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**LIVING IN THE CITY AS SAMA-BAJAU:
THE CASE OF PAPA MELCITO'S FAMILY**

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Living in the City as Sama-Bajau: the Case of Papa Melcito's Family

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Acknowledgment

This manuscript is a direct self-translation of Chapter Seven, originally entitled “Papa Melcito’s family: economic predicament and changing religious practices,” from my Japanese book, *An Ethnography of Poverty: Socioeconomic Life of Five Sama Families in Davao City, Philippines*, published by the University of Tokyo Press in 2006. I am very grateful to the University of Tokyo Press for permitting this translation to be included in the Harvard-Yenching Institute working paper series.

Abstract

This manuscript is a direct self-translation of Chapter Seven, originally entitled “Papa Melcito’s family: economic predicament and changing religious practices,” from my Japanese book, *An Ethnography of Poverty: Socioeconomic Life of Five Sama Families in Davao City, Philippines*, published by the University of Tokyo Press in 2006. A few parts have been modified to fit the given space, with careful effort to retain the original content. The basic unit of analysis is the household. However, the term “family” (*pamilya*) was chosen for the chapter titles, as it is the term that the informants used in daily life. In this particular case, Papa Melcito’s household contained two families, including Papa’s own family consisting of him and his wife, and another family consisting of their married daughter, her husband, and their six children.

There are two communities of the Sama-Bajau in Isla Bella (pseudonym), Davao City, which I refer to frequently in my narrative: *Hong Kong* and *Japan Pikas*. In order to avoid any confusion with Hong Kong, the city-state in the People’s Republic of China, I write its name in italics. Papa Melcito’s family lived in *Hong Kong* during my research from 1998 to 2000.

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The survey on the subjective evaluations of social inequality among the Sama-Bajau residents in Isla Bella that the author conducted in 1999 revealed the fact that there were five livelihood groups, which could be ranked according to socio-economic and other criteria that the Sama-Bajau raters claimed. Based on such results, we call the livelihood group that Papa Melcito's family belongs to "Pearl and shell vendors group (Type II)." In this group, males who were of an income-producing age engaged in selling pearls and shells along the beaches or in the streets, while females, if not staying at home, peddled "*ukay-ukay*" (second-hand clothing).

Christianity made inroads into this particular house group. Once the members converted to Christianity, evangelical missionary groups provided them with assistance through their local non-Bajau pastors. Such resources helped them improve their standard of living to the point where they felt ashamed of being "Bajau" which had connotations of being a marginalized group engaged in hand-to-mouth subsistence activities or in outright mendicancy. This image was actively projected by their fellow "Bajau" in the lower-status community within *Hong Kong* to promote their begging activities. Papa Melcito's household, which we will study in detail in this chapter, had not yet converted to Christianity and its standard of living was rapidly declining. Papa did not hesitate to project his "Badjau" identity rather negatively as a strategy for his mendicancy. He and his wife used to live in a houseboat. The household members identified themselves as *Sama-Dilaut*.

1. From the boat to the land: escaping from the pirates

The household head was named Papa Melcito¹ (we will call him Papa for short hereafter), a male presumably around 60 years old. He always complained of generalized skin dryness and itchiness, despite the humidity being constantly over 80 per cent in Davao City. I touched the skin on his arm and felt it rough. On closer examination, the skin surface was so dry that it produced scales among the countless wrinkles. It looked like the surface of the earth damaged by chronic droughts. There was no moisture on his skin. His body was dry everywhere. The only moist parts were his eyes, which were reddish maybe because of chronic conjunctivitis, a common disease in this area, or maybe because of the exhaustion in his daily life, which was not easy. But his eyes were gentle, although it was difficult for me to read his mind through them.

Papa's facial profile was rather sharp, but he had large, wide ears that made his head look like it had sprouted wings.

Papa was tall for a Sama-Bajau. He was lean and muscled with little flab around his flanks. He was able to squat with his soles flat on the ground and his back almost perfectly straight. His shoulders were wide and squared. Such body features were common among Sama-Bajau males in our study. Papa had legs so straight, they looked like sticks, yet they were well developed and apparently used to good advantage; as a matter of fact, his toe nails, especially on his big toes, were permanently tattooed with sand and dirt.

He did not know where his parents came from. As far as he could recall, they were Sama Palau, or the Sama living in boats. Papa was born and raised in a houseboat.

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999, translated from Cebuano into English)

For many generations, we lived in boats. We had no land. We kept on sailing. If we found Babak² by chance, we would moor there. Then if we sailed to Davao³ next, we would not return to Babak any more.....I will show you (Papa drew an illustration

using my pen on my drawing pad). *The shape of our houseboat was like this. The hull was not made of plywood; it was made of solid wood⁴. The boat had four posts. It had outriggers on both sides to prevent the hull from colliding with other boats. (Papa pointed to the part of the drawing that took up approximately two thirds of the hull towards the bow): This area was covered with a roof. At the stern was where we fished. Look, it's right here (He pointed to the part taking up roughly one-third of the hull towards the stern). We kept all of our fishing gear right here. This area had no roof, but we could place one at night, if needed. The hearth could be moved anywhere. At the front of the boat, there was a container to keep water as well (He drew a circle in the part taking up about one third of the body towards the bow). When we tired of fishing, we would moor, eat, and sleep. We slept under the roof at night, like this: (He drew a human figure, lying across the line from the bow to the stern, sleeping on his/her side with a pillow under his/her head and with his/her legs bent slightly to fit the width of the boat). No, you could not stretch your legs. The other family members would be sleeping with you, here and there..... [One family consisted of] about four [adults including older children who had reached marriageable age] and small ones (meaning younger children).When a pregnant woman gave birth, the "panday" (their midwife) attended to her here (Papa pointed to the side of the roofed area) because there was no room to move the pregnant woman around. (At delivery) Blood flowed to the bottom of the boat. As soon as the baby was delivered, it was bathed. The blood (in the boat) was washed out as well.....The baby was rinsed with fresh water first (not with sea water), and then washed again with soap.....The boat had no engine, and so we paddled in this area (He pointed to the stern area). In the past, we did not use engines. We had sails. I'll show you: There were two types of sails. (He drew illustrations) The old one was like this one (square in shape) called "lamak," while the new one was like this one (triangle in shape) called "banug."Members of the same "kampong" (their group) sailed together. Our kampong comprised about twenty families: all relatives. We had to bathe in sea water, for there was no fresh water at sea. That's why previous generations were not "puti" (literally means 'fair' in the Cebuano language. Papa was referring to the deep tan the Bajaus acquired at sea). But do not believe that the Bajau in the past consigned their*

dead to the sea. Actually, we found places to moor and bury our dead on land. But we performed rites for “mboq” (ancestors spirits) or pray (to Tuhan, or God) in our boats.....Once children got married, they were not allowed to stay with their parents in the same boat. You must understand the reason why, right? One family in one boat. Whatever you may need to do, you will do in your boat. You need to make many children. Otherwise, there would be no human beings in this world. There are people dying every day, while there are people being born every day too. It is like a circle turning around.

Papa abandoned living in the boat sometime between the late 1940s and the early 1950s⁵. “Ours was a hard life. Pirates attacked us. It was dangerous. They had new weapons (fire arms) to threaten us,” said Papa in attempt to explain the situation in those days. His families and relatives set for Taluksangay in the province of Zamboanga del Sur (Taluksangay is located in the east of Zamboanga City. The distance from the city proper is about 19 km). They started living in stilt-houses there.

(Papa, recorded on August 17, 1999)

There were no Bajau beggars in my parents’ generation. We were fisher folk and mat weavers.....that’s how we made our living those days. It was easy for us to catch fish then by using “pana” (spear gun), “pasol” (hook and line) or by deep sea diving.Our fishing grounds were very close, too. Here [in Isla Verde] it is much harder [for us to fish]. Fishing grounds are too far away.....When we were still in Taluksangay, there were various “tribu” (ethnic groups). There were also Tausug⁶. Fish buyers were “hadji.” They were educated “Bajau.”⁷We had “suki” (meaning, in this context, fish buyers that they had regular transactions with): we borrowed money from them, went fishing and delivered our catch to them; and they sold the fish in the market. They deducted our debts from the sales of the fish, and the rest would be our profits. Even if we borrowed as much as 1,000 pesos, it was not difficult for us to repay because we fished every day. In those days, those places [their fishing grounds] were still peaceful. But things changed since pirates started attacking us and the peace and security order over there deteriorated. The Bajau [fishermen]

could no longer pay back their debts. If they attacked us at sea, we could do nothing but plead for mercy, saying “please don’t kill us!” We had no choice but give up all of our catch. So how could we possibly repay our debts? Such a pity! There were still plenty of fish in Taluksangay.....

Papa had more to tell us about “bad” times in Talksungay:

(Papa, recorded August 17 and October 19, 1999)

[In Talksungay] before the peace and security declined, most of the Sama engaged in fishing. Even the old ones went fishing. None of us begged. But things changed. It became unsafe so rapidly. They (implying Tausug “pirates”) began to attack and kill us. The Tausug pirates killed the Bajau people indiscriminately; they even killed women who were gathering shells along the seashore. Have you heard of that beautiful “Bajau” woman who was kidnapped for ransom in Taluksangay? Jesus! Simbako! ⁸.....Those who provided us with capital (for fishing operations, referring to their fish buyers) pitied us because they knew that pirates regularly took our catch away at sea. But even when we were in town, if they knew we had money, they would seize us and take our money, too.....We sold everything we had to come to Davao City: our house, engine, boat, even our “habul” (blankets).....Even after we arrived here, we still had to sell a necklace to feed our grandchildren (referring to the children of Vilma, their fourth daughter living with Papa during our fieldwork).If it were not for the “guerra” (war), we would never have come here (to Davao City). But (in Taluksangay) the government did not do anything to solve any problems. Even if there were a dead body on the street, it would not be buried; it would be left there to rot like a dead dog. Can you imagine how badly we were treated [there in those days]?

By the end of the 1960s, the peace and order became really worse in Zamboanga City. More attacks on “Bajau” by Tausug “pirates” in the adjacent waters occurred. Soon, Papa and his family fled Zamboanga City along with other Sama-Bajau neighbors. Drifting from one place to another, they found a piece of “empty land” (actually a

sandbar off the shore) along the coast of Davao City, known as Isla Verde today. As he recalled, it was after the declaration of martial law by President Marcos. He remembered that Vilma, their fourth daughter, had not had her first period yet. We estimated that they arrived in Isla Verde sometime in the late 1970s. He remembered the greenness of the islet covered with so many coconut trees, gone⁹ now at the time of our research. He told us about the early days they spent in Isla Verde:

(Papa, recorded on August 17, 1999)

Before finally deciding to settle in Davao, we went to many places. Iligan City, Cagayan [de Oro City], Marawi City, Butuan City.....Seeking to survive, we tried any city. The “Military”¹⁰ did not harm us if we did nothing wrong. There was nothing to worry about so long as we just begged. Davao City is (relatively) safe.

Papa and his family counted as one of the pioneer migrants who arrived in Isla Verde when the sandbar was just shaping up to be an islet. Initially, they settled on the side where *Japan Pikas* is now located. After they started living there, their children and relatives followed and joined them, one family after another. For the first year, they slept in their “Bangka” (wooden boats with outriggers) while collecting lumber to build their houses.

Papa recalled:

(Papa, recorded on August 17, 1999)

We called them houses, but they did not have roofs. No roofs, no floors. So, we had no choice but to sleep on the sand on the beach. At that time, we were still fishing to make a living. Our children, who were still not married then, would paddle to ferry boats along the wharf to beg for anything (food and other things).

When they settled in *Japan Pikas*, many Sama-Bajau, including Papa himself, engaged in dynamite fishing. His narratives were verified by testimonies of Cebuano fishermen in the neighborhood as well as the Cebuano fish buyers in the market who transacted

with “Bajau” fishermen in those days.

Papa recounted his experience of fishing then:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

Fishing was really good! You enjoyed warm sunlight when you set out for the sea, and you ate fresh fish. Look, this is how we fished (gesturing of how to hold a fish spear). Aside from spear fishing, we also did hook and line fishing.....We used to go fishing in Kaputian¹¹. Actually, we did dynamite fishing there. It was when we still lived in [Japan] Pikas. There was a Cebuano couple, named Cocoy and Miring, who bought our catch (from the blast fishing). They were rich people living in Trading¹², and they had a fish stall in Bankerohan [Market]. They are both dead now, though.....They were the ones (who provided Papa with the money to purchase the dynamite). We no longer have such people (who offered the “Bajau” the capital for fishing operations). Anyway, blast fishing has also been banned.....Spear fishing only allows you to catch one fish one time, but blast fishing gets you a great catch at a blow. If you had 1,000 [pesos] for the capital (for the blast fishing), you could perhaps catch an amount of fish equivalent to 10,000 [pesos].....The government is wrong. I don't understand why the government has banned it (referring to the blast fishing). But even if they banned it, people are still selling dynamite anyway. People (mga tawo) will keep using dynamite to survive. Listen, if you are holding a piece of dynamite, and light it instead of your cigarette, what would become of you?You would be blasted to death (with the accidental explosion of the dynamite)! If so, it would be so much better to throw the dynamite into the sea and catch fish. You must not keep holding it (the dynamite) in your hand. That's dangerous.Up to now, people are using dynamite (for fishing). You know, over there in Zamboanga, fishing grounds are far (from the shore), and so they (the "military") cannot spot us easily. Moreover, the “military” (Coast Guard) is very much involved in such illegal fishing there too.....

Papa and his family transferred from *Japan Pikas* to *Hong Kong* within *Isla Verde* when

giant waves washed away their house in 1984. Many of his relatives also moved to *Hong Kong*. Since then, with no clear livelihood, their lives have not improved. Under such predicament, roughly half of the households in this group converted to evangelical Christianity over the years and started identifying their religious affiliation as “born again Christians”. But Papa kept practicing the religious rites they had been practicing from the past, or “*mag-mboq*.”

Papa and his wife Cambriya were both previously married. They had eight children, of whom five survived to adulthood. Their third daughter Banessa was still living in Talksangay, while their eldest son Albales (their fourth child and the only son) was living in Sta. Cruz¹³ during our first field research from 1997 to 1999. Banessa and Albales were far more geographically mobile than their parents. They traveled to “Manila,” more precisely: Baklaran in Metro Manila, Olongapo City in Central Luzon Region as well as Legazpi City in Bicol Region. The males peddled dry goods and the females became housewives and sometimes mendicants. It had been more than two generations since this group of *Sama Dilaut* abandoned boat-dwelling and became land based, yet it was hard to tell if they had settled permanently in a particular location.

Papa was a respectful person. Every time we visited him, he spread for us a newly hand-woven mat before the wall without windows where they prayed to their *mboq* (ancestors’ spirits) and *Tuhan* (God), and then gently told us to make ourselves at home. I always tried to take his right hand to my forehead, a gesture of respect to seniors in the Christian Cebuano speaking community, but before I could do this, his right hand would quickly take mine and bring it towards his right chest and then gently release it. He would not say, “*As-salamalaykum*”, a greeting used by the Muslims, but his gesture was similar to that used by Muslim males in the neighborhood. He would pray to thank “*Tuhan*” (God) before receiving any small gifts from us (such as a kilo or two of rice or locally made bread worth about twenty pesos each visit). He was also very often away from home, yet whenever we met, he showered us with stories. More than anything, he was always concerned about his family: Cambriya, his gentle and rather quiet wife whose back was bent over from osteoporosis, and his children and his grandchildren as

well.

2. Worrying about his grandchildren while begging¹⁴

2.1 Moving around to survive

Papa and Cambriya lived with the family of their fourth daughter Vilma. Vilma was married to Kapirin. They had six children. So there were two families and ten members in Papa's household in 1999. Everybody, except for small children, had some sort of job. They all worked hard, yet none of them earned enough to qualify as the main breadwinner. Their earnings were limited and fluctuated unpredictably throughout our eight-month observation.

Papa and Cambriya frequently resorted to begging. They traveled to neighboring cities about two weeks every month. They occasionally took along Carmensita, the eldest daughter of Vilma and Kapirin. Papa and Cambriya traveled together from one city to another but went begging separately. If Carmensita was with them, she went with her grandmother. Each one of them could earn roughly 30 to 50 pesos a day. With this, they paid for a place to sleep and food to eat during their sojourns. They also bought souvenirs for those who stayed home, especially for their daughter and grandchildren. Such gifts were often clothes like T-shirts and blouses, each one of which cost about 30 pesos. Papa also liked to buy cigarettes¹⁵ for himself, while Cambriya preferred to purchase "mamaq" (chews of betel nut and piper betel leaves with lime) for herself. Overall, a two-week sojourn of begging allowed them to bring home from 200 to 500 pesos cash. Christmas season offered them the best opportunities: they were able to bring home as much as 900 pesos in November and 1000 pesos in December. Papa recounted to us:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

Fishing is so much better than begging, of course. If I could go fishing often enough, I would not even think about "negosyo" (meaning small businesses such as peddling

in non-fishing sectors). *Well, anyway, I am too tired (because of age). I find it too difficult to peddle decorations around. (Among the Sama-Bajau living in Hong Kong area,) some of them are angry with me, and they would come up to me and demand that I “Stop begging!” But if I gave up begging (and do nothing at home); my back would shrivel and I would be unable to walk at all. Look at others (referring to other elder Sama-Bajau neighbors)! Their backs are so hunched (gesturing that he does not like the way they look). They can walk only like this (demonstrating a hobbling way of walking). If you do nothing but eat and sleep all day, your blood circulation becomes poor. If you do not perspire, blood will not circulate in your entire body.*

When he went begging in Davao City, he preferred places far from Isla Verde, specifically Buhagin and Calinan. He said the distance would help him avoid meeting people he knew. He found begging exhausting both physically and mentally. Many times we saw him lie down on the floor to rest as soon as he arrived home.

One day my research assistant Claire and I met Cambriya on the wooden footbridge between Isla Verde and the High Way (Quezon Boulevard). Obviously she was on her way home from downtown where she had been begging for hours. Her white hair appeared so disordered that we could hardly tell whether it was tied backwards or forwards. She tied a rag around her head that absorbed her sweat and the dust from the street. She walked without a cane, holding a white plastic cup in her hand instead. Her back and knees were acutely bent, and her body shook tremendously from side to side with each step she took. She was looking down as usual. When I tried to meet her eyes, it seemed like she had turned off all the lights from within: they were the eyes of dead fish. She wasn't there at all; so under the blazing sun, I could not greet her.

In Papa's case, the shift of livelihood did not happen at once; it was a long and gradual process since he settled in Isla Verde. In the early 1980s, he peddled shells and pearls, following other Sama-Bajau peddlers. He was, though, the very first one to try this peddling business among his house group. As we described earlier, it was the time he lost the Cebuano fish buyers who used to provide him with capital for blast fishing

operations. So he needed to switch to another livelihood. He eventually chose “*negosyo*”, the shell and pearl business.

But Papa proved to be a poor businessman; he lacked basic skills. He could not communicate effectively other than in the Sinama language. He could negotiate with potential customers only through sign and body language. This was difficult since he sold mostly to the crew of foreign cargo ships anchored at various piers dotting the Gulf of Davao, namely Sasa, Sta. Ana, Panabo and others. Without his own boat, he joined his relatives or neighbors who owned small boats and paddled from Isla Verde to those piers for his business.

Having information regarding the arrival times of cargo ships at the piers was crucial to succeed in the business. Papa and his fellows got such information from the security guards. It was not free. They needed to pay the security guards twenty pesos each time for the information and the “informal” business permits to sell to the crews. Papa recalled that his sales were able to reach from 500 pesos to 1,000 pesos (net sales) on a lucky day. Approximately 30 to 50 per cent of his net sales would be his net profits at the time. The transactions were sometimes in cash and at other times in barter. The latter was more gainful, Papa added, only if he was lucky. For example, one day, one of his sons-in-law successfully traded a piece of “*budyong*,” a large helmet shell, which was polished white as a decoration, for a gas stove. The wholesale cost of the shell was merely 50 pesos. This “generous” customer was “Koreano” (Koreans, or possibly other nationals from Northeast Asia).

In those days, Papa was selling two types of goods. One type was decorations, including plastic and shell products. These came in animal-shapes such as deer and birds. Each one of them had a logo of “Davao City” somewhere that makes it look like a local souvenir. There were also polished shells and “chandeliers” typically made of tiny “*sigay*” (cowrie shells). The other type was products using “pearls” (plastic pearls and fresh-water cultured pearls), particularly necklaces, bracelets, pendant tops as well as earrings.

Papa and his customers negotiated the prices on the spot. He always tried to sell the items at twice or triple the wholesale cost. He repeatedly said to us, “There is no business person who is not a liar.” It was easier to sell his items at higher prices when his customers were foreigners. Take shell chandeliers made of many local tiny cowries for example: local customers paid only 300 to 600 pesos per item while customers from other countries did not mind paying more than 1000 pesos for the same product. One time, Papa sold such a chandelier to a foreigner (who looked Korean) at 1,200 pesos-

When we met Papa in 1997, he had quit the selling business¹⁶ and had become an almost “full-time” mendicant. In November and December ~~in~~ 1999, he still had a stock of plastic decorations and shell chandeliers equivalent roughly of 240 pesos wholesale cost, but he was not able to sell them by the end of 1999. Papa continued:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

There are still fish in Isla Verde. If we could use dynamite, we may still get a large catch. The Coast Guard is watching there, though, so we cannot use dynamite. Otherwise, we get arrested. (In Davao City) we no longer have suppliers (of the operating capital for fishing) anyway. If we go as far as to Tibanban¹⁷, we might be able find more fish because the coral is better preserved there. (Even so, it is still hard to continue fishing activities) some (of the Sama-Bajau) are begging, and others are peddling secondhand clothes. They are doing so to survive. Those who feel ashamed of begging will not do so. We (indicating Papa himself and Cambriya) are already old, and we do not feel much shame in begging. Others (younger Sama-Bajau) will not beg so long as they have capital (for other businesses). I do not want my children or grandchildren to beg. So, I always say to them, “Don’t you ever go begging!”¹⁸

Papa added:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

It (How much he can earn from mendicancy) depends on the timing. Before payday¹⁹,

most of people are reluctant to give us anything. But once they get their salaries, they give us alms; especially those who have kind hearts (here in Davao City). It was not like that where we came from (indicating the places of origins of the Sama-Bajau in Isla Verde in general). In Basilan, Zamboanga and Jolo, people would not give us anything; they would confront us, saying “Why are you begging? I have no money (to give to you). But here (in Davao) nobody would say such a thing to me.

In this household, the only male member of an income-producing age was Papa’s son-in-law, Kapirin. He also used to engage in spear fishing. But by the time we met him in 1999, he had practically quit fishing and started a shell and pearl peddling business. But his operations were sporadic because of the lack of finances.

In May, 1999, he got the first shell and pearl products for his business from Banessa (Papa’s third daughter) who visited *Hong Kong* then with her husband Albales to attend a wedding. There was no direct contact between Kapirin and Banessa. Banessa gave the products to Papa who then offered them to Kapirin²⁰.

From May, 1999, to July, 1999, Kapirin barely sold any of the shell and pearl products. It was only in August, 1999, that he started recording some sales, which never exceeded 200 to 300 pesos in gross and therefore yielded only about 100 pesos in net profits every week. He went out to many places: Davao International Airport in the morning; and beach resorts (mostly those for the locals) and downtown hotels (where people come to attend conferences and seminars) during the daytime. On weekends, he peddled for longer hours. Sometimes he walked to Times Beach, looking for local tourists as potential customers. At other times, he went to the beaches on Samal Island by a “*pump boat*” (a small boat with an engine) he borrowed from Asahi, the husband of Langkatiga (Papa’s second daughter), who was also a shell and pearl vendor but who did not work on Sundays, being a Christian-convert. While peddling the shells and pearls along the shore, he occasionally went spear fishing. But this was intended not for commercial purposes but simply for his personal pleasure and domestic consumption. He also asked for leftovers at small-scale local restaurants while peddling in beach resorts. He reported

to us it was good enough to feed himself, if not his entire family.

Banessa (Papa's fourth daughter) was pregnant when we met her in May, 1999. She was expecting her sixth child, or her seventh, if a baby who did not survive were to be included. Until she gave birth in July, 1999, she occasionally went begging in the public market, where she would ask for small change. She also received food occasionally. Even though the amount she earned from such operations seemed small, it contributed to the upkeep of the entire household. Once she stopped begging, the level of the daily consumption of fruits, vegetables and fish in the household dropped significantly.

Banessa started on *ukay-ukay*, or secondhand clothes business in November, 1999, three months after giving birth. She left home at five o'clock every morning and peddled in Bankerohan Market or Agrado Market. At one time, she brought four to five pieces of used clothes²¹, which were not repaired or dyed, unlike the ones the female vendors in Group Two were peddling. After about two-hours peddling, she returned home around seven o'clock in the morning. That became her routine.

The amount of cash Banessa earned from her *ukay-ukay* business was unpredictable but more regular than her begging operations. Her *ukay-ukay* business yielded from 30 pesos to 50 pesos of net profit every day. It helped the household but did not make a significant contribution²². Soon she began to beg again whenever she had a chance, while still peddling clothes in the public market, bringing home vegetables and fruits. However, she quit the entire operation of peddling and begging in December, 1999, explaining that she found it hard to breastfeed her baby while working outside and that the baby eventually fell sick. But we observed that her capital was exhausted, too.

Aside from female economic activities, Papa's household was characterized by the relative independence of its individual members. Whenever they went off to either beg or peddle in places far from their house in Isla Verde, they left the "home" household and formed his/her/their own flexible subunits while they were away. Although they might bring some cash or commodities back to the "home" household, they were

principally free to decide how they spent their earnings without consulting the members who remained back “home.” What could be contributed to the “home” household at their return was sort of “surplus” from their consumptions and expenditures while they were away. In doing so, it can be said that they were dispersing risks over time and space to increase the chance of survival of each member. This flexible formation of subunits that arose from the nature of its members’ mobility, allowed each of them freedom to feel his/her agency to a certain degree. However, this resulted in an uneven and unpredictable redistribution of income among the household members.

The monthly average cash income of Papa’s household during our observation in 1999 was 2,306.3 pesos. Income per head per month was 205.0 pesos, only one fourth of that of Biraiya’s household in Group Two. How could they survive with this extremely low level of cash income in the city? As we will see later in this chapter, Papa’s household activities were extensively supported by assistance both in cash and in kind from relatives who had been converted to Christianity and living relatively decent lives. Papa’s household members were also allowed to purchase cassava and other needs on credit from nearby *sarisari* stores (a local version of small convenience stores) owned by a Tausug. Without such social relations, Papa and his household members could not meet their daily needs. This is not only because of Papa’s and Cambriya’s age and incapacities; this was more due to their lack of direct access to resources now available around the Christian church²³ with *SamaDilaut* pastors, where more missionaries from outside had started to come and donate the community cash, food, medication, education, information, etc.

2.2 Papa’s life as a chief of the “Bajau”, and as a mendicant

Members of this household made eighteen trips during our observation in 1999; of which, Papa and/or Cambriya, as highly mobile members in this household, made sixteen.

When Papa went alone, it was usually a short sojourn that lasted about three days to

attend a wedding ceremony in another Sama-Bajau community. As a recognized “chief of the Bajau” (that was actually how he and the people in his neighborhood introduced him to us), sometimes he was called for to negotiate a marriage between two families, and eventually to perform the wedding ceremony for the couple. At other times, he came simply as a guest. The communities he visited for weddings were located close to Davao City, namely Sta. Cruz in the Province of Davao del Sur where many *SamaDilaut* from Talksangay settled and General Santos City where he also had some relatives. Those cities were reachable by bus, and the families of the marrying couple always provided for the transportation.

When Papa took Cambriya along, they traveled to other cities to beg. Sometimes they stayed only in one city, and at other times, they toured several cities before returning to Davao City. In both cases, however, their destinations were limited to cities within Mindanao Island. Butuan City in the Province of Agusan del Norte and Cagayan de Oro in the Province of Misamis Oriental were their favorite places to sojourn. Papa pointed to three reasons for such choices. First, compared to Davao City, the local governments (especially the police) in those cities were rather kind towards beggars. Second, there were fewer “Bajau” beggars in those cities²⁴. And third, Papa (and Cambriya) had very few acquaintances in those cities; so hardly anybody knew them. So they did not feel ashamed of what they were doing. Papa explained:

(recorded on October 19, 1999)

When you beg, you should not coerce people to give you anything. Just sit on the street like this [to demonstrate to us, he squatted with his back straight on the spot], and just reach out your arm towards passersby. Some beggars pressure people, almost grabbing them by their necks. But you know, people would not feel like giving anything if they are forced to do so. They would rather chase us out, instead. So, you should not force anybody to give.....”Hesus!” I would keep sitting like this from five o’clock in the morning to till three o’clock in the afternoon. I need to stand up and stretch my body like this [demonstrating the movement to us] from time to time because otherwise my body aches. Then, I sit again to continue begging.....Beggars

*from Jolo [referring to a group of Sinama speaking beggars whose place of origin differs from his] approach stores when they find customers in there. If they find people eating at a restaurant, they go up to them [to beg]. “Hesus! You should not beg like that! Don’t bully them!” [Papa shouted to us]. Policemen say I am kind. They say it’s good that I try to stop beggars from bullying. Begging is not banned in Butuan, Cagayan [de Oro] , San Francisco [in Agusan del Sur Province] and Gingoog City [in Misamis Oriental Province]. [In those cities] there are also many Bisayan beggars who come from Surigao.....I wonder why begging is banned in Davao [City]. Once we get caught and jailed, we will never be bailed out. We will die there. Neneng [from Caritas, a charity arm of Catholic Church] once told us so. You know [pointing to Sama-Bajau beggars from other clusters in Hong Kong], if you take along your children to beg.....[he implies, “you will get punished.”]*²⁵

The average travel expense, including transport and food, in this household was 312.3 pesos per month. It was a small amount, considering the frequency of their travels and the number of household members who traveled. Such thriftiness is explained by two facts about their trips. First, they were often offered discounted fares or even free bus trips. Papa said that sometimes they got what he called “special night rates” at off-peak hours. Papa added that at other times the conductors, who were mostly Cebuano Christians, took pity on them and granted them free rides. Second, they usually brought very little “budget” for food from home; they would beg for food, or if the household member was a vendor (like Kapirin whose case will be mentioned next), he spent part of what he earned to feed himself during his trip. As to accommodations, they slept on the streets in most of the cities they visited. In Butuan City, however, they paid ten pesos per head per night²⁶ in a cheap lodging house, where they met mendicants from other ethnic groups or Cebuano mendicants with physical disabilities. Papa added that the place was just good enough to shelter from wind and rain. He continued to comment on his travels as a mendicant:

In Butuan, there are many Sama [mendicants] from Jolo. There are also those from Taulksangay like us. And, there are many of those from MargossaTubig [Zamboanga

del Sur Province]. [Pointing to the corner where Cluster Five, most of whom are from MargossaTubig, in Hong Kong] I mean, those who are living there. Most of them are mothers, begging with their children. I do not think what they are doing is quite right.....Those over there [referring to Cluster Four in Hong Kong] also beg there [in Butuan]. In Dadjangas²⁷, there is a “Badjao Village.” Every Sama person living there is a beggar. [Compared to Dajangas,] there are smaller numbers of Sama beggars in Butuan, indeed. In Cagayan [de Oro] there are many [Sama mendicants], as well as Bagobo beggars. Waka, do you know the Bagobo? I wonder why their hair is so kinky and their skin is so black. [Without a derogatory expression, asking us] it seems that they are different from us [“nato”, including the author and her assistant].....[Pointing to us] There are also Bisayan [Cebuano] beggars like you who are blind.” (recorded October 19 and November 8, 1999)

Aside from Papa and Cambriya, Vilma’s husband, Kapirin, also traveled during our observation. He made two trips to neighboring cities to try out his pearl business in October and November, 1999. Both trips were rather short, lasting only for five days to two weeks. Towards the end of our observation in December, 1999, he stopped traveling to other cities and came to concentrate on his business in Davao City. He recounted to us:

(recorded December 8, 1999)

I found it very hard to peddle in Butuan. I could not find a place to sleep at all. So I had to sleep in the [bus] terminal. And sometimes I even had to sleep standing up.....My food was sometimes only “puso” [rice wrapped in coconut leaves].....I will never do that [peddling pearls in cities other than Davao City] again. I guess those who have a larger amount of capital might go there [cities other than Davao City]. Such vendors must have more pearls, too. Unlike them, I have only a small amount of capital, a small number of pearls, and so I cannot do my business like them. You know, I would also need to pay bus fare [to go to other cities for his business] .

Young members of this kinship cluster showed higher geographical mobility. Nonetheless, those who had tried out their peddling business outside Davao City tended to choose the city as their main location for business and settle in *Hong Kong* as well. In some cases, they moved out from Davao City and settled in other metropolis such as Metro Manila and Metro Cebu where they continued to work as pearl vendors. In general, their destinations were limited to capitalist cities with a certain scale of market economy.

2.3 Cassava, rice and fish to purchase in the market

The number of meals per day in Papa's household depended on the earnings of the day. They ate every time after they concluded their business operations, whether begging or peddling. With the cash they earned, they bought food and fuel to prepare the meal. They usually prepared meals twice a day, around at 10:00 am and around at 4:30 pm. Everybody could potentially cook, but most of the time it was Vilma who played the main role with help of her eldest daughter Kasima. However, due to irregular and unpredictable time schedules, the members of the household often ate separately. Typically, one or two of the three, Papa, Cambriya, and Kapirin, came home later. Meals for them, though the amount varied from a full meal to just leftovers, would be saved so that they could eat when they returned.

In this household, securing a sufficient amount of staples such as cassava or rice was a high priority. Adult members preferred cassava, which they believed produced a longer-lasting feeling of satiety. The children preferred rice. After obtaining the staples, they begged for fish or bought some if they could afford²⁸ it. Fish was often made into "*tinula*" (soup) or "*paksiw*" (fish stewed with vinegar and other spices). Sometimes, it was pan-fried or char grilled. This household seldom consumed meat or eggs for their protein needs. Only in rare cases, did we observe the children eating chicken²⁹.

Most of the vegetables and fruits³⁰ in this household were alms. Household members did not eat such food regularly. Vegetables were usually stir-fried. The spices they used

were “*kamatis*” (local tomatoes) and “*sibuyasbombay*” (violet-colored onions), and salt, similar to the food in other kinship clusters with higher community statuses. Sometimes they used “*bitsin*” (monosodium glutamate, commonly known as AJINOMOTO in the Philippines) as well. Most of the time in place of the usual “*sawsawan*” (dipping sauce), they crushed fresh small green chilies, which they mixed with the food when eating.

Their daily consumption fluctuated from day to day. Calculations based on the monthly record for eight months, the following average daily expenditures may be overestimated. They spent approximately 30 pesos on cassava (two cellophane bags; each one contained 1.5 kg) and 18 pesos on rice (1.0 kg). When the number of this household increased from ten to fifteen in June and July, 1999, however, they spent as much as 80.0 pesos on cassava. During those two months, Amusaldin, Papa’s son from his previous marriage, became ill, and he and his family temporarily stayed with his family. Even at such time of crisis, they struggled to secure a sufficient amount of the staple food to feed every member. They looked for the kinds of fish they could afford in public markets, or simply bought dried fish, which was cheaper than fresh fish in general. Although we recorded they spent 30 pesos on vegetables and 7 pesos on fruits per day, these values were overestimated when put together with the data we had collected by observation. Vilma narrated³¹:

(recorded on September 21, 1999)

In Bankerohan [Market] nobody gave us money. Sometimes I begged [there], and at other times, I didn't. When I begged, they gave fruits, vegetables, and sometimes even fish [by vendors in the market]. Perhaps vegetables are the easiest to get for free. You cannot beg for cassava. It costs five pesos per kilo [at the Bankerohan Market]. But most of the time I would rather buy cassava from Asis Store [the only sarisari owned by a Tausug within Hong Kong area], because the quality of their cassava is good. [Even though the price is higher than in the public market,] it does taste good. Besides, Asis [the name of the store's owner] allows us to buy cassava on credit. We cannot do that at the Bankerohan [Market].....When we [cannot afford and therefore]have no food, we simply lie down and try to sleep. If someone gives us food,

then we can eat. We cannot borrow money. Our neighbors would not lend money to us. My [elder] sisters would not mind lending money to us if they had spare money, though.....

In this household they sometimes also ate boiled “*gabi*” (taro) and “*saba*” (plantain) with “*ginamus*” (salted fish). They ate sea cucumbers as well, on which Vilma commented, “*Unlike in Zamboanga [Talksangay], the sea is far from here, and so we cannot eat them as often as we used to.....*” They bought sea cucumbers their Sama neighbors occasionally collected and brought to their house to sell. Sometimes they ate sea cucumbers raw. And at other times, they boiled sea cucumbers and mixed them with “*pancit*” (fried noodles).

Members of this household usually had meals in the kitchen, sitting on the floor. They placed the staple foods and the side dishes on communal plates, and they helped themselves to the food individually. They ate the food with their right hands, like Muslims. They shut the front door so they could eat in private, unseen by neighbors or any passersby. Adults ate in silence. But the children were always noisy, playing around while enjoying their meals. The adults tolerated this and were often seen smiling to each other.

In this household, Vilma usually shopped for groceries and prepared the meals. During her pregnancy, however, Kapirin, her husband, often helped her with the household chores. Cambriya also helped Vilma with cooking during the daytime; but she became blind after dark,³² so she could not do much. Although Vilma and his other daughters claimed that Papa could cook and he still did so occasionally, we never saw him cooking during our field research.

The number of the members of this household fluctuated throughout the eight months of our research. It ranged from nine to fifteen persons, and if calculated, the average was 11.3 persons. This fluctuation did not affect their consumption level of their staple food much; but the consumption level of their side dishes such as fish as a source of protein

considerably decreased when they had more mouths to feed. This showed this household's vulnerability. Compared to other households in clusters of higher community status, the average intake of side dishes (fish, vegetables, and fruits) per head in this household was always much lower. When a crisis happened and it affected the number of dependents and/or that of income earners, their food intake shrank even further. But children from ages approximately zero to nine were always given priority in the distribution of food in normal times or in times of crisis. Unlike adult members, they had snacks almost every day; they spent one to two pesos each to buy candy from "sarisari" stores in *Hong Kong*. They were never left starving, even when adult members complained about being hungry.

When a member of Papa's household became ill, he or she was taken to a small private clinic attached to the pharmacy at NCCC³³, a shopping mall in Oyangoren Street. They preferred the clinic to the "barangay" health center (community-based health services organization regulated by the Department of Health) for the following reasons. First, the barangay health center was always crowded with patients, and the waiting time was long. Second, it was not very accessible to the Sama-Bajau like the members of this household who had little formal education in school. Vilma lamented, "*Bisayan* [Cebuano] *patients were often prioritized. Unlike them, we did not know how to read.....*"

Despite the disadvantage in their daily caloric intake, the incidence of disease and physical malaise in this household was not significantly higher than those with higher community status. Medical expenses recorded in June, July, September, and December showed they spent an average of 140.6 pesos per month on health care over the eight months in 1999. In June and July, they spent 500 pesos each to purchase medicine for Amsaldin, Papa's son from his previous marriage, who was taking shelter with his family in Papa's household³⁴.

Because of the lack of adequate sanitation in *Hong Kong*, Papa's household often suffered from skin diseases like ringworm and parasitic infestations such as scabies.

Adult members did not even bother to treat themselves³⁵. But Vilma bathed her children and washed them from head to toe whenever she was lucky enough to get soap, hoping it would help cure the scabies that infested her children's skin. Other mothers in the same cluster did the same to their children, especially their infants and toddlers.

None in Papa's household seemed to have contracted tuberculosis. Some in other households of this cluster, however, suffered from tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. When a member of the cluster fell ill, he or she was taken to a clinic attached to a pharmacy nearby or to a public hospital they called "The Regional", actually the Davao Medical Center a tertiary hospital in Davao run by the National Government under the Department of Health. But even though they went to these medical institutions, they often failed to take the prescribed medication due not only to the lack of finances but also to other various reasons³⁶. From time to time, evangelical missionaries came and offered a free clinic for residents in this neighborhood. They distributed basic medicines and vitamin supplements. On such occasions, they naturally gave priority to members of the church under the leadership of a Sama-Dilaut pastor. However, in 1999, Papa's household still had not yet accepted the Christian faith.

2.4 mats, pillows, and "bandihado"

If one walked from the highway, passed through a Maranao-inhabited area, entered *Hong Kong*, and turned right at the first corner, one would immediately have found catwalks made of coconut lumber. If one followed the signboard declaring: "Badjao Christian Community" painted in red against a white background and walked farther inside, one would come to the only Christian church in this particular neighborhood. If one turned right there and walked a few meters on the catwalk, one would reach Papa's stilt house. His house stood at the furthest place from the shoreline, but it stood right at the point where the seawater circulated around the islet of Isla Verde and flowed through as though it were a natural canal. Even at low tide, there was always water under the floor of his stilt house. The location was perfect to park a "bangka" (a small boat), but his household could no longer afford one.

With its red roof and sky blue walls, Papa's house stood out in the neighborhood. From the catwalk, one climbed a ladder to a platform before one could reach his front door. The platform was approximately six square meters in area. There was a jalousie window on the left side of the front door. The front door led inside to a single living room with an area of roughly fifteen square meters.

The walls of his house were made of plywood, the roof, of galvanized iron, and the floors, of coco lumber. All these materials were "non-traditional" since the Bajaus seldom used them before the government provided them free. Such materials actually kept the house hot: the walls and the roof absorbed the heat from the sun at daytime and retained it even after the sun had set; and the limited ventilation kept the room temperature high all the time.

The back door of his house led to the space called "kosina" (kitchen). The space was roughly four to five square meters. It had traditional "nippa" walls and bamboo slat floors, which resulted in much better ventilation. It not only provided space for preparing meals, but also one for dining together, bathing, washing clothes and other personal necessities. It was airy, and it served as the best place for the household members to chat together as well as to have afternoon naps.

We often saw Vilma (Papa and Kasima's fourth daughter) in the "kosina." She sat on the floor and stretched out her legs on which she placed a pillow where her little children, Sonya (her third and youngest daughter) and Gabriel (her third and youngest son) sat. There, we often saw Langkatiga (Papa and Kasima's second daughter) with mother Cambriya's head on her lap, grooming her mother's hair with handmade bamboo comb: each time the comb caught a louse, which Langkatiga squashed with her fingernails, Cambriya would make slurping sounds³⁷. It was also here that Cambriya scrubbed her daughter Vilma's back with a pumice stone during her baths, especially during her pregnancy.

The kitchen space had a window for ventilation. From the window, one saw a view of large Maranao houses and their mosque across the canal. Under the window were: a large steel basin for laundry, soot-blackened cooking pots in various sizes, cooking ladles with long handles, sieves for spreading rice grains and uncooked cassava, white and orange gallon containers for water, white enameled plates with blue edges, brown glass plates, buckets, and other artifacts for daily use.

But there were no durable goods inside Papa's house. We only saw several hand-woven mats, pillows, and clothes kept in cardboard boxes and bags. In front of the wall with no window, where the ancestor spirits dwelt, was a suitcase covered with old clothes. Above the suitcase hung a calendar, courtesy of Davao Diamond Pawnshop (a Cebuano owned pawnshop in downtown). It showed the month of April and was never updated since we started visiting the house. On both sides of the calendar, two wooden sticks were suspended; neither had any decorative purpose. They served simply for their domestic uses: the one on the right was where the household members hung their T-shirts and pants conveniently; and the other on the left served as a rack to keep the "bandehado" (a huge platter used for serving food). The "bandehado" was large, about 60 cm in diameter, and its original pink color was almost lost after being used so many times to serve their guests on special occasions such as weddings.

In contrast to the clutter along wall with no windows, there were only a few things placed along the other three walls. A length of wire was strung from one side to the other, and it was used for hanging skirts, knapsacks, and plastic bags. The silver frame of a loudspeaker was tied to the top of a post, which was actually a bundle of two pieces of thin coconut lumber nailed to each other. None of us, including Papa himself, had clear explanation on why the loudspeaker frame was kept there.

The catwalks that connected Papa's house to the others in the neighborhood were relatively well built and maintained mainly by the Christian church. The church was led by a SamaDilaut pastor named John. Pastor John was trained by Visayan pastors for years and he learned to collect "love offerings" (donations) for his church. He continued

to collect materials for the construction of the walks and bridges, which typically included coconut lumber and bamboos, and occasionally cash, from outsiders. Such outsiders were evangelical missionaries and other independent Christian missionaries as well as local government officers such as Barangay officials. The improved walks and bridges provided those who lived in the neighborhood better access especially to Asis Store (a Tausug owned store in *Hong Kong*) where they purchased water for daily use.

Papa's household spent a daily average of 10 pesos on the purchase of water from Asis Store. In other words, they consumed roughly 40 gallons of water a day. They used the purchased water for cooking, drinking, bathing, and laundry. To save the water, they sometimes utilized sea water they directly drew from under the floor to wash their dirty dishes. They also spent more or less five pesos on detergent and soap every day.

Papa's house had access to electricity. His Christian convert relatives living in the next house had a "meter," which meant a contract with Davao Light and Power Co. They allowed Papa to tap electricity from their line, and collected the charge later. Papa's household spent approximately 70 pesos on electricity every month.

For cooking, Papa's household used about eight pesos worth of firewood bought from Asis Store every day. There was only one hearth in his house. It normally took more than one hour to prepare a meal. First, they cooked cassava as their staple, and then went on to cook their side dishes one by one. "*[Just to finish roasting cassava in the pan] it takes at least thirty minutes. Well, it still takes less time than laundry, though,*" Vilma said to us.

Papa repaired his house twice during our observation period in 1999. The kitchen floor and the living quarter walls were replaced. Each repair cost them about 100 pesos for materials. Compared to the nippa houses where others with lower community status dwelt, his house was made of materials believed to be more durable and with less visible damage from the elements.

2.5 Jesus closer to school

Three of the grandchildren who lived with Papa were of school age when we met them. The eldest one, Kasima (granddaughter), never attended school before. The second one, Gabriel (grandson) enrolled once in a public elementary school in Pampanga³⁸. He was a scholar there as a child of “poor ethnic minorities.” His parents supposed that they would not have to pay for anything at all. They did not realize that there were “miscellaneous” expenses (transport, allowance for lunch and various projects) and eventually failed to afford them. Gabriel himself was totally lost at school. He could not cope with it and he finally dropped out before the end of his first semester. This experience later led his parents to decide not to send his younger brother to school. Vilma recounted to us:

(Vilma, recorded on October 5, 1999)

Sometimes we had money, and at other times, we did not. But teachers in school did not allow my son to be absent, saying that they wanted my son to attend every day. What could we do if we did not have money? We did not even have enough to feed ourselves.....You know, it was neither Pastor [John] nor Neneng [from Karitas] who paid for Gabriel's schooling; it was we who shouldered all the expenses. I thought it would be good if he learned to write and read. But it was just such a waste of money. Gabriel himself did not want to go to school every day.....What do I think he will become when he grows up? Probably, he will be a shell vendor, like his father.

We asked Gabriel about his dream job and he answered:

(Gabriel, recorded on October 5, 1999)

When I grow up? What do you mean? [he did not quite understand our question] Well, I prefer “panaq” (spear gun fishing) [to selling shells and pearls]. I like catching fish!

But Papa and Kapirin (Gabriel's grandfather and father) both had given up fishing. Beyond their generations, much of the knowledge and skills necessary for fishing was not passed on to the children in this household.

Instead of going to school, Gabriel, Bagiya (Vilma's second son) and Melcita (her second daughter) often played with their maternal cousins who lived close to their house. They adjusted their play according to the ebb and flow of the tide in the public space in *Hong Kong*: at low tide, they played with a ball; at high tide, they swam around small boats moored in the area. In both cases, they enjoyed themselves so fully that we could often hear their joyful laughter even from a distance. Sometimes, they played indoors, drawing with pieces of paper and crayons that we brought in for them. They liked drawing characters of popular cartoon films. They also liked to illustrate fishing gear and boats that they were familiar with. Since most of the boats in this neighborhood were owned by Sama-Bajau Christian converts, the children without being aware of it, learned to copy the name "JESUS" that was often painted on the boats.

Papa and his children had never attended school. It was very likely that his grandchildren who lived in his house would also never learn to write and read. His other grandchildren living in other houses, though, enrolled in elementary schools. Their mothers (Papa's eldest daughter Salipa³⁹ and second daughter Lydia) were willing to educate their children. Both of them were Christian-converts, and they received support for educating their children from the church led by Sama-Bajau pastors. The church had a Bible school, which also served as a "daycare center." The center issued certificates to those who successfully completed their own pre-school curriculums, and assisted the children and their parents to enter local elementary schools both within and outside Isla Verde.

Papa wanted his grandchildren to learn to earn a living. Peddling would be good, but begging could be acceptable if they had no choice. He had a vague idea that it would be better if his children could go to school to learn and become economically independent. Any job would do so long as they could survive. What was important for Papa was that

his grandchildren would learn “not to steal.” Papa was also hoping that his grandchildren would be able to provide him with some kind of social security in his old age. He narrated:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

We should cherish children. Children are good. When they become independent, they will help us. When the time comes when I cannot earn for myself, they will be there to help me. It is natural for my grandchildren to take care of me when they grow up and I become a feeble old man. Then, they will draw water for me to take my bath.

In reality, the disparity in human capital investment between Christian converts and non-Christian converts in this group appeared to be widening. I was not quite certain if Papa’s grandchildren would be able to measure up to his expectations when they grew up.

3. As the chief of the “Bajau”⁴⁰

3.1 Papa’s daughters accepted Christianity

Papa and Cambriya considered eighteen households that dwelt in their neighborhood as their “*kampong*.” In terms of the number of the households, their “*kampong*” was larger than those of the “*kampong*” with higher community statues (Group One⁴¹ and Group Two⁴²). But the larger scale did not necessarily indicate a wider safety network. Mutual help in daily life was seen only among the households that were related to each other by blood.

Papa’s household spent more than 5,000 pesos on food, utilities, and medical expenses every month. His household was always in the red. The gap between their needs and income called for constant assistance from his relatives. Such assistance came in kind rather than in cash from his Christian-converted daughters’ households that were relatively better off in his “*kampong*.” Specifically, his eldest daughter Sumala-iya and

his second daughter Lydia considerably helped Papa's household. These two daughters lived nearby, and often shared food, especially fish and vegetables for side dishes with them. Vilma narrated:

(Vilma, recorded on September 13, 1999)

[Among her siblings] *Sumala-iya and Lydia are doing better. [When they can afford] they give us food, and sometimes money as well. They give us thirty pesos... fifty pesos.....I am on good terms with my sisters, and we never quarrel.*

Vilma's husband Kapirin also engaged in sharing, but he did so in a different way from his wife. His sharing was done through his shell and pearl business: he and his fellow vendors pooled their individual sales then divided the gross profits equally among them at the end of each business operation. Kapirin's share would naturally become much smaller than what he could have earned by himself, but he accepted such custom because he knew he could get cash, no matter how small, even when he failed to sell anything so long as his fellow vendors successfully sold something.

These sharing systems helped Papa's household survive everyday life, yet they were not enough to significantly lift up the precarious living standard of the household. But despite the daily hardship, Papa never hesitated to help his children. For example, Papa immediately took Abraham, his son from his previous marriage, and his entire family of five members, under his wing when Abraham finally collapsed after suffering from a chronic stomach ailment. Papa brought his son to the community health center in the barangay for consultation, and then bought him the prescribed medicine from a pharmacy nearby.

Abraham and his family were not converted to Christianity at the time, and so Papa offered two religious rituals to pray for his son's recovery: he performed "*pakansumangat*" in June, 1999; and "*pag-mboq*" in July, 1999⁴³. As the two rituals were rather private and attended only by the household members, Papa's household spent only about 200 pesos for them. But with this relatively small budget, the rituals

appeared to help the patient himself and uplifted the rest of the household members' spirits greatly: everybody looked so highly spirited after each ritual. Papa mentioned his wish to perform another celebration to thank God when his son recovered but we did not have the chance to observe this.

When Vilma gave birth to her youngest son Bagiya at home, they called an old woman named Dakmatya⁴⁴ for assistance. She was a “*panday*” (traditional midwife) in Papa's group. Vilma had a normal delivery, and they paid 50 pesos in cash to the “*panday*” as a token of gratitude.

Papa Melcito stood as the chief in his group during our fieldwork in 1999. Although several households of his group were converted to Christianity, it was still Papa, rather than Pastor John, who performed significant social events like wedding ceremonies⁴⁵. Papa's family was also known for its talent in music. For example, Papa's son Abdul was a wedding singer who was invited to perform for weddings not only in Isla Verde but also for those in other Sama-Bajau communities outside Davao City. Abdul earned his living out of fishing, not out of singing, but he took great pride in his role as a musician. Papa talked to us about his musical experience:

(Papa, recorded on October 19, 1999)

When my parents were alive, we owned “agung” [gong] and “kulintang” [musical instrument with gongs in different sizes arranged horizontally]. Whenever there was a wedding, my mother would lend out those instruments, just like we do now⁴⁶. The instruments need tuning [Papa illustrated the instruments to show us]. Otherwise, they will not produce the proper tones. The “kulintang” requires two players, while the “agung” takes three people to play⁴⁷. So, that would make five players in total. The musicians should play perfectly together. Or else, the music would not sound good at all. Cambriya [his wife] is an excellent “kulintang” player. Indeed, she was once invited to play the instrument by Pastor John in his church. Lydia [his second daughter] is also a good at it. Vilma [his fourth daughter] and I can also play the instrument. But [Sama-Bajau] families other than mine know very little about music

[the traditional one that Papa and his family members prefer to play]. *Nowadays, the music they play is too short. They play only for three hours.....My family can play much longer. If there is a wedding, it would be a great opportunity for you to listen to the music my family plays. Beautiful music helps each individual dancer perform longer.*

As a “*djin*” (spiritual medium), Papa took care of sick members of his group: he saw patients, diagnosed possible causes of their illnesses, and if necessary, he performed curing rites for the patients as well. By the time of our research, however, he had stopped offering his “traditional medicine” to those who had accepted Christian faith. Indeed, such Christian converts preferred to attend the prayer and healing meetings of the church. The church also helped them visit hospitals downtown. Papa and his household members, who were not baptized, were not officially entitled to monetary assistance provided by the church. The lack of the access to such external resources made Papa’s household even more vulnerable to the sudden drop in per head disposable income when any household member(s) fell ill. The medical expenses eventually crippled the tight household budget. In the worst case, such vulnerability caused secondary crises.

During our fieldwork in 1999, Pastor John emerged as a new leader in the group. Although Papa was still respected by most of his Sama-Bajau neighbors, his leadership was waning and becoming more symbolic. In the actual political scenes in everyday life, he no longer attempted to deal with the local government for any policies favorable to his group. Only in rare occasions would he meet, as the “chief of the Bajau,” visitors from the CSSDO and Caritas who were willing to help the Sama Bajau in Isla Verde. He was always humble and soft-spoken to those visitors. In other words, he seemed rather passive, and tried not to initiate any negotiations with them at all. On the other hand, Pastor John, presented a stronger type of political leadership, in which he strove to gain assistance successfully from both evangelical missionaries and the local government agencies. Nevertheless, the pastor was careful not to involve Papa directly in his church operations, let alone coerce him to convert to Christianity.

3.2 As the eldest Bajau

Papa and his household members did not have a direct economic relationship with the Sama-Bajau who dwelt in *Japan Pikas* (Gwapo's Group, Group One). Kapirin, however, occasionally resorted to ask for help from male members of Biraiya's Group (Group Two) who engaged in the shell and pearl business at the resort hotel and who had merchandise to sell when he had difficulties in getting pearls from his relatives in Zamboanga City. Kapirin narrated to us:

(Kapirin, recorded on December 8, 1999)

There are pearls here [in Davao City] as well. But they are more expensive [than those he could buy from his relatives in Zamboanga City]. [When I run out of pearls to sell] I get pearls from Tirso and Allan⁴⁸ [who belong to Biraiya's Group, Group Two]. [Not as consignments] I have to purchase them in cash. I spend up to 1,000 pesos to buy pearls from them at a time. That would allow me to get only a few pearls. My money is limited. Look at Tirso and Allan. They have a much bigger capital (up to 10,000 pesos) for their business. You know, they are rich.....

Papa's presence as the "chief of the Bajau" had little to do with his economic status. Everybody knew his livelihood drifted to mendicancy as he got older. But he was respected by his Sama-Bajau neighbors not just because he was one of the pioneer Sama-Bajau migrants to Isla Verde but mainly because he was considered to be knowledgeable of the "old" ("*karaan*") social and religious ways.

The most significant ceremonies in which we observed Papa involved as a "traditional" leader were weddings. The weddings were rare occasions in which everybody-all the neighbors in *Hong Kong*, relatives, and neighbors in other Sama-Bajau communities outside Isla Verde-were invited to attend. Normally, each wedding lasted for three days, and it cost an enormous amount of money. Among the Sama-Bajau in our research site, including those in Papa's group, the groom's family paid "*banghad*" (bride price) to the

bride's family before the nuptial ceremony. In the case of Papa's group, it was said that the groom's family paid more than 30,000 pesos⁴⁹ (if the bride is young in her teens and has never been married before) to cover the cost of the celebration including the meals served for the guests. Such financial burdens were shared by the groom's relatives. Indeed, Papa's household contributed 2,000 pesos each⁵⁰ for the weddings of two of his grandsons. One of them got married in May, 1999, and the other, in June, 1999.

When there were weddings held in Papa's group, the Sama-Bajau from other groups also came and helped. Aida and Rajema from Gwapo's group lent out their wedding costumes-both a western style white gown and a yellow "sablai"⁵¹- and also helped the bride dress up and put on her makeup properly for the occasion. Females from Biraiya's group also visited the bride's fitting room to help. Females from the groups in lower community statues, especially those from Magsahaya's group, came as well; they could not offer any direct help, but they dressed up and gathered around the makeshift stage to dance. Those from Kapring's group, however, were rarely seen attending weddings held by Papa's group.

Burials were another type of social event. Although Papa's role was much smaller, wide cooperation among the Sama-Bajau beyond the boundary of Papa's group was observed. The center of their mutual help was the sharing of the cost to hold the gathering, perform the rite, and travel to bury the dead in the cemetery in Babak in Samal Island, across the sea from Isla Verde. During our fieldwork, Papa's household contributed more or less 30 pesos whenever there was a death in the neighborhood. The scale of the assistance for the burial in terms of the amount of money from Papa's group was much smaller, though, than that of the land-based Sama in *Japan Pikas* and that of Group Four in *Hong Kong*.

Papa recognized the other group of *Sama-Dilaut* (Group Five, Magsahaya's group) in Isla Verde. He had a say about their way of life. Indeed, he stressed to us the difference between his group and the other group: their way of life was "mas *lisud*" (more difficult,

challenging, due to lack of money in this particular context). They totally depended on mendicancy for their living. He recounted this to us:

(Papa, recorded on August 17, 1999)

In the case of the Sama[Dilaut] other than our group [particularly pointing at Magsahaya's group], it is not only the elders who beg. You see, they are the "Bajau" who come from MargossaTubig, Dalosan⁵², Suba-nipa⁵³, Zamboanga [City] and Jolo, right? Those people beg in Butuan and Cagayan [de Oro]. Their children beg, too, "Hesus"[Jesus]! If those children were mine, I would never let them beg at all. But I am not in a position to stop them. I can understand that they are struggling to survive in their own ways.....In our group, children do not beg. It's true that they do not go to school, either, yet it's still better than going begging, because, who knows, they could get into traffic accidents while begging in the streets.....in that case, it would be much better for them to stay at home.

Papa's daughter Vilma added that we should not believe everything the Sama-Bajau in the lower community status say to us. She commented:

(Vilma, recorded on December 6, 1999)

[Pointing to Magsahaya's Group, Group Five]⁵⁴ I cannot believe what Magsahaya says. Every day, she says she has no money, but I just cannot believe that. She begs every day, doesn't she? Then she must have money.

3.3 Leaving Maranao's political "protection"

Male members of Papa's household were in the business of selling pearls and shells. The ornaments they sold as souvenirs were usually purchased from Cebuano merchants in Panabo City, the Province of Davao del Norte. The wholesale prices of the ornaments varied according to the type of products. For example, a large-sized deer-shaped decoration cost about 40 pesos, and a bird-shaped one of the same size costs about 50 pesos. As to the pearl products, they went to Gaisano and Aldevinco Shopping Malls

where Maranao merchants who owned retail shops sold to them strands of cultured pearls and other related products. In any case, they usually needed to pay for the products in cash for each small transaction. In other words, they couldn't get credit. No form of credit transactions between the Cebuano and Maranao merchants and Papa's household members were observed.

When Papa's household members faced any shortage of cash in daily life, they resorted to Asis's store in *Hong Kong*. What was special about this Taosug owned store was that it allowed Sama-Bajau neighbors like Papa and his family to pawn "*habul*" (blanket) and "*malong*" (originally a Maranao garb: a cylindrical item of clothing used for multiple purposes). For every one piece, they were given 30 pesos as credit to purchase only one item from the store, cassava, the staple food they needed for sustenance. They were supposed to pay the debt within a week with 20 percent interest in cash: 30 pesos would become 36 pesos by the due date. Among the household members, Vilma most frequently utilized the credit, and indeed, every Sunday, she tried to repay her debts as much as possible. If she failed, she would lose the "*habol*" and/or "*malong*" she pawned.

Sometimes, Papa's household faced unusual increases in expenditures, like medical expenses beyond their normal basic needs. Then they pawned their cashable assets downtown. Typically, they visited Cebuano-owned pawnshops. Although their "*habol*" and "*malong*" were never acceptable, their metal watches and gold jewelry were welcome. Since Papa and his household members had little surplus and savings anyway, the value of the individual article they pawned was always small: the amount of borrowed cash at one time never exceeded 500 pesos. We never saw them successfully redeem their pawned articles during our fieldwork in 1999.

After migrating to Isla Verde, Papa and his group followed Pagandaman, a Maranao minority leader who was elected Barangay Captain. They used to live in *Japan Pikas*, but after large waves washed away their houses in 1984, most of the Sama-Bajau residents, except those in Gwapo's Group, transferred to the area that came to be called

Hong Kong. Since the Maranao residents also moved to areas close to *Hong Kong*, Pagandaman's political dominance over Papa's group and other Sama-Bajau habitants continued until Pagandaman lost in the 1992 local elections. Papa narrated to us about those days:

(Papa, recorded on August 17, 1999)

Pagandaman is half crazy. I'm sure you have noticed that. The fence that blocks our way [from the Maranao-habited area to Hong Kong area]... I have tried to negotiated with Asis [a Taosug store owner who lives in Hong Kong and a relative of Pagandaman], but it seems like that they are going to close the entrance [so that the Sama-Bajau can no longer pass through]. 'The Bajau always cast shadows, and that's why we do not have sunshine,' he said to me. But how could we make the sun disappear? He does not have respect for us. I mean, that Maranao[referring to Pagandaman]... You must be aware of this, right?

Though Papa expressed hard feelings about the Muslim Maranao in the neighborhood, his household together with other households in this group celebrated "*Hari Raya Puasa*" every year. In other words, they had Muslim-orientations in certain aspects of their life style like other Sama-Bajau migrants in *Hong Kong*. But Papa's group celebrated the festival differently from Gwapo's group and Biraiya's group. Vilma mentioned:

(Vilma, recorded on December 6, 1999)

We will go over there [pointing to the public space in the center of Hong Kong], and we will gamble. On the day of "Hari Raya," many people enjoy gambling. We do this only once a year. No, we do not [fast]. "Deretso." [straightaway: she meant, they enjoy the festival without bothering to fast for a month during Ramadan, as the Muslim do]

Given that Papa's family no longer had strong political connections with the Maranaos, we asked Papa whether they received any assistance from other outsiders such as the

city government and church-based NGOs. Papa narrated to us:

(Papa, recorded on June 22 and August 17, 1999)

We receive no assistance from CSSDO [City Social Services and Development Office]. They say the Bajau are too lazy to succeed in mat-weaving business [that the CSSDO tried to develop among the Bajau women by providing credits].....The government comes when they want, they do what they want to do, and leave.....But please keep it secret when the CSSDO and Karitas [a charity arm of Catholic Church] offer us assistance. Otherwise, the Maranaos[his Maranao neighbors]would get jealous of us. [To improve the standard of living for the Sama-Bajau] First, we need housing lots, then, the church [pointing to the church headed by Pastor John], and education for our children. The [construction of] church was helped by the government through Pastor Bobong [an Ilongo Pastor who found in Pastor John a potential leader; then trained him, and helped him establish his ministry in Hong Kong]. It is good that we have the Bajau-owned church. Now our children can go to school [the Bible school with a daycare for preschool children attached to the church].

As the conversion to Christianity progressed in Papa's neighborhood, the pastors in the church gradually came to play a role in negotiations for assistance with the government and NGOs. Since Papa and his household members were not members of the church, they did not have the direct access to the benefits the pastors successfully obtained for their followers. However, through her Christian converted elder sisters, Vilma sought information and connections that could help her obtain such benefits. Indeed, she was able to have her name listed as a potential participant in the livelihood program offered by the CSSDO in October, 1999. This is the same livelihood program that Biraiya's group eagerly took part in. The micro finance program was supposed to allow Vilma to borrow 4,000 pesos on the condition that she returned 130 pesos every week. The term of payment was six to twelve months with two per cent interest a month. But the money was never released to her during our fieldwork. Seeing her predicament, we contributed 100 pesos from our pocket to her to help start a secondhand clothes business in

November, 1999.

3.4 Self-identification ever-changing

Papa and Cambriya taught us that there were many ways to identify the Sama-Bajau in Isla Verde, based on the style and place of residence. Papa's and Cambriya's generation lived in houseboats. They were called "*Sama Palau*;" although Papa and Cambriya would rather call themselves "*Sama Dilaut*". In terms of place of origin, they said they were "*Sama Zamboanga*." They called the younger generation of their daughters who had always lived in a house on land: "*Sama Lumaq*" (the Sama living in a house). Because their daughters grew up in Davao City, they could also be called "*Sama Davao*."

Papa explained that the Sama-Bajau in *Hong Kong* came from different places including Margossa Tubig, Sangali (a place within Zamboanga City), and Jolo and Siasi Islands. Their manners of speaking were slightly different from each other, yet they all spoke the same language, Sinama, which they used for daily commerce within their community. But they were all called the "Bajau" by the non-Sama populations in Davao City. In that sense, they had a sense they had a sense of belonging to the same ethnic group.

At the end of our first fieldwork in 1999, the number of the Christian converted Sama Dilaut steadily increased. Papa commented on the phenomena:

(Papa, recorded on August 17 and October 19, 1999)

I do not mind at all that my children and grandchildren are becoming Christians, because I believe that there is only one God. It [practicing Christian worship] is the same as [practicing] "mboq". Muslim mosques and Christian churches are just the same as well. We do not need to ban other religions. So long as we can help each other, it's even better [to have different religions]. It would be no problem with me if my children and grandchildren stop praying to the "mboq" [ancestor spirits]. Nowadays, it is more important for them to go to church, pray to God, as well as

learn to read. If they know how to read, they will never get lost wherever they may go.....There is only one God. We are “Bajau,” and you are Bisaya [Cebuano], but we are the same. [In front of God] We are all human. It’s the same thing even if you were Muslims, for example, Maranao⁵⁵.Christians are less likely to be tempted by “lumay.”⁵⁶ If you do not believe me, why don’t you ask Pastor John? We should never perform sorcery against others, because God never permits us.

Papa and his family members always identified themselves Sama to the Muslims. Unlike Gwapo’s and Biraiya’s groups with higher community status, they seldom appropriated Muslim self-identification, or named themselves Islamized Samal, to non-Sama populations in Davao City. On the other hand, Sama Dilaut pastors proudly wore and used their new identity as “Christian Bajau, ” as more and more Sama Dilaut in this neighborhood were baptized.

In this chapter, we saw Papa and Cambriya, rather strategically (whether they admit or not), using their “Bajau” identity to advantage when they begged in the streets. Such self-identification as the “Bajau”, was however, rapidly changing as the Christian conversion continued within the community.

The “Bajau” identity, which Papa and Kasima projected in a rather miserable manner when they begged, was in

¹ Most of the Sama-Bajau in *Hong Kong* area used neither “*apilyedo*” (surname) nor middle name (typically surname as well) unlike the Cebuano speakers, the majority in Davao City. When asked their surnames, they often answered using the given names of their fathers. Papa Melcito was also called Angales by other Sama-Bajau neighbors. To us, he called himself Melcito Albarezraja Angales, which sounded somewhat like a Muslim name. This is only to show an example, though, because I have changed the personal names that appear in this paper for the protection of their privacy.

² Babak is the name of a place in Samal Island, which is located across from Isla Verde. In this particular context, though, it was mentioned as an example of places where they moored their houseboat by chance in their nomadic voyage.

³ Similar to the note above, Davao was mentioned as an example in this particular context of his narrative.

⁴ Referring to the body of the houseboat particularly, he was stressing that they would dig out a tree trunk to make such a boat like a dugout canoe, and that it was very different from the way

the Sama-Bajau built fishing boats using plywood in Isla Verde.

⁵ Since he recalled that the abandonment of houseboat dwelling happened only after his marriage, we estimated this period based on the estimated ages of his children who were all said to be born in the “house on the land.”

⁶ The Tausug were called “Joloano” or “Sug” in most of the original narratives that appear in this book, including this one by Papa. However, to make it easier for the audience, the author has decided to call them Tausug instead.

⁷ The hadji-fish-buyers in this particular context were presumably land-based Sama.

⁸ A Christian ejaculation expressed in the Spanish way of pronunciation of the word Jesus, commonly used by the Cebuano speaking Christian population in Davao. The use of this phrase does not mean that the speaker is Christian. While Papa pronounced Jesus as Hesus like the Cebuano speakers do, those converted evangelical Christians in this house group rather pronounced the name as Jesus like the speaker of the “standard “English language.

⁹ It was said that the destruction of the coconut trees was mainly caused over the time by migrants who needed to cut down the trees to secure materials for the construction of their houses.

¹⁰ In accordance with the context in which it is used, the “military” means members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and this was extended to the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Coast Guard.

¹¹ A district along the shore in Samal Island across from Isla Verde.

¹² A district along Quezon Boulevard, within a walking distance from *Japan Pikas*.

¹³ A town in the Province of Davao del Sur, where a group of Sama Dilaut Christian converts have settled with missionaries and related NGO workers.

¹⁴ See the following paper, Aoyama, Waka. "Social Inequality among Sama-Bajau Migrants in Urban Settlements : A Case from Davao City." *Hakusan jinruigaku (Hakusan Journal of Anthropology)*, no. 15 2012.3: 7-44.

¹⁵ He usually bought individual cigarettes from variety stores (*sari-sari* stores) or from peddlers. Aside from cigarettes and betel chewing, no expenditures on non-basic goods (ex. alcoholic drinks) were observed in this household.

¹⁶ This type of business has been operated by other households in the same group. Typically, they display larger helmet shells and bird-shaped decorations on the outriggers of their small boats, while they carry pearl products in their waist pouches. Vendors are mostly males, yet they often take along their wives and children in their boats. But when they peddle on the land, only male members engage in the business, leaving their wives and children at home.

¹⁷ A name of a place in the Province of Davao Oriental, where the Sama-Bajau males in Group Four in this book conducted fishing activities during our observation in 1999.

¹⁸ Mendicancy was rarely practiced by younger members of this house group partly because of the influence of the Bible school in the house church within the group, which discouraged their children from wandering in the streets. Nonetheless, the seasonal “begging” operations before and during Christmas was commonly observed among them as the Church Pastors tolerated their taking such “opportunities” available only for two months every year in the context of the Christian-dominant city.

¹⁹ Salaries were normally paid twice a month (every fifteen days) on the 15th and on the 30th of each month.

²⁰ Although I did not have a chance to validate, this transaction should not be considered as consignments. For one thing, Kapirin did not return cash or anything in kind to Bani or to Papa whether related or not related to this particular transaction. Later we learned that Papa also gave his only son Alvarez some 2000 pesos in shell and pearl products, or just about the same amount he offered Kapirin, from what he had received from Bani during the wedding in May 1999. Whether Bani gave those products as a gift or as (part of) payment of any debts in the past

remains unknown. But Bani never asked Papa to return cash or anything else in kind during our observation. Most probably, they were given as a gift in this particular context.

²¹ Actually, we (the author and her research assistant) donated 100 pesos as the initial capital to help her start up the business. In this case, she did not have a market plan to attract more customers, nor did she have the financial resources to do so. So she decided to purchase children's clothes, which she found were sold at relatively low prices (around 10 pesos per piece) by Cebuano wholesalers. She attempted to sell each piece for around 20 pesos. But aside from children's clothes, she also bought any kind of clothes if they were sold at discounted prices for her.

²² Bani constantly spent roughly twenty pesos on "tikam," a game held by an ethnic Laminusa (Sama Laminusa) woman in the public space of *Hong Kong* area throughout our observation in 1999. After giving birth, she took her baby along to the gambling table (the same place where Biraiya from Group Two was seen to enjoy gambling as her favorite pastime). Her expenditures on such activities were never an issue among the other members of this household.

²³ This Christian church was primarily supported not by offerings by its local congregation but rather by finances and other resources from outside the community.

²⁴ In the Philippines, mendicancy is prohibited by Presidential Decree No. 1653, "Establishing an Integrated System for the Control and Eradication of Mendicancy, Providing Penalties, Appropriating Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes." During our research in 1999, this decree seemed to be well observed by the city government, and indeed, it was often mentioned as a legal base to crack down on beggars on the street.

²⁵ Although his narrative on the situation of mendicants in Davao City was exaggerated from his own personal view, there were cases in which Sama-Bajau parents, mostly from kinship clusters with lower community status in the research site, were arrested and jailed on charges of "child abuse" because they were found begging with their child/children along on the street.

²⁶ Magsahaya in Cluster Five, who also engaged in mendicancy in Butuan, expressed doubt about Papa's story concerning accommodations. Magsahaya's understanding expressed to us is that Papa and Cambriya also slept in the streets, just like herself.

²⁷ The old name of General Santos City. The city was created in 1968.

²⁸ We often observed them eating "piri" (mackerel) and "tamban" (sardine). They said that they did not eat "balanak" (general names for large mullets) because the fish was known to eat human waste.

²⁹ One could purchase chicken necks and feet at low prices from local *sarisari* store owned by Cebuanos in Isla Verde.

³⁰ The vegetables we observed them eating often included "kangkong" (water spinach), "dahong sa kamungay" (horse-radish tree leaves), "batung" (string beans) and "talung" (eggplants). Likewise, the fruits included "santul" (*Sandoricum indicum*, lolly fruit), various kinds of bananas and mangoes.

³¹ This narration of Vilma was recorded in the presence a woman named Imdya, her next door neighbor and a distant relative on Papa's side. Although Vilma was our primary interviewee, Imdya actively joined her talk and expressed her comments, which naturally affected the course of Vilma's narrative. But according to Imdya herself, she was originally from Siasi Island, not Sama Laminusa. Since she fractured her left leg, she was unable to stand and walk by herself. When we started our interview with Barmarya in the kitchen of Papa's house, Imdya found it interesting and crawled over to our place. Many of the houses in this cluster were connected to each other at the floor level by catwalks made of coconut lumbers and bamboos, which allowed Imdya to move rather easily by herself.

³² After we left our research site in 1999, Cambriya's cataracts were operated on and she regained her sight significantly in 2003.

³³ New City Commercial Center. This Chinese-owned small-scale shopping mall was located

within a walking distance from Isla Verde. The prices were lower there than those at large-scale shopping malls downtown.

³⁴ For the details, refer to section 3.1 of this chapter.

³⁵ Adult members of Papa's household, however, complained of itching that bothered them especially in their sleep. This itchiness was attributed to bed bug bites rather than skin disease, and they often asked me to donate insecticide sprays, which they believed expelled the bugs from the mats and floors on which they slept.

³⁶ In fact, there were many deaths which were attributed to "fits of coughing followed by vomiting blood" by the members of the bereaved family during the period of our observation. Most of the members of this cluster knew that free screening and medication for the treatment of tuberculosis were available at the community health center in their barangay. Nonetheless, very few seemed to utilize the service effectively; some of them found it simply difficult to access the center due to the social and psychological distance. There were others who actually went to the center and were given the medications, but somehow failed to follow the advice they were given by the health workers. At the same time, members of this cluster, whether they were sick or not, often tried to secure free medication from "missionary", evangelical missionaries, who sometimes came to offer free clinics to their neighborhood. Such medical missionaries were not necessarily accompanied by medical professionals, and the medication that was distributed for free was the kind that did not require diagnoses and prescriptions by physicians.

³⁷ This behavior of producing sounds was also observed among members in Group Five when they groomed each other to remove lice from their hair as part of their every day pastime.

³⁸ Pampanga is located in the north of Davao City. Most of the children in the school are ethnic Cebuano, unlike the one in Isla Verde where many of the children are ethnic Maranao who, according to Sama-Bajau parents and children in our research site, would bully them. To avoid such trouble, some of the Sama-Bajau parents and children themselves preferred to attend others schools outside Isla Verde. In the case of this group, a Cebuano pastor and his wife who had been working with a *Sama Dilaut* pastor in this neighborhood's church presumably advised the parents on their choice of school.

³⁹ Her husband named Benito was one of the Sama Dilaut pastors in the neighborhood. Pastor Benito was an elder brother of Pastor John who was the senior pastor of the church.

⁴⁰ When we conducted our first household survey in 1998, we intended to identify potential leaders among the Sama-Bajau in *Hong Kong*, and asked respondents whom they would consult by types of issues. Papa Melcito was frequently named as the "chief of the Bajau" whom respondents would approach when they had trouble with their Sama-Bajau neighbors for some reasons. The origin of the English term "chief" in *Hong Kong* is unknown. It was probably introduced by non-Sama-Bajau missionaries who spoke English and translated the term for "leader" in the local languages.

⁴¹ For more details about this group, see Aoyama, Waka. "Living in the City as the Sama-Bajau: A Case Study of Guwapo's Family." *Hakusan jinruigaku (Hakusan Journal of Anthropology)* 17 2014.3: 31-58.

⁴² For more details about his group, see the following paper. Aoyama, Waka. "Living in the City as the Sama-Bajau: A Case Study of Bilaiya's Family." *Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Paper Series* 2016.3.

<http://www.harvard-yenching.org/features/hyi-working-paper-series-aoyama-waka-1>

⁴³ In addition, Papa advised Abraham to ask their relatives in Tibanban to perform "pag-patulak" (a ritual to drive away the evil spirits considered to be incurring the ill health and misfortune).

⁴⁴ Dakmatya was the mother of Maria, the wife of Pastor Lainito who was one of the leaders of the church headed by Pastor John.

⁴⁵ The liturgical acts in the wedding ceremonies that we observed in our research site were very

much similar to the descriptions of such in the book written by Bottignolo on the religious events among the *Sama Dilaut* in Tawi-Tawi (Bottignolo, B. 1995. *Celebrating with the Sun: An Overview of Religious Phenomena among the Badjaos*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University). For example: 1) the religious leader's act of empowering the groom, 2) the procession of the newly married couple led by the religious leader in the community, and 3) the religious leader's act of holding the groom's right hand to point to the back of the bride's head could be seen in our research site.

⁴⁶ When Alvarez was called for a wedding, he would bring his own electric piano and karaoke machine for his performance.

⁴⁷ Cambriya's explanation slightly differed from her husband, Papa's; she said it would take two players for each instrument, or a total of four players for the "*agung*" and the "*kulintang*."

⁴⁸ Allan is the husband of Mika, a daughter of Biraiya's younger sister. He claimed himself as "half-Bisayan" Sama. Tirso and Allan are in-laws.

⁴⁹ The amount is the total of the wedding gifts. For example, it could include 7,000 pesos in cash and gifts in kind of which total cost would reach about 13,000 pesos. Typical gifts include suitcases, home appliances such as cooking utensils and thermos, and food such as sacks of rice, a box of cake, "*panyalam*," and soft drinks. The food and drinks were meant to be served to the guests on the wedding day. The "*panyalam*" is a palm-sized round home-made pancake. It is made of rice flour and sugar. Many pieces of the cake would be piled up and decorated and carried with the procession that followed the bride and the groom after the wedding ceremony. The cake was considered "Muslim food" by Christian residents in Isla Verde, though the Sama-Bajau in our research site did not identify themselves as Muslims.

⁵⁰ Though we did not trace the source of the money, we recorded that the boat (with no engine) had "disappeared" from Papa's household just before those two weddings. We could only guess that Papa's household sold the boat to raise the cash to spend on the weddings.

⁵¹ A loose blouse for females. In this context of weddings, though, it refers to a long gown. We saw the brides wearing the "*sablay*" after taking a ritual bath the night before the wedding ceremony.

⁵² A place located near Zamboanga City.

⁵³ A place located near Margossa Tubig.

⁵⁴ Vilma was implying the quarrel that happened between some members of Papa's group and those Majarya's group a few days ago before the interview. The quarrel was on the mendicancy of Kanosa, Majarya's elder brother in downtown. Those from the former group, perhaps with influence of norms taught in the Christian church, considered it as a rather disgraceful conduct, while the latter, as a necessary means to survive in the urban setting of Davao City.

⁵⁵ At the time of the interview, Papa had not formally confessed his faith in Christianity. However, we could see the strong influence of the sermons given by the pastors in the church.

⁵⁶ Originally, the term refers to love potion. In this particular context, though, Papa means "*barang*" (black magic, sorcery).