of time without many problems, others tend to experience many negative effects.

Influence of Mass Media

Table 7 presents the mean distribution of the statements that measure the influence of mass media on the respondent's sexual behavior. As shown in the table, the mean scores obtained from the responses of the respondents indicate that they are in high agreement that they view seductive poses on TV (2.73) and that sex phone is pervasive (2.87). The respondents also moderately agree that they got curious about the pornographic materials from the mass media (2.07), receive sex videos from friends (3.20) or have always watched pornographic sites in the internet (3.00).

Table 7. Influence of Mass Media (Mean Distribution)

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
I always watch pornographic sites in the internet.	3.00	1.050
I always got shared sex videos from my friends.	3.20	.961
I watch seductive poses on TV, internet and etc.	2.73	1.015
Sex on the phone is pervasive.	2.87	1.137
I get curious about the pornographic things I see in various media.	2.07	1.015
Over all mean		2.77

Nowadays young people's consumption of traditional forms of mass media, especially of newspapers, has been low and this declined further in 2013. This however, does not necessarily mean that they read less. It could be that they get their news online now.

In study of Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS 4, 2013) indicate the prevalence of internet exposure among the youth. The study showed that 6 in 10 of young people are regular internet users, more than half have social network and email account and 78 percent have mobile phones. On average, they spend 6 hours a week online, some logging in as much as 35 hours of internet use. Younger female youth and those from economically better off regions show higher social media consumption than males, older youth and those coming from poorer regions. This pattern of internet and information technology use translates on how they build relationships. One in three young people, for instance, said that they have friends whom they only met online, while 25 percent have friends whom they met through text and have not seen personally.

Influence of mass media expose the youth to books, magazines and movies that glamorize sex. Changing sex values are also evident on increased consensual unions or "live-in" in the urban areas (Reinando 1981:330).

Religiosity

Table 8 presents the mean distribution of the statements that ask about the factors of the respondent's religiosity in relation to their sexual behavior. As shown, most of the respondents attend religious services (\bar{X} = 2.37). Also there is low agreement among respondents who say that religion really matter to them despite their early sexual engagement. Also, they pray to God always (\bar{X} = 1.97), put God first (\bar{X} = 1.83) and believed that without God they feel nothing (\bar{X} = 1.73). These statements have low mean indicating that religiosity is a weak factor contributing to their sexual engagement. The overall mean of the statements that measure religiosity is 1.96

Table 8. Religiosity (Mean Distribution)

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
My religion matters the most to me.	1.93	.868
I pray to God always.	1.97	.809
I usually attend religious services.	2.37	.928
It's important to put God first before anything else.	1.83	.648
Without God, I am nothing	1.73	.828
Over all mean	1.96	

Summary of Mean Results as the Factors Responsible for the Respondent's Sexual behavior

Table 9 presents the summary of mean distribution of the factors having relevance to the sexual behavior of respondents. As shown in the table, influence of mass media has the highest mean of 2.77, it is followed by influence of friends (2.28) religiosity (1.92) and parental control (1.89).

Table 9. Summary of Mean Results as the Factors Responsible for the Respondent Sexual behavior

Variables	Mean	Interpretation
Influence of friends	2.28	Moderate
Parental Control	1.89	Low
Influence of Mass Media	2.77	Moderate
Religiosity	1.96	Low

The data in the study indicates the applicability of the social learning theory of Bandura wherein people learn by observing others' behavior, attitudes. They learn sexual behavior from others through the behavior or actions of persons openly displayed in the pornographic materials, magazines, movie, etc. The symbolic interaction theory also tends to be depicted in the behavior of the respondents with respect to their tendency to be influenced by peers whom they consider significant especially in their involvement in early premarital sex.

Health Issue/Risk Encountered

This portion presents the respondents idea of reproductive health, their exposure to population health education like issue on reproductive health and the problems they encountered in their engagement with unprotected sex. Also, this portion presents ways done by the respondents to the problems they encountered and advice have they received from the significant others.

Engagement in Unprotected Sex

Table 10 shows the engagement in unprotected sex, out of thirty (30) respondents the highest percentage (56.6%) total of seventeen (17) respondents ten (10) for females and seven (7) males whose answered "yes", and the lowest percentage of 43.3% total of thirteen (13) respondents eight (8) males and five (5) females who's answered "no".

The 2013 Young Adult Fertility Study (YAFS 4) conducted by the Demographic Research & Development Foundation and the University of the Philippines Population Institute shows that 32 percent of young Filipinos between the ages 15 to 24 have had sex before marriage. Of these, 78 percent reported that their first sexual encounter was unprotected: 84 percent among young women and 73 percent among young men. Clearly, what we see here is not only the increasing level of premarital sexual engagement of young people, but that it has also evolved into other forms of sexual activities.

Table 10.Engagement in Unprotected Sex

Response	Frequency		Percent
	Male	Female	
Yes	7	10	17(56.6%)
No	8	5	13(43.3%)
Total	15	15	30 100)

Problems Related to Engagement in Sex

The problem encountered mostly by the respondents is urinary tract infection, genital itchiness, painful urination, teenage pregnancy and abortion. Considering the increase in the number teenage pregnancy. Abortion is the option for a few who are mainly unprepared for motherhood.

Based on the result of the study on the State of the Philippines Population Report (2003), the RH problems of most teenagers are painful urination, pain, itching which are indicative of sexually transmitted diseases and diminished the desire for sex.

Table 11. Problems Encountered in Sexual Engagement

Problems encountered	Frequency		Percent
	Male	Female	
Urinary tract infection		1	1(3.3%)
Genital itchiness	2	2	4(13.3%)
Bleeding		2	2(6.7%)
Painful urination	2		2(6.7%)
STD's	3		3(10.0%)
Teenage pregnancy	5	7	12(40.0%)
Abortion	3	3	6(20.3%)
Total	15	15	30(100%)

Adequacy of Health Education

Table 12 shows the adequacy of health education of respondents. As indicated, 13 said (5males and 8 females) that they had enough information on health education. On the other hand, 10 males and 7 females do not have knowledge on health education at all. However, what is disturbing is the complacency of those who believe that they have adequate information on population education as they are also the ones who use unprotected sex.

Table 12. Adequacy of Population education

Adequacy of health education Themes	Frequency		Percent
	Male	Female	
Enough information	5	8	13(43.3%)
Not enough information	8	4	12(40.0%)
No knowledge about it at all	2	3	5(16.6%)
Total	15	15	30(100%)

CONCLUSION

The familial structure of both male and female respondents is intact and nuclear with parents who are predominantly authoritarian. However, there seems to be no indications that these family structures have bearing on their sexual behavior regardless of respondents' gender.

In terms of permissible behavior during stages of courtship, there is an indication that both males and females are conservative during acquaintance stage but they tend to be permissive when they are already on the steady stage or in a defined relationship with a partner. In both stages, sexual intercourse is allowed, including other forms of intimacy like kissing and hugging.

The sexual experiences of the respondents tended to align with the sexual behavior they consider allowable at each stage of courtship. However, when the congruence of the permissible sexual behavior and actual sexual experiences of the respondents are compared, it is known that there is incongruence in the sexual behavior during acquaintance stage. The permissible behavior of both gender are conservative, no physical contact allowed. On the contrary, the actual sexual experiences tend to go beyond this moral boundary as they admitted to have held hands and hugged in this initial contact with the opposite sex.

The respondents practice unprotected sex which consequently posed certain reproductive health risks among the respondents like teenage pregnancy and abortion.

Females tend to be conservative when it comes to acquaintance and dating/wooing stages but appear to be permissive when they are in a defined relationship. Males have the tendency take sexual advances during all the stages of courtship/relationship.

Mass media especially internet which provide pornographic sites to the users and seductive poses on TV influence the respondent's sexual behavior. The findings have relevance to the results of Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS 2013) which indicate that the Filipino youth has a high prevalence of usage of the new information and telecommunication technologies. However, these new technologies can be tools for increasing risks but they can also serve as tools for mitigating risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers offer the following recommendations in order to enhance future studies on sexual behavior among teenagers.

On Methodology

1. Future studies should focus on in-depth examination of teenager's sexual behavior in the cultural communities in Mindanao and elsewhere in the Philippines.
2. Other research gathering methods such as Focus-Group Discussions, life history, ethnographic methods are recommended.
3. A methodological triangulation is also recommended.
4. Views of other members in the society, such as women, youth leaders on youth sexuality may also be explored.
5. Other studies may improve the validity of the instrument used in this study.

On Policy-makers

1. The need to intensify program on sex education that protects both the sexually inactive and active youth, who have been engaging in high-risk sexual behavior.
2. Organizing Youth volunteers advocating responsible sex education among the youth.
3. Mobilize Sangguniang Kabataan (SK or elective youth leaders) for funding seminars on youth sexuality and health awareness.

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Empowered Females as Objects in Uzma Aslam Khan's Fiction

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the ways in which female empowerment takes place and how this process of 'empowerment' dislocates those females furthermore and turns them into 'Objects' in Kristeva's words. This paper takes into account Uzma Aslam Khan's main characters who are almost always women struggling with different issues, sexual and psychological ones to be highlighted here. Her works provide us with characters who spell out this masculine discourse devoid of any capacity for a female narrative. This paper basically deals with the post-feminist world where a certain set of standards has been specified in order for a woman to become 'empowered', it is to enquire whether it is really possible to attain this status of empowerment and to question it in respect of Kristeva's idea of Abjection. This paper has a particular relevance to the current wave of Indian Feminism and the outrage it has caused in both India and Pakistan.

Goodness, Wealth, Marriage, and Revenge: The Values of Women in Agamaniyog Folktales

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Abstract

The Agamaniyog Folktales are stories around the Lanao region—a region in the Island of Mindanao, the Southern part of the Philippines. These folktales are used in studying women characters because these are the folktales which come from a culture that values women. This study aimed to define the good woman and the bad women in Agamaniyog Folktales through the analysis of their roles, characteristics, and values. A descriptive literary analysis using the qualitative method was used in presenting, analyzing, interpreting and comparing the thirty-eight women characters in the sixteen folktales in this study. The study revealed that women in Agamaniyog Folktales are women of strength who value goodness, wealth, marriage, and revenge. The study further revealed that good and bad women in the stories value marriage and revenge. This study then concludes that the concept of good woman and bad woman is not universal; thus, stories such as these could be greatly used to develop one's sensitivity and understanding of another culture.

Keywords: culture, folktales, values, women

1. Introduction

Women have been variously portrayed in different literary works. And according to Stone (1989) in her essay "Feminist Approaches to the Interpretation of Fairy Tales," about 99% of the Old World Fairy tales had some sort of bad image of women. Women in these stories do not do anything for themselves but instead wait for their situations to get better. Women had also been portrayed either as the wicked witch, stepmother or other producer of evil. On the other hand, in a study by Cotejar (2000) entitled, "The Women Characters in the Short Stories of Selected Filipino Women Writers," women were portrayed as types who never easily give up, who did not easily become discouraged, were capable of working hard to claim their place and realize their potentials.

The interest of this study lies in the women characters of Agamaniyog Folktales and the values that these characters hold.

The Agamaniyog folktales are to a large extent about Maranao sultans and their families and their relationships with their subjects, their way of life, their customs and traditions, and other cultural features found in the Maranao cultural inventory (Asain, *n.d.*). According to Saber (1979) in the introduction of *The Agamaniyog Folktales, Mindanao Art and Culture, Number One*:

The *Agamaniyog* Folktales is a collection of popular stories in the oral tradition around the Lanao region. *Agamaniyog* is the most frequent imaginary setting of the popular Maranao folktales and fables. Loaned to both Malay and Maranao languages, *agama* is originally a Sanskrit word for "religion." The Maranao extended the meaning of the word to include a town or village which has land, people, a mosque, wealth, and power distinct from those of its neighbors. *Niyog* is the Philippine word for "coconut," and so *agamaniyog* means "land of coconuts." In many folktales, *agamaniyog* is a land of splendor and glory, and a variety of plots and characters are woven into its fabric in stories that either merely entertain or teach lessons about good and evil.

In addition, Agamaniyog tales, as part of the Maranao folklore, reflects the culture of the Maranaos. Tawano (2001) presented in her essay that social structure, kinship, marriage and respect can be seen in these folktales. Aside from this, the common motifs of the folktales were also identified. The motifs are punishment, love and reincarnation. The Agamaniyog tales then are interesting stories of the Maranao folk.

These folktales were used here in the studying of the women characters because these are the folktales which come from a culture that values women. Coronel (1979) wrote that "the woman in Maranao society is an important person. Whereas her contemporary is given equal rights and treated vilely in the name of Women's Lib, she is ever the queen and always treated as such." Moreover, these folktales were chosen to bare its beauty to the readers. to generate awareness on the richness of the Philippine folk literature and to hopefully pave the way for Maranaos to develop a deep appreciation of their culture and for the non-Maranaos to gain an understanding of Maranao culture and society.

2. Method

Descriptive literary analysis using the qualitative method was used in this study. The sixteen selected Agamaniyog folktales are: *Curse on Lingayadan Mindayo*, *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, *Bago a Raga*, *Fat Thin Deer*, *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*, *Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor*, *Tiny Bird*, *A Healthy Exchange*, *Empty Bags*, *Bitter Rice*, *Stones*, *A Lesson for the Sultan*, *Potri' Maalika*, *Anak and the Crow*, *Potri Intantiyaya*, *The Story of Solampid* and *Daliday a Binembar*

Data Gathering Procedures

The roles and characteristics of the women characters were analyzed. Their characteristics were arrived at by looking at how they are described in the story or how they were treated and/or responded to the treatment of other characters.

Next, the circumstances of the different types of women characters were identified and were used to analyze the values of the women characters. The values were then explained by looking into the culture and values of the Maranao society.

3. Results and Discussion

“Values are those things that really matter to each of us ... the ideas and beliefs we hold as special (Pinetreeweb, *n.d.*).” Since these stories are told by the Maranao folks, then it is imperative to look at their society for a better understanding of what the women characters in the folktales “hold as special.”

The sixteen folktales have shown that women characters value the following goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge. All these are all influenced by the Maranao's *maratabat*.

According to Saber, Tamano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tawano (1961) *maratabat* is defined as “face” or “amour proper” of the Maranao. They also wrote that “an understanding of *maratabat* will explain and account for a great deal of Maranao behavior, but most particularly those portions of behavior which seem less explicable by common-sense assumption and understandings.” In addition, Svenja Smelcher (2007) cited Fishceder (2006) in an essay “Rido and Its Influence on the academe, NGOs and the Military” that “*maratabat* is a guiding principle for every Maranao regardless of sex, status or age.”

Maratabat according to Saber, Tawano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tawano (1961), “is legal in terms of traditional and customary law...Most insults, shame and loss of face are defined by violation of these rights and privileges. Much customary law implies the existence of *maratabat* and the necessity for its maintenance on the part of the family.” Brecht (2005) wrote that “In some cases the revenge to the violation of *maratabat* results in *rido*, the blood feud.” Disomangcop (2007) wrote that “the practice of *maratabat* does not bar a person with high educational attainment from killing another person once his *maratabat* has been transgressed. There was one law practitioner who was compelled to kill the brother of his brother's killer because of this.” He also wrote that “because of the desire to uphold their *maratabat*, a killing could cause a vicious cycle for vendetta and counter vendetta, one family avenging the death of a relative until a solution is arrived at.”

The values therefore of the women characters in Agamaniyog folktales may differ with the values of the characters in other folktales from another society or culture. Like for instance the concept of revenge may not be shown in other folktales (or fairytales) but in Agamaniyog folktales it is repeatedly shown. If one would look at the common fairytale characters like Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty of other societies (Germany for example), one could not see them taking revenge even if they were treated harshly by other characters in the stories. But in the Agamaniyog folktales, most if the ba'is and the princesses take revenge on those who have hurt them.

Goodness

In this study, goodness refers to the valuing of any of the following: bravery, self-sacrifice, determination, wisdom, obedience, generosity, kindness, gratefulness, acceptance of one's fault and one's way of upholding *maratabat* (honour) that would lead to the welfare and happiness of many people, specially that of one's family.

In Maranao society, according to Saber, Tamano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tamano (1961) "a man is judged to be **good** or **bad** not so much in terms of the consequences of his acts, but rather in terms of the extent to which he has *maratabat*." This is reiterated by Casal (2007) who wrote "Maranaos equate tradition with conscience. One's acts are justified, not by their consequences, but by how zealously they conform to *maratabat*, the inherited body of Maranao custom and usage." Casal (2007) also wrote that "Much of the custom-law concerns the rights, privileges and prerogatives of each class level of society. These rights are *maratabat*, and so are the procedures for protecting them and punishing a violation of them. Insults that bring on shame and loss of face are defined as a violation of those rights; and it is *maratabat* to do the duty to avenge a loss which involves not only the person insulted but all the members of his family and kin." Thus the valuing of *maratabat* is included in the definition of goodness in this study. And so, good women in this study therefore, may take revenge because they are simply upholding their *maratabat*.

Twenty-one women characters in the sixteen selected Agamaniyog folktales value goodness. These are the women who are classified as good: the well-intentioned beautiful princesses, strong minded ba'is, the kind non-royal women and the wise non-royal women.

The well-intentioned beautiful princesses, on the other hand, are the following: Linggayadan Mindayo who values bravery, kindness and self-sacrifice; Gayad Lagid a Olan who values bravery and kindness; Tingting a Bolawan who values bravery, self-sacrifice, wisdom, acceptance of one's fault and *maratabat*; Potri' Maalika who values obedience, wisdom and bravery; Anak who values kindness; Potri Intantiyaya who values obedience; Solampid who values obedience and bravery; and Daliday a Binembar who values bravery, wisdom and *maratabat*.

The strong minded ba'is are the following: the ba'i in *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo* who values self-sacrifice; the ba'i in *A Healthy Exchange* who values bravery, determination and wisdom; the ba'is in *Empty Bags Bitter Rice, Stones and A Lesson for the Sultan* who value bravery, determination, wisdom and *maratabat*.

The kind non-royal women value kindness and generosity; these are Mapiya a Balowa and Anak in *Fat Thin Deer*, and Marata a Balowa in *Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor*. Mapiya a Balowa and Anak (who also values obedience) in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal* who value gratefulness.

The wise non-royal women are Bago a Raga who values wisdom and bravery; Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* who values wisdom, submissiveness and *maratabat*; and Lokes a Babay in *A Healthy Exchange* who values wisdom.

Based on the values and the circumstances of the women characters it could be inferred that the sixteen stories have a common message, and that is “goodness begets goodness.” If one does good then he/she would have favorable circumstances.

In the *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo*, because the ba’i is self-sacrificing, she found her daughter again; because Linggayadan Mindayo is brave, kind and self-sacrificing she married a handsome and powerful prince; and because Gayad Lagid a Olan is brave and kind, she went back to Balantankairan with a boat-laden with treasures.

In *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, because Tingting a Bolawan is brave, self-sacrificing, wise and values *maratabat*, she became a queen; she avenged her family from her wicked aunts and she lived with her family again.

In *Bago a Raga*, because Bago a Raga is brave and wise she was able to teach the sultan a lesson.

In *Fat Thin Deer*, because Mapiya a Balowa and Anak are kind they were given meat by the deer and they were able to share it to others.

In *Mapiya a Balowa’s Visit to the Balbal*, Mapiya a Balowa’s gratefulness made the monster generous to her and her daughter. And Anak’s kindness and obedience led her to marry the Sultan of Bandiyarmasir.

Since Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* values wisdom, submissiveness and *maratabat*, she became rich and she took revenge on her husband. Her revenge could be considered as a form of *maratabat* because she was tricked by her husband and so she had to avenge herself.

In *A Healthy Exchange*, the brave, determined and wise ba’i proved her point and became instrumental in making the sultanate prosperous and famous again; and the wise Lokes a Babay became adviser to the sultan.

The brave, determined and wise ba’is who value *maratabat* in *Empty Bags Bitter Rice*, *Stones* and *A Lesson for the Sultan* became rich; they proved their point and took their revenge on their former husbands, the sultans.

In *Potri’ Maalika*, Potri’ Maalika who values obedience, wisdom and bravery, was adopted by a wealthy couple.

In *Anak and the Crow*, the kindness of Anak led her to marry a prince.

In *Potri Intantiyaya*, Potri Intantiyaya who values obedience led her to marry Radiya Bagaram, a rich son of the Sultan.

In *The Story of Solampid*, the brave and obedient Solampid married her teacher Rajah Indarapatra.

In *Daliday a Binembar*; Daliday a Binembar who values bravery, intelligence and *maratabat* was found by her husband and was able to take her revenge on Maragaraga and Masangasanga, the persons who deceived her and her husband.

Goodness is a universal value, however this is relative. This is affected by one’s personal belief and culture. Thus the definition of goodness in this study is true only for the women characters in the sixteen selected Agamaniyog folktales. It is observed that goodness in this study embraces other values as well—bravery, self-sacrifice, determination, wisdom, obedience, generosity, kindness, gratefulness, acceptance of one’s fault and *maratabat*. These values are considered good since these motivate the characters to perform actions for the well-being of many people (but not for all people).

It is important to note that the actions of some of these good women may not be considered good in other societies. These are the women who value *maratabat* like Tingting a Bolawan (who had her aunts dragged by horses), Daliday a Binembar (who cut Maragaraga into pieces), Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *Empty Bags Bitter Rice* (who put the sultan "in unbearable shame"), Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *Stones* (who deceived the sultan), Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *A Lesson for the Sultan* (who shamed the sultan by ordering him around) and Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* (who did not let her husband enter her torogan). These women took their revenge for the good of themselves, for the good of their family, for teaching a lesson to those who have hurt them and/or insulted them and for their sullied *maratabat*. According to Macaraig (1969, cited in Bartolome, 2004) a "Maranao's honor and dignity are everything to him so that the wounding of these, whether the "wound" is real or fancied, becomes a challenge to his manhood," in this case "womanhood," thus their actions can be justified because vengeance is acceptable in the Maranao society. These actions are reflected in the Agamaniyog tales. Hence, these women have done good.

Wealth

"Wealth has come to mean an abundance of items of economic value, or the state of controlling or possessing such items; it encompasses money, real estate and personal property (Wikipedia, 2008)." In this study wealth refers to land, treasures and servants.

Seventeen of the women characters in the Agamaniyog Folktales value wealth. Fourteen of these are good women and three are bad women. The Ba'is sa Agamaniyog in *A Healthy Exchange*, *Empty Bags Bitter Rice*, *Stone*, and *A Lesson for the Sultan* worked hard to gain wealth. For the princesses, Linggayadan Mindayo, Anak (in *Anak and the Crow*), Potri Inantiyaya (in *Potri Intantiyaya*), Solampid and Daliday a Binembar, they gained more wealth through marriage. The other princesses also gained wealth. Gayad Lagid a Olan was given a boat-laden with treasures by her cousin's husband. Tingting a Bolawan became wealthy because she was made queen by the people she had helped. And Potri Maalika was adopted by a wealthy couple.

For the non-royal woman like Anak, she gained wealth through marriage. Another non-royal woman, Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* gained wealth through a bird that would lay precious stones. For the bad woman like Marata a Balowa in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal* who wanted to be wealthy like her neighbor she had her daughter sleep with a snake thinking that the snake would become a prince, like what happened to her neighbor; but the snake ate her daughter instead. Another bad women are Maragaraga and Masangasanga. They wanted to be rich and so they deceived the prince.

It is important to note that *torogan* is mentioned in the folktales studied. It connotes that the characters are of royalty or that they have become rich. In *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, it is written that "*Tingting a Bolawan now wished that their house would change into a beautiful torogan*" and in the end she lived in the torogan because she became a queen. Another is Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* who "*built a torogan*."

Torogan connotes wealth. According to Francisco (1995), "the *torogan* represents both traditional art and power (hence wealth, honor and prestige)" in a Maranao society. He quoted Barada (1968), "The Torogan is symbolic of rank, prestige and status. Its erection connotes only lineage of the highest rank, for only the dato class and in particular those holding the highest titles are allowed to build such a structure." Thus, *torogan* relates to wealth.

Wealth is related to the "happy endings" of thirteen of the sixteen folktales. The following folktales are : Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo, Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts, Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal, Tiny Bird, A Healthy Exchange, Empty Bags Bitter Rice,

Stones, A Lesson for the Sultan, Potri' Maalika, Anak and the Crow, Potri Intantiyaya, The Story of Solampid and Daliday a Binembar.

Wealth is very important in Maranao society. This could be related to their practice of *maratabat*. One way of protecting their *maratabat* is to maintain their wealth because wealth gives security and power. Disomangcop (2007) wrote "An outsider in Maranao society would be surprised to find-out that to work as maids, which is very common especially among urbanized Christian groups, is unknown among the Maranaos. Household servitude among Maranaos is not in accordance with the accepted mores of their society." Perhaps this is the reason why the value of wealth is reflected in the folktales.

Marriage

There are fifteen women characters who value marriage. Eight of these are good women and the other seven are the bad women. Of the eight good women, seven are from royalty. The following are: Ba'i sa Agamaniyog (in *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo*), Linggayadan Mindayo, Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *A Healthy Exchange*, Anak in *Anak and the Crow*, Potri Intantiyaya in *Potri Intantiyaya*, Solampid and Daliday a Binembar. In addition, the good non-royal woman is Anak in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*. The bad women who value marriage are Marata a Balowa in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*, Potri Bonso, Potri Intan Tihaya, and Tingtinga Bolawan in *Anak and the Crow*, the other six sisters of Potri' Intantiyaya and Maragaraga and Masangasanga in *Daliday a Binembar*.

Five princesses married princes or rich gentlemen in the folktales. This reflects what Mala (n.d.) a Maranao, has written, "In our culture, it is rooted out from our ancestors' value system. We value our family's pride as the prime reason for it to be regarded as among the higher class and that it has predominantly then put to much consideration when an intention of expanding the family occurs." Thus, to show that they value their family's pride then the rich should marry the rich, or the princesses should marry princess.

Linggayadan Mindayo, a princess, married the prince of Inged a Bolawan, Somesen sa Alongan. Her marriage to the prince gave joy to his parents, "*The Sultan and Ba'i sa Agamaniyog were happy to see their daughter still alive and married to a handsome and powerful husband.*"

Anak, a princess in *Anak and the Crow* married Somesen sa Alongan, the Stopper of the Sun's Rays. He offered her anything she wished for. "*The Sultan formally heard the proposal of the gentleman, and summoned his wasir to consult them about the matter. When everything had been arranged, the grand wedding was held...*"

Potri Intantiyaya was chosen by the son of the Sultan of Bandiyarmasir, Radiya Bagaram when he was looking for a bride. Radiya Bagaram said "*I will not select any of the elder sisters. The youngest girl whom I saw playing and going up and down, sitting on her father's lap, is the one I will take for a wife.*" After they were married, a big celebration "*was held by the people of Bandiyarmasir for the beautiful Potri Intantiyaya who became Radiya Bagaram's wife.*"

Solampid married Rajah Indarapatra. "*He at once fell in-love with her and, not long after, married her.*"

Daliday a Binembar married Somesen sa Alongan, the prince of Yaman. "*Somesen sa Alongan fell in love with her and took her for his wife.*" However, they were separated because of the deception of Masangasanga and Maragaraga But after many years, "*the people of Yaman celebrated the finding of the true wife and son of Somesen sa Alongan...*"

There is also a non-royal woman, Anak in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal*, who married a prince, the son of the Sultan of Bandiyarmasir. "He sent his messenger to his father and asked his relatives and followers to come over. The couple married and lived happily ever after."

The marriage of the women gave the folktales a happy ending.

Another character who valued marriage is the Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo*. When she learned that her daughter was married to a rich and powerful man, she was happy. Then another is the Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *A Healthy Exchange*. She forgave the sultan of what he did to her. "The Ba'i was taken back by the sultan as his wife..." And she helped the sultan in making Agamaniyog prosperous and famous again.

The other characters who value marriage are the bad women.

Marata a Balowa in *Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal* wanted her daughter to marry a prince and so she imitated what her neighbor had done. She had her sleep with a snake. However, the snake did not turn into a prince, it ate her daughter instead.

Potri Bonso, Potri Intan Tihaya and Tingtinga Bolawan in *Anak and the Crow* were envious of their sister's marriage to a prince.

The other six sisters of Potri Intantiyaya also value marriage. They prepared for the arrival of Radiya Bagaram. They dressed up and they even "quarreled among themselves for each one claimed to be the one to receive the proposal for marriage of Radiya Bagaram." However, none of them was chosen. But after the marriage of their sister, The Dipatuan, Mantra, Bilal, Katib and the other titled datus of Agamaniyog married them "each with a pompous celebration."

Maragaraga and Masangasanga also value marriage. They deceived Someesen sa Alongan, the husband of Daliday a Binembar, just so Masangasanga could have him as a husband.

Of the sixteen selected folktales, seven of these have put great emphasis on marriage. And based on the stories, it could be seen that marriage brings happiness and wealth. Thus marriage is valued by many of the women characters.

If we look closely at Maranao society, marriage is of great value since it provides wealth, security and privileges to Maranao women. According to Sumagayan (1982) "to the Maranaos, the "dowry system" gives the woman more rights, security, a higher status in the community."

It is also important to note that marriage in the Maranao society is of great value because the Maranao maidens are also highly valued.

According to Tawano (2001) "In the past the place of the Maranao women was merely a small space in the home called *lamin* (tower) or *gibbon* (adolescent daughter's room), where they could only be heard but not seen by men...Because a Maranao maiden could only be seen quite rarely by the opposite sex, she is highly regarded by the latter. Sometimes she is referred to as a *montiya*, or "precious stone."

This is reiterated by Pumbaya (2003) when he wrote that Maranao girls "are taught to be modest at all times for modesty and shyness prevents one from indulging in immorality. Premarital relation is strictly prohibited...The community ostracizes people who commit an immoral act"

Maranao maidens then are expected to be chaste and modest and this could be the reason why marriage is sacred. Tawano (2001) wrote "Marriage is something sacred in the Maranao society. It is something so revered that free love is frowned upon. A woman cannot just be taken as a wife without the corresponding rituals and processes and above all the religious sanctity." This is the ideal in Maranao society.

Disoma (1999) wrote that “arranged marriage is prevalent in Meranao society because of family social and economic factors which are given prime importance, that is, marriage is seen as an institution establishing a union between two families.”

Pumbaya (2003) cited Warriner who wrote that Meranao marriage is “primarily an affiliation between lineages, rather than between persons. Marriages are contracted in the interest of lineage groups and *agama* to facilitate power, to ensure the body of supporters and to resolve feuds. It may also be used for the accumulation of wealth. Because of this, even very young children may be married.” This could be the reason why Potri Intantiyaya in *Potri Intantiyaya* was married even if she was still a child.

The Ba’i of Agamaniyog sent for Potri Intantiyaya. When she came, she was told that she would be wedded. The daughter cried for she was too young to become a wife. She complained why her elder sisters were not given ahead in marriage, but the mother insisted that she put on a pretty wedding dress.

Pumbaya (2003) also wrote that “Although Meranao marriage traditionally and customarily has been arranged by the parents of the two parties involved, in Islam, the final decision lay with the bride. However, Meranao parents thought (and still think) that their choice of mate for their children was for the benefit of the latter, to enhance their well-being as they entered into new life.” This could be the reason why parents in the folktales are happy to see their children married to rich men. Like for example the parents of Linggayadan Mindayo, the parents of Potri’ Intantiyaya and the mother of Anak in *Mapiya a Balowa’s Visit to the Balbal*. Maragaraga (in *Daliday a Binembar*) and Marata a Balowa (in *Mapiya a Balowa’s Visit to the Balbal*) should not be overlooked, as mothers they wanted their daughters to marry rich men but in the end their daughters were put to harm.

In Maranao society, *Meranao betang* is required as a prerequisite for marriage. This is equated to “bride wealth”, “bride price,” or “dowry”. However, each of this mean differently. Bride wealth is a present of the groom to the bride while bride price is a property or gift by the man in exchange for the woman in marriage. The dower or dowry, on the other hand, is a property given to the man by the woman. *Betang* is a property sought of a man (the groom) by the guardian of the woman (bride) as a requisite for marriage. The guardian may be the parents or close relatives but not other people. The *betang* depends upon the woman’s family status, that is, the higher their status the bigger the *betang*. The capacity of the man, whether he can put it up or not is not considered (Disoma, 1999). Thus women of higher status would eventually marry rich men because their *betang* is high.

In the folktales, all the women who got married, were married to rich men or titled-men.

Tawano (2001) wrote:

A Maranao woman gains a few items—and more rights and privileges—when she marries. Materially, the siwaka, songodan, leka sa gibbon, leka sa dulang and sayat are some of the mahar (bridal gift) that she is entitled to at their wedding.

The siwaka is a gift to the girl before the wedding ceremony and is distributed to her relatives... The songgodon is any part of the mahar (bridal gift) that is to be distributed among the relatives of the girl. The leka sa gibbon is part of the songgodon which is requested by the girl’s relatives before the groom is allowed to enter the gibbon (room), where the bride is found... The leka sa dulang is also part of the songgodon asked by the girl’s relatives before a groom can be allowed to eat with the bride from a dulang (food placed in a tabak or brass tray) .

The sayat or leka igaan, is a gift given to the girl a few days or months after the wedding ceremony.

And when the woman is married, “to some degree, customary laws gave the Maranao women the right to be equal to men. The woman could inherit property, engage in trade and industry, and occupy a unique position in the society. Maranao men and women have parallel roles in the society, each role being socially respected.” (Tawano, 2001). These could be added reasons why mothers would want their daughters to marry.

According to Tawano (2001), “In the past, the husband usually walked behind the wife in the streets, more submissively so if his wife had a higher social status than he prior to marriage. When a married woman belongs to an affluent or royal family, the husband has to provide her with slave helpers to relieve her from the chores of cooking, cleaning the house, or washing her husband’s clothes.”

Maranao women then expect much from marriage because society has shown them that this is so. That is why, women characters who were not treated well by their husbands like, Lokes a Babay in *A Healthy Exchange* divorced her husband; the Ba’is sa Agamanyog in *Empty Bags Bitter Rice, Stones and A Lesson for the Sultan* and Lokes a Babay in *Tiny Bird* took their revenge on their husbands.

Women in Maranao society as reflected in the folktales are treated as queens and considered to be very precious. That is why marriage is given great value.

Revenge

Wikipedia (2008) defines revenge as “retaliation against a person or group in response to a perceived wrongdoing. Although many aspects of revenge resemble or echo the concept of justice, revenge usually has a more injurious than harmonious goal. The goal of revenge usually consists of forcing the perceived wrongdoer to suffer the same pain that was originally inflicted.” Injuring somebody because that person has done you wrong is an unacceptable in some societies. However in Maranao Society, revenge is justifiable because the Maranaos value *maratabat*. This makes them unique among all other ethnic groups.

Maratabat can be defined as honour (Brecht, 2005). However, this value embraces other values that refer to self-esteem, personal dignity, honor, and pride at one extreme family feuds, conflicts, revenge, and retaliatory acts on the other (Bartolome, 2004). Disomangcop (2007) wrote:

Maratabat is equated with “hiya” or shame, honor and dignity, rank, self-esteem or “amor-propio,” reputation and “face.” But maratabat is more than any of these. There is no single word or phrase that can clearly define maratabat, for the Maranaos have surrounded it with many socio-psychological concepts of their own. It is directly proportional to a person’s social rank. One social scientist views it as blind irrational pride of clan and tribe and a deep sense of personal honor and face. The substance of maratabat lies in the symbols, shared beliefs, images in the collective reputation, and in the public morality of the Maranaos. When positively directed, it gives them unity, strength, and identity; it serves as a driving force in Maranao everyday life, be it social, political, or economic.

Saber, Tawano and Warriner (1960 cited in Bartolome, 2004) observe that Maranao’s and non-Maranao’s refer to maratabat as the “key to Maranao psychology.” They call it the “fundamental motivating force” in Maranao folk psychology.

Thus, it is what they value most. They protect their *maratabat*. Casal (2007) said “ To stop observing the traditional is to stop being identified with the ancestors of the Maranao. To lose that identity is to be without *maratabat*; and the person without *maratabat* becomes "nobody", or very, very "small". He has lost "shame"; he wears "dirt on his face". When thus equated with shame and duty, the *maratabat* approaches the concept of conscience, except that conscience here is a function of social class and position.” A violation of one’s *maratabat* would mean revenge to one who violated it. But the revenge would not just involve one person, but all the family and relatives of the person who violated it.

According to Brecht (2005), “the woman’s role concerning *maratabat* is two-fold. On one hand she is the one keeping up the family’s *maratabat* through her behavior which includes having an eye on her family members doing the same. On the other hand she is also the one, if one of her family members is concerned to negotiate with the other concerned family, since women normally aren’t directly involved into *rido* and can cross the family lines safely.” She also wrote that “I haven’t heard of a woman conducting *rido*, probably because an insult or violation of *maratabat* has to be “physically avenged” which would be improper for a woman.”

But these roles were never reflected in the folktales. Instead, seven stories show women characters taking revenge on other characters that have inflicted pain (physical or emotional) on them. These women who took revenge were all classified as good women.

In *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts*, Tinting a Bolawan revenged on her aunts Potri Bonso and Matagbabay because they deceived not only her mother, but her entire family. “...*Tingting a Bolawan ordered her slaves to tie the left hands and feet of Potri Bonso and Matagbabay to a horse and their right hands and feet to another horse. When the two horses ran, the bodies of Potri Bonso and Matagbabay were torn apart and they were killed.*”

In *Tiny Bird*, Lokes a Babay revenged on her husband who deceived her. She divorced him and left him. “*Lokes a Babay built a torogan in a nearby settlement. She had her guards and slaves to serve her. When Lokes a Mama heard the news, he was surprised. He wanted to be reconciled with her, the guards would stop him at the gate.*”

Lokes a Babay in *A Healthy Exchange* revenged on her husband who did not provide her well and who neglected her. She divorced him and she flirted with other men. She made herself beautiful by wearing her finest dress. She then said to Bago a Mama, who passed by, “*My dear young and attractive gentleman, may I know where you are going?... May I ask a favor from you? Please help me fence the isolated plant near my house...*” And this made her husband, Lokes a Mama jealous.

Ba’i sa Agamaniyog in *Empty Bags Bitter Rice* revenged on her husband because she was deeply hurt when she and her husband quarreled and he told her “*Maybe you are in love with Lokes a Mama. Suppose we exchange spouses. You get Lokes a Mama for your husband, while I get Lokes a Babay for my wife...Leave my house right now...*” After many years, she became rich, and the Solotan sa Agamaniyog became poor. When the Solotan came to ask forgiveness she did not forgive him, instead she gave him a poetic reply (*bayok*), “*When darkness came, the datu abandoned the lady to float down the river. But when brightness came, he wants to get her back like a beautiful golden kris for his realm.*” This caused the Solotan “*unbearable shame.*”

The Ba’i sa Agamaniyog in *Stones* took her revenge on her husband when he exchanged her with Lokes a Babay, another woman because of their conflicting ideas. After many years, she became rich with her new husband, Lokes a Mama and the Solotan sa Agamaniyog became poorer and poorer. When the Solotan asked her how they became rich, she deceived him. She told him that Lokes a Mama dreamed of being buried and so they buried him. When they dug him out, they found gold, silver and heirlooms on the grave with him. And so the Solotan asked to be

buried by his *orobarang* with the instruction that he be dug out on the seventh day. When they dug him out on the seventh day, they found him dead and rotting.

The Ba'i sa Agamaniyog in *A Lesson for the Sultan* took revenge on her husband because she was hurt during their quarrel. This resulted to an exchange of husband and wife with Lokes a Mama and Lokes a Babay. Time came when she and Lokes a Mama became rich and the Sultan became poor. The Sultan was “near death from regret and repentance and shame over the knowledge that he had been defeated.” One day, the Sultan passed by the lake, he saw a headdress and he was told that it was owned by Maradiya Dinda (Lokes a Mama). He brought it with him and he returned it to Maradiya Dinda. The Ba'i then said “*My dear Sultan, do you still remember when I said that someday you will pick up a left-over of Lokes a Mama?*”

In *Daliday a Binembar*, Daliday a Binembar took revenge on Masangasanga and Maragaraga because they deceived her husband and they took her away from him. In the end, she “*cut Masangasanga to pieces, had her body parts salted and cooked and ordered that these be delivered to her mother, Maragaraga.*” And because Maragaraga unknowingly ate her daughter she turned into a witch.

Since the stories did not show the traditional roles of women in *maratabat*, then it can be assumed that these stories reveal women's desire to take revenge on their own if they or their family are insulted or mistreated. Although, only three stories show that women are the ones who deliberately caused death to other characters (*Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts, Stones and Daliday a Binembar*), these still led to surmise that even though they (the women) are regarded as precious and fragile, they still want to be seen as independent and strong women.

The women who caused death to other women in the stories, like Tinting a Bolawan, Daliday a Binembar and the Ba'i in *Stones* reflects what Disomangcop (2007) has written, “a Maranao does not just kill a person without a reasonable cause. Insult or defamation could goad a person into killing another. Once this is inflicted on him, he is ready to face his enemy just to uphold his “dirtyed *maratabat*.”

It is important to note that the bad women did not value revenge. The possible reason could be that most of these women are non-royal women. And according to Casal (2007) “the degree of *maratabat* expected of a person depends on his social status. A subservient may not conform to it, while a datu must be totally attuned to the minutest details of its observance...” Another reason could be that since some of these bad women (like Putri Bonso and Maragaraga in *Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts* and Maragaraga and Masangasanga in *Daliday a Binembar*) are the women who violated the *maratabat* of other characters in the stories then they are the ones who are subjected to revenge.

Table 1. The Values of Good Women Characters

Title of the Folktales	Women Characters	Values			
		Goodness	Wealth	Marriage	Revenge
<i>Curse on Linggayadan Mindayo</i>	Ba'i sa Agamaniyog	✓		✓	
	Linggayadan Mindayo	✓	✓	✓	
	Gayad Lagid a Olan	✓	✓		
<i>Tingting a Bolawan</i>	Tingting a Bolawan	✓	✓		✓

Title of the Folktales	Women Characters	Values			
		Goodness	Wealth	Marriage	Revenge
<i>and Her Wicked Aunts</i>					
<i>Bago a Raga</i>	Bago a Raga	✓			
<i>Fat Thin Deer</i>	Mapiya a Balowa	✓			
	Anak	✓			
<i>Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal.</i>	Mapiya a Balowa	✓			
	Anak	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor</i>	Marata a Balowa	✓			
<i>Tiny Bird</i>	Lokes a Babay	✓	✓		✓
<i>A Healthy Exchange</i>	Ba'i sa Agamaniyog	✓	✓	✓	
	Lokes a Babay	✓			✓
<i>Empty Bags, Bitter Rice</i>	Ba'i sa Agamaniyog	✓	✓		✓
<i>Stones</i>	Ba'i sa Agamaniyog	✓	✓		✓
<i>A Lesson for the Sultan</i>	Ba'i sa Agamaniyog	✓	✓		✓
<i>Potri' Maalika</i>	Potri Maalika	✓	✓		
<i>Anak and the Crow</i>	Anak	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Potri Intantiyaya</i>	Potri Intantiyaya	✓	✓	✓	
<i>The Story of Solampid</i>	Solampid	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Daliday a Binembar</i>	Daliday a Binembar	✓	✓	✓	✓
		21	14	8	7

Table 2. The Values of Bad Women Characters

Title of the Folktale	Women Characters				
		Goodness	Wealth	Marriage	Revenge
<i>Tingting a Bolawan and Her Wicked Aunts</i>	Potri Bonso				
	Matagbabay				
<i>Fat Thin Deer</i>	Marata a Balowa				
	Maragaraga				
<i>Mapiya a Balowa's Visit to the Balbal.</i>	Marata a Balowa		✓	✓	
	Maragaraga				
<i>Marata a Balowa's Good Neighbor</i>	Mapiya a Balowa				
<i>Empty Bags, Bitter Rice</i>	Lokes a Babay				
<i>Stones</i>	Lokes a Babay				
<i>A Lesson for the Sultan</i>	Lokes a Babay				
<i>Anak and the Crow</i>	Potri Bonso			✓	
	Potri Intan Tihaya			✓	
	Tingtinga Bolawan			✓	
<i>Potri' Intantiyaya</i>	Other six sisters			✓	
<i>The Story of Solampid</i>	Ba'i sa Agamanyog				
<i>Daliday a Binembar</i>	Maragaraga		✓	✓	
	Masangasanga		✓	✓	
			3	7	

The tables 1 and 2 summarize the values of women in Agamanyog folktales. Table 1 shows that twenty-two good women characters value goodness, fourteen value wealth, eight value marriage and seven value revenge. Table 2 shows that three bad women value wealth and seven women value marriage. Goodness and revenge are valued only by good women. Also, wealth and marriage are valued by both good and bad women.

4. Conclusion

The valuing of goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge of the women characters are interconnected through the *maratabat* of the Maranaos.

Goodness includes the value of *maratabat*. Thus, the value of revenge is also contained in the value of goodness. A good woman in the folktales may be considered good if she values *maratabat*. If she is insulted or shamed then she has to take revenge on the person or persons who have transgressed her *maratabat*. Goodness can also be related to wealth and marriage. Women may gain wealth and or marriage through their goodness. Good women like the ba'is have shown that through hard work and determination, they were able to gain wealth. For the princesses and non-royal women, their being kind and generous led them to wealthy princess who married them. Wealth and marriage (to rich men) recur in the stories. Therefore, these are important in Maranao society. These two maintains or raises one's status in a community. And status is very important since one's *maratabat* is also dependent on one's status. According to Saber, Tawano and Warriner (*n.d.*) in Saber and Tamano (1961), "*Maratabat is an expression of one's social position.*" They also wrote that "The degree of *maratabat* expected of a person is directly proportional to social rank. A person of slave status is not expected to have and would be punished for exhibiting *maratabat*. On the other hand persons of highest status are expected to possess and to exhibit a jealous protection of the *maratabat*."

Maratabat then connects goodness, wealth, marriage and revenge, as values of the women in the folktales.

Values are indeed culture bound. For Filipinos living in a multicultural society, an understanding of other Filipino's culture and values could strengthen one's concept of "Filipinos" and may lead to more open communication and acceptance of diversity.

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