

# Migrants' Influence to Indigenous Socio Political Practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi

Jeffrey Yasin A. Noor, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, MSU-Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography  
Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

## Abstract

*The population of the people in the province of Tawi-Tawi is densely inhabited by the BangsaSama. The BangsaSama scholars agreed that all people have varied traditional socio-political practices. Thus, Tawi-Tawi consists of different cultures in contrast with the more complex migrant groups. The triangulation technique method of qualitative research is utilized in this study. The descriptive-narrative survey method with key informant's personal interview and the organized focus group discussion were used as data gathering tools to look into the influences of the migrants to the traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi. The different between the BangsaSama and the migrants lie in the degree of their complexity and rapidity of influences taking place within the group. Along this, the BangsaSama no matter how simple in their ways of living has a culture of their own. Undeniably, this study looked into the changes of the traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the migrants within the Tawi-Tawian context.*

## Introduction

Philippines is mainly composed of many islands. Major islands are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Each major island also contains smaller islands and islets. Tawi – tawi is a small island which is part of the Mindanao Island, southernmost part of the Philippines. The name Tawi-Tawi was derived from the Malay word “jawi” which means far or isolated, also known as “land of peace”, and peopled predominantly by BangsaSama. This will testify that the BangsaSama of Tawi-Tawi is totally different from other Muslim tribes, Chinese and the Christian alike in terms of traditional socio-political practices phenomena (PDP, 1994) as cited by (Noor, 2010).

However, prior to the advent of conflict in Mindanao between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Tawi-Tawi was once a part of the province of Sulu. In this crucial stage, the BangsaSama MNLF demanded for separation whereby on September 27, 1973, and legally declared as distinct province from Sulu by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 302. Its creation was a significant milestone. It has instilled hope among the BangsaSama who has become more actively involved in the activities of the national government. Currently, more excellent and efficient management is offered by the provincial administrators of Tawi-tawi for the welfare of the Tawi-tawians in some outlying islands municipalities.

In 1973, the armed conflict that broke out between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front marked the problematic political event of the entire nation which is much more felt by the Muslim communities in Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan. During those chaotic years, many areas in Mindanao were under the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) control and many of the people were sympathetic to the cause. Therefore, along this inception the BangsaSama not only survived but also prevailed in its quest for self-rule, peace and progress. This is due largely to the fact that the peace-loving nature of the BangsaSama asserted itself and maintained a haven of peace amidst continuing violence and conflict in other parts of Mindanao. This is a testament to one's conviction making in Tawi-Tawi as a best choice of an evacuation center.

In a nutshell, this study portrays the Migrants' influence to indigenous socio-political practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi. Considerably, the BangsaSama and the migrants are Filipinos of different racial stock and should be made to realize that knowing and understanding their differences and the importance of co-existence

would promote unity and progress. Hopefully, this study would become as basis of their understanding of their own people so that peace and development will reign among the different ethnic groups that constitute the pluralistic society of Tawi-Tawi.

### Methods

This study used the triangulation technique of the qualitative research. The descriptive narrative survey technique with key informants' personal interview (KI) and the organized focus group discussion (FGD) were the basic tools of gathering the data needed in the study.

The observation design was made with a strong intention of coming up with the descriptive analysis of the migrants' influence to indigenous socio-political practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi. Variables elicited by the key informant (KI) and the focus group discussion (FGD) were investigated and form part of this study.

The participants of this study were 70 migrants of the different ethnic groups and religious affiliations coming to Tawi-Tawi and 70 participants from among the BangsaSama tribe of Tawi-Tawi. Both groups of participants were randomly chosen from four municipalities. Out of 70 migrants participants only 55 returned the questionnaire and from the BangsaSama participants only 63 questionnaire were retrieved. This data obtained from four municipalities namely: Bongao, Sitangkai, Panglima Sugala, and Languyan as the primary venue of this study. Other seven municipalities served as the auxiliary venue to counter check and determine the reliability of the participants' feedback on the study. Thus, the total participants of this study were 108 aside from the focus group discussion (FGD) participants and key informants (KI).

The 55 migrant participants and 63 native participants are composed of professionals, laymen, and religious leaders in accordance with their tribal affiliations. They served as the primary sources of information and feedback. A questionnaire was made to elicit the needed data by adopting the 4-point scale patterned from the Likert's scale designed to measure the migrants' influence to indigenous socio-political practices of the BangsaSama tribe in Tawi-Tawi. A semi-structured guide question prepared to the key informant (KI) and focus group discussion (FGD) on the influence information and distribution of migrants on the BangsaSama in digamous Socio-political practices in Tawi-Tawi.

### The Indigenous Socio-Political Practices Characteristic of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi

Traditionally, the BangsaSama community is headed by the so-called *Nakurah* (leader) his main function is solely the servant to his *raayat* (constituent) and the guardian of his *raayats'* lives and properties. Consultation would have to be undertaken by the representatives of the people. This was practiced in the period of early BangsaSama traditional socio-political practices. Laws are derived from Shari'ah and the customary practices or *Adat* is vested. New laws according to the needs of the time and circumstances are only made by the popular assembly from among the multitude of the *Pakil* (learned man) on account of their enlightenment and understanding of the need of the people.

### Traditional System of the BangsaSama Government

The BangsaSama system of traditional government is basically patterned from the patriarchal doctrine of government leadership. Preference is given to man, but it is more democratic in nature. Admittedly, the BangsaSama of Tawi-Tawi is under the protectorate of the Sulu Sultanate. As such, to the BangsaSama, *Panglimais* the highest leader of the BangsaSama traditional government.

The compositions of the BangsaSamatraditional governmental system are the following: Sultan is the overall head of the BangsaSama state based in Jolo, Sulu. The *Panglima* (headman) is appointed by the Sultan as his vice-regent in every BangsaSama community. *Panglima* is the chief executive who runs not only political but also the religious affairs of his jurisdictional area.

The *RumaBicharais* the traditional BangsaSama legislative body composed of the Ulama, a learned BangsaSama on Shari'ah laws. However, the *ulama* are divided into two functions: (a) *Kipaya* is in-charge of the religious matters ranging from the daily prayers and other five pillars of Islam to the death procession. Aside from being religious leaders, they are also tasked to educate their young: (b) *Mukali*, the council of elders who shall serve as advisers and could only restrict the authority of the *Panglima*. The *Mukali* is in-charge of the social obligation, which ranges from social activities down to community security. In addition, they are responsible to train the boys in economic activities and duties and obligation of manhood.

The authority of *Qadhi* (judge) traditionally is vested in the agama court, just like the judiciary branch of the Philippine state. The agama court tries disputes at all level of crimes may it pertain to religious conflict, civil or criminal offense. For religious matters, it resolved conflict of the BangsaSamaummah on how to start fasting, and its culmination day and the celebration of other religious activities.

*Raayatare* the common people. Unlike in the other Muslim tribes where empowerment of a common tao is not allowed, the BangsaSama rulers, respects common people depending on the skills, knowledge and expertise of the person.

### **Traditional Manner of Choosing a Leader**

The BangsaSama traditional way of choosing a leader is unique among the Muslim tribal groups. The qualifications of their leaders are: (a) *Ilmawan*, (educated, learned) which means being knowledgeable of the Qur'an and the Al hadith followed with strong faith in performing religious restrictions, and with a good moral standing and family background; (b) *Altawan*, (wealthy) traditionally, because BangsaSama leaders have to assist affected indigent people of their jurisdiction; (c) *Halimawan*, (brave) as he should have knowledge in the arts of war and is invulnerable. However, the paramount consideration for one to be a leader in the BangsaSama community is seniority based on age and gender (male) and who possesses the qualification with untainted character or personality. The BangsaSama as a tribe had been observing democratic or consultative way of choosing their leaders long before the advent of the westerners in the Philippines. As their tribe is called "BangsaSama" connotes unity and peace.

The typical BangsaSama politics in the olden days originally was highly traditional. They believed in the authority of the elders. The younger BangsaSama could easily give way to elder's opinion. BangsaSama family is highly patriarchal where the absolute authority in the family is designated to the father being head of the family. This is carried out in their practice on political issues up to this date. Leniently, the opinion of the father prevails when family is deciding in political affairs. The paramount consideration in political decisions is that, the decision should not bring trouble to the family and to the community as a whole. The BangsaSama, just like any other Filipino tribes in the country believes that politics play a very strong influence in the lives of the people, whether it is for good or bad. The BangsaSama are not so much active in vying for a political position rather they attune to their traditional political practices of giving way to the elders in deciding on things that effect the family and the community as a whole.

### **The Traditional Justice System**

Traditionally, the BangsaSama had no formal written law; however, their judicial system patterned from the Sulu sultanate form of justice system called the *Diwan* (customary law) as they had been under the protection of the Sulu Sultanate. In addition, since they are the first embraces Islam, most of their justice system is averted in the Qur'an verses and the Al hadith which is called the Shari'ah law. The traditional BangsaSama justice system is not only limited to personal laws but encompasses all aspects of human life.

In settling of personal conflicts, the BangsaSama *Qadhi* based their decisions by producing at least two witnesses, a male and/or two females. For criminal cases the Qadhi makes it possible to end the case through amicable settlement to avoid further escalation and not allowing hurts to continue. Thus, destroyed community ties are repaired and harmony is restored between the conflicting parties. Restitution is always proportionate to the offense committed. Thus, it is coin with (Tan, 2001) Cited by (Noor, 2010) the traditional BangsaSama leader

handling the cases is; when a conflict resulted to death, the rite *magbangun* (blood money) is held. When someone gets bloodied in a fight *magdiyat* (lesser blood money) is initiated. Settlement is also agreed upon through the *magkiparat* (sacrifice for settlement). Even, for single verbal hurts, there is a mechanism to restore harmony. The *magtaubat* is a public declaration of repentance for ill-chosen words. The offended party accepts the apology in an equally public manner. Full reconciliation is achieved with *duwa'asalamat* (thank giving prayer).

### Development/Participation in Government

The BangsaSama like other Filipinos is actively involved and has participated in political governance, but admittedly they are not aggressive evidence up to this date majority of the political leader in a BangsaSama community is migrants. The BangsaSama had their early struggles to gain full recognition from the national government even as early as 16<sup>th</sup> century in defence of their ancestral domain and its specific boundaries as well as leadership and government.

In 1946, after the declaration of Philippine independence, as fledgling nation charted course, provinces in the periphery were neglected. In the Southern Philippines, this neglect bred deep feelings of disappointment and the lack of development rekindled desire for the Jabida Force became the inglorious days of the Sultanate. As the Jabida Force became the infamous "Jabida massacre" in 1968 the cessions' movement for the separation of Mindanao from the Philippines was organized. Violence was used as the forefront organization of the movement was the Moro National Liberation Front.

In 1973, the BangsaSama long struggle for self-identity and for freedom to be finally attained. The BangsaSama undoubtedly was the first civilized people as they are the first embraces Islam in the Philippines. Islam introduced first the concept of *Ummah* which provided the Islamized BangsaSama of Tawi-Tawi a universal sense of unity based on spiritual ties in Islam not on narrow ethnic groups. At once, under Islam all became brothers regardless of racial origin, ethnic culture, or geographic location. The Holy Qur'an, in this regard mentioned in verse (49:3) "O Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into a nations and tribes that you may know one another". Hence, the BangsaSama being Muslim does recognize that religion and state are inseparable.

The BangsaSama traditional government is composed of the *Rajah*- the representative of the sultan, through hi delegated power, *Datu*, head of the BangsaSama *ummah*(community), *Panglima* the chief executive and the *Maharajah* who serves as secretary of the *Datu*. The sultan possessed absolute power over the people and could only be restricted by the council of elders but his government was based on the *Shari'ah*(Islamic law) and customary law(Addat).

Tawi-Tawi during the olden days was divided into three political jurisdictions: 1). Bukutawi-Tawi is headed by Imam Sahawi, a BangsaSama and learned man on both customary law and Shari'ah; b). Dungun is ruled by the descendants of Sulu sultanate which served as the seat of sultanate government; and, 3). Sibutu which is ruled by the Sultan of Borneo (Abubakar ND). A typical BangsaSama politics is highly traditional because it anchored on patriarchal family system. For the BangsaSama, the duty of bringing up children is that of the father, then the mother finally that of the teachers of the community. They will be responsible before their people for educating their children as ALLAH said" guard yourselves and your households from fire, Qur'an (66:6). The father, being head of the family has the absolute authority in the family. This carried out to their practice on political issues.

BangsaSama had their early struggles for self-identity like other Filipino tribes since 16<sup>th</sup> century. The BangsaSama leadership is strongly conscious of the well-being of their people. Specifically on the possession of ancestral lands and specific boundaries, leadership and government the BangsaSama leaders had continuously knocked the doors of the national leadership for the separation of the province (Tawi-Tawi) since time immemorial.

### Traditional Law-Making

A typical BangsaSama lawmaker is highly traditional. They believe in the authority of their elders. Thus, the council of elders is the law making body that provide the verbal guidance to sustain and maintain the order,

progress and development in their community. The words of the elders especially on conflict resolution are considered laws or rules in which the community people or the conflicting parties have to abide. The BangsaSama could easily give way to their elders' opinion, especially on issues that pertain to their community thus their paramount consideration when deciding is through conflict resolution that makes them as a bastion of peace loving people of the south. Foremost, they live simple lives even without written laws. In their traditional norms, any decision made should not bring trouble to the family and to the community as a whole.

In the traditional BangsaSama laws, this applies a combination of both the shari'ah law and the customary law (addat). But most often the law does not apply because the conflicting parties through the emissary will easily reconcile as they believe in the word of Allah and if two parties (groups) among the believers fall to fighting, they make peace between them both (Qur'an, 49:9). The traditional BangsaSama community has no complex form of government, no police officers, yet their ways of life is well organized and united because the Holy Qur'an is their paramount guidance. Their form of government and way of life is very simple guided by the verse in the Holy Qur'an (49:10) stating that "the believers are nothing else than brothers, so make reconciliation between your brothers".

## Results and Discussions

### 1. The changes on the socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the migrants

The BangsaSama communities like other indigenous group in the Philippines have their own traditional system of government, in the traditional BangsaSama politics, consultation would have to indirectly and undertaken by the *pakil*(learned representative) of the BangsaSama in deciding on their political issues.

Politics whether good or bad have the primary function to rule the people. They manage the community affairs and provide services to facilitate the harmonious relationship among its member and order in the society. This topic presents the perceptions of the participants on the changes of traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the migrants. Table 1 shows item 1, on the traditional system of government, the migrants and the BangsaSama participants rated with the mean scores of 3.64 and 3.65 respectively and both are interpreted as strongly agree.

Table 1  
The Changes on the Socio-Political Practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the Migrants

Item	Migrants		BangsaSama	
	Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1. Traditional System of Government	3.64	SA	3.65	SA
2. Traditional Manner of Choosing a Leader	3.50	SA	3.15	A
3. Traditional Justice System	3.58	SA	3.35	SA
4. Involvement/Participation in Government	3.45	SA	3.70	SA
5. Traditional Law Making	2.97	A	3.00	A
Overall Mean Score	3.35	SA	3.37	SA

Legend: Score Mean Descriptive

1	1.00-1.74	Strongly Disagree (SD)
2	1.75-2.49	Disagree (D)
3	2.50-3.24	Agree (A)
4	3.25-4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)

Data and information presented in Table 1 concludes that both groups of participants strongly agree that the BangsaSama traditional politics/ government changed through the influence of the migrants. This could be traced that the BangsaSama traditional system of government which leadership is basically resides on men whether it is in the family or in the community management. Their *Nakurah*(Headman) have eventually been replaced by the Barangay officers, and this were not only limited to men but as well as the women who can have the chance to

become a leader in the present BangsaSama community. The government concepts in the traditional BangsaSama world, their leaders were service oriented and expect no reward for their services. Their leaders were among the elders in the community whom believe to have the necessary expertise to serve the position they occupy.

On the traditional manner of choosing a leader item 2, the migrants rated with the mean score of 3.50 describe as strongly agree, while the BangsaSama participants rated with a mean score of 3.15 interpreted as agree. The finding revealed that both groups of participants perceived that the BangsaSama way of choosing a leader has changed. This finding is attested by the fact that the present BangsaSama ways of choosing their traditional leader has been rigorous changed because the gender discrimination for leadership role has found its way for liberalization. In fact women now head some BangsaSama communities. And the qualification standard set by the traditional BangsaSama community in choosing their leader has been changed drastically, because some learned or knowledgeable and the most senior in age and competent ones in the community are anymore chosen in the community.

Item 3 on the BangsaSama traditional justice system, the migrants and the BangsaSama participants rated with the mean scores of 3.58 and 3.35 respectively, both described as strongly agree. This interprets that the traditional BangsaSama justice system has changed. This finding can be gleaned that the participants and the Focus group discussion (FGD) viewed the changed on this item 3 as a matter of response of the BangsaSama to the situation, which actually deviates from the norms of the traditional BangsaSama justice system. The BangsaSama is now in dilemma especially if they are in conflict with the migrants. The peace loving nature of the BangsaSama who are always open and welcome for the preservation of peace and tranquillity are sometimes misconstrued as being coward people and these are often resulted in their being abused. Thus as a result the present BangsaSama are seen as aloof to mingle with some migrants groups if only to preserved peace loving nature which are presently misconstrued as provoking tribal discrimination.

Item 4, on the involvement/participation in government, the migrants participants registered a mean score of 3.45 interpreted as strongly agree, while the BangsaSama participants rated with the mean score of 3.70 described as strongly agree. The finding implies that the BangsaSama has moved closer and integrated them into the main stream of the government. The key informant (KI) stressed, this was actually realized when Tawi-Tawi became a separate province of Sulu and the impact of education among the BangsaSama youth.

On item 5, in Table 1 revealed that on the traditional law making, the migrants and the BangsaSama participants rated with the mean scores of 2.97 and 3.00 and both are interpreted as agree respectively. This supports that the BangsaSama traditional law making body has been altered. In fact both the key informant (KI) and the focus discussion (FGD) noted in the early BangsaSama society laws were not written but through tradition and customary practices (Pangaddatan) thus law makers and enforcers are usually among the oldest men in the community who exercise the law especially on matters of conflict and other social dealings, their universal laws evolve on the *diwan* rule. Their laws are promulgated or made by the council of elders in the community. And with the creation of the sultanate the *panglima*, maharaja and the *Datu* who are considered the executive head of the community enforced the laws promulgated by the sultan and his council.

The over-all mean scores on the changes of traditional socio- political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the migrants registered the mean scores of 3.50 and 3.37 rated by the migrants and the BangsaSama participants and are interpreted as strongly agree respectively. Generally this implies that the migrants to a larger sense have influenced traditional BangsaSama traditional socio-political practices. But it can be observed, according to Focus group discussion (FGD) the coming of the migrants were not the sole reasons for the changes in the BangsaSama traditional socio-political practices perspective but the integration policy of the national government which among others were the stronger determinants of changed agents, such as provision of education and the promotion and the implementation of the democratic ideals in the BangsaSama communities.

## 2. *The Migrants 'influence on the socio-political practices of the BangsaSama.*

Table 2 presents the migrants' influence on traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi.

Item 1, on the traditional system of government, the migrants and BangsaSama participants registered the mean scores of 2.54 and 2.75 respectively. Both responses are described as very extensive. This finding the key informant (KI) connotes both the migrants and BangsaSama participants perceived that the migrants have greatly

influenced the traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama traditional system of government in Tawi-Tawi.

Table 2  
The Migrants' Influence on the BangsaSama Traditional Socio-Political Practices

Item	Migrants		BangsaSama	
	Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
Traditional System of Government	2.54	VE	2.75	VE
Traditional Manner of choosing a leader	2.63	VE	2.84	VE
Traditional Justice System	2.11	E	2.60	VE
Involvement/Participation in governance	2.16	E	2.48	VE
Traditional Law making	2.41	VE	2.45	VE
Overall mean Score	2.37	VE	2.62	VE

Legend:	Scale	Mean	Description
	1	1.00-1.66	Limited Extent (LE)
	2	1.67-2.33	Extensive (E)
	3	2.34-3.00	Very Extensive (VE)

It should be noted that Tawi-Tawi is among the Muslim communities in the Philippines and by virtue of Islamic leadership do not tolerate women leadership, presently, because of education and cultural interaction and greater influence of the national government for equal right and privileges regardless of gender, noticeably some BangsaSama communities are led by women. In fact, at this writing, two regional ARMM representatives elected from Tawi-Tawi were women and some LGU officials are women.

The traditional system of government was patriarchal in nature. Their titular leaders are called *Nakura* (headman). At the height of the sultanate rule the respective community leaders were appointed by the sultan as *panglima* who were believed to be capable of managing the affairs of their respective communities. With the integration of the communities to the body politics of the Republic of the Philippines the titular symbols of leadership was changed to Barangay chairman with their Barangay *kagawad*. This notion led to the opening of the gate for women in the participation of leadership role in the community.

On manner of choosing a traditional leader and law making, these items were rated by the migrants with respective mean score of 2.63 and 2.41, while BangsaSama participants rated with the mean scores of 2.84 and 2.45 respectively. These two items were both described as very extensive. This finding gleans that the BangsaSama way of choosing a leader and law making were greatly influenced by the migrants. The traditional BangsaSama community were headed by the elders in the community who were believed to be the most active and competent ones in accordance with their expertise and experience to manage the community affairs. And without their applying to such positions they are elected or proclaimed by the community people as *Nakurah* and/or the *Pakil*, who perform the various functions of the community affairs from the executive, law-making, and law-enforcement. Leadership is viewed in the traditional BangsaSama community as service to community without expecting monetary reward. Thus refusal to the proclamation of being a community leader commonly happened. But with the insistence of the community people the chosen one to assume the leadership has no way in turning down the community consensus.

This maybe the reason why the participants perceived a very extensive influenced of the migrants because the present BangsaSama community are even managed by women and some are managed by younger ones whose qualification bank much on their economic status and use their affluence to persuade community people to be elected or nominated as their leader.

On traditional justice system and involvement participation of governance, the migrant participants rated with the mean scores of 2.11 and 2.16 respectively and are described as extensive. While the BangsaSama participants rated with the mean scores of 2.60 and 2.48 respectively and are described as very extensive. It concludes that the migrant participants perceived the BangsaSama to have been extensively influenced by the migrants in terms of their justice system and participation in governance. While the BangsaSama participants perceived their tribe to have been very extensively influenced by the migrants in these two aspects, justice system and law making. It can be evidenced that the justice system presently are based on the Sharia'ah and civil courts and most cases elevated to higher courts, making the community or Barangay council as mere endorser of conflict/problems, of which this scenario is very much in contrast with the BangsaSama traditional justice system, because customary law (addat) were among the bases in trial and conflict resolution. In terms of participation in the governance all the senior or elders in the community are obliged to share their part for the good of the community. Presently, some of the BangsaSama community do not any more care on the role of elders although emphasis has been made in the Local government code, this may be among the reason why with little conflict they cannot anymore manage to solve in their level instead elevate the matter to the higher courts which is the Sharia'ah or civil court in the municipal or provincial level.

The overall perceptions of both the migrants and the BangsaSama participants obtained the average mean scores of 2.37 and 2.62 which are described as very extensive respectively. This implies that the migrants have very extensively influenced the present traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices. Key informant(KI) and focus group discussion(FGD) confirmed the feedback and findings of this study that to a greater extent the traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices has been altered and believed to be influenced not only by the migrants but with greater integration policy of the national government and with this policy of the national government has gave rise to the participation of affluent migrants both the Muslim and non-Muslim to participate in the political affairs of the province of Tawi-Tawi.

### 3. *The Migrants' Influence on the Development of the Socio-Political Practices of the BangsaSama*

The table 3 below presents the degree of migrants' contribution to the development of traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices. It reveals on the traditional system of government and involvement in governance, item 1 and 4, the migrant participants perceived that they have contributed much in these two aspects of traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama in Tawi-Tawi as it registered the mean scores of 3.11 and 3.09 respectively, while the BangsaSama participants perceived that the migrants contributed very much to the development of BangsaSama traditional system of government and participation in the governance and rated with the mean scores of 3.27 and 3.68 respectively. This draws that both groups of participants admittedly that the migrants have shaped that traditional BangsaSama way of politics which even the BangsaSama themselves agreed very much that they were already influenced by the migrants.

Table 3  
The Migrants' Influence on the Development of the Traditional BangsaSama Socio- Political practices

Item	Migrants		BangsaSama	
	Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1.Traditional system of Government	3.11	M	3.27	VM
2.Traditional Manner of choosing a leader	3.39	VM	3.81	VM
3.Traditional Justice System	3.52	VM	3.73	VM
4. Involvement/Participation	3.09	M	3.68	VM
5.Traditional Law making	3.41	VM	3.56	VM

Over-all mean score		3.30	VM	3.61	VM
Legend:	Scale	Mean		Descriptive	
	1	1.00-1.74		Not all (NA)	
	2	1.75-2.49		Minimal (MIN)	
	3	2.50-3.24		Much (M)	
	4	3.25-4.00		Very Much (VM)	

As focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant (KI) stressed, the BangsaSama original and traditional politics reside solely on the elders of the community and purely based on the male authority to manage the community affairs and since they were Muslim, the leaders should also be a Muslim who will lead the community affairs based on the Islamic tenets. However, some BangsaSama communities are now lead and manage by non-Muslim and Muslim migrants alike who gain influence through their economic affluence.

On items 2, 3 and 5, both the migrants and the BangsaSama participants perceived that the migrants have very much contributed to the development of the present BangsaSama traditional manner of choosing a leader, traditional justice system and traditional lawmaking as the migrant's participants registered the mean scores of 3.39, 3.52 and 3.41 respectively. Hence, the BangsaSama participants registered mean scores of 3.81, 3.73 and 3.56 respectively. These findings imply that the migrants, both the Muslim and Christian groups, play an integral role in reshaping the original traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices.

The overall mean score of the migrant participants on the contribution of the migrants to the traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama registered at 3.30 which described as very much, while the BangsaSama participants registered an average mean score of 3.61 and described as very much. Generally the findings show that the migrants have contributed much to the development of the present traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices. The key informant (KI) and the focus group discussion (FGD) affirm these findings that the Migrants have very much contributed to the socio-political practices of the BangsaSama and not only in terms of politics but also in terms of economic development. Since migrants were more aggressive in utilizing the economic bounty of Tawi-Tawi and having been economically stable they venture to politics and gain influence using their economic means to convince the people for their success in their political career. Thus, as seen in the present BangsaSama society some of their leaders were migrants of both Muslim and Non-Muslim migrants. This scenario paves the way for the fertile ground of the blending of various socio-political practices in the province of Tawi-Tawi.

#### 4. General View of Traditional BangsaSama Socio-Political Practices Status as Reflected in the Study

The key informant (KI) stressed the old BangsaSama piece of advice to their young is "*Minggakampangaddatanmakalakuaddatabiatsubaymagsariatmakaam*"; wherever you are, the good moral conduct and norms must always be manifested within by hand." The usual BangsaSama socio-political rehearsal its insinuation to peace and growth is based on this part of recommendation and create their life more self-effacing and important.

The focus group discussion (FGD) testifies to the BangsaSama, the essence of peace and development are the evidence in their simple way of living. The simplest and the most widespread understanding of peace among the BangsaSama is the absence of death and destruction as result of war and direct physical violence, have home to stay in, have food to eat and are free to observed their political norms and conduct.

Table 4  
The Overall View of Traditional BangsaSama Socio-Political Practices Status as Reflected in the Study

Overall Mean Score	Migrants Participants		Sama Participants		Findings
Changes on the Socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as Influenced by the Migrants	3.35	SA	3.37	SA	There are positive changes
The socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as Influenced by the Migrants	2.37	VE	2.62	VE	The migrants positively influences the BangsaSama
The socio-political practice of the BangsaSama as developed by the Migrants	3.30	VM	3.61	VM	Migrants positively helped develop the BangsaSama Status

However, the key informant (KI) revealed, the BangsaSama knowledge of peace seems to be narrow in scope. They tend to forget the so-called structural violence, which the Migrants introduced to their community that is served as the vital ticket to banish little by little their own long lasting preserved cultural heritage. This finding coin with what Galtung (1980) as cited by Noor (2010) explained about structural violence- It is the ways in which people may suffer from the violence built into a society via its social, cultural, political and economic system may also led to death and disfiguration as a result of starvation, unavoidable diseases, discrimination against minority groups, or denial of human rights. Along this view, the focus group discussion (FGD) commented the BangsaSama no longer adhered to their old wisdom “*ayyan-ayyantakkanikaamsirakabetehlara*; anything happens to you; surely you cannot yet feel the immediate consequence but afterward.” From that argument, the key informant (KI) justified, it can be concluded in the BangsaSama world the effect of structural violence is positive. This has a conformity with the Old BangsaSama popular dictum “*niyawaktuaddattabiattahinangdakuman kata-kata*; times will come our cultural and customary practices are just merely a fantasy and became a strange thing to us.”

The general view of the BangsaSama world is not anymore a true BangsaSama belief, practices, tradition and way of life. It is an adaptive measure to address to the call of circumstance and attune to the needs of time and situations. Hence, the showcases of traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices as influenced by the Migrants. It can be drawn that the BangsaSama politic is already altered and lost their own identity, what are left in them now is part of the innovated processes introduced by the Migrants pouring into the mainstream of their community.

Drawing from the results and analysis of the overall findings, the traditional BangsaSama Socio-political practices envisioned presently have to some extent is an admixture of the Migrants influences. As BangsaSama the aborigine of Tawi-Tawi who live with passionate contentment to farming and fishing. The focus group discussion (FGD) pointed out, that the BangsaSama has not conscious of the future yet to come as coin with what Hisk (1981) as cited by Noor (2010) says that the broader views of peace involved four issues aside from violence and war. These are: inequality, injustice, environmental damage and alienation. This study encompasses these four issues as strongly back up by the key informant (KI) and the focus group discussion (FGD) observations of the BangsaSama experiencing at present, they said “*niyah du waktuyakitamumaglahat du mabukutkap*”; in the future, soon we will be living in a place where no one are to be found.” As opposed to BangsaSama compassionate living with a simple life the focus group discussion (FGD) blaming their old dictum “*ma tuhannasidja*; entrusting everything by Allah’s live.” The key informant (KI) exclaimed further “*Iya BangsaSamatabihagna*; we the BangsaSama people are already alienated. The voice of *magsama-sama*, (unity) is faded away from the BangsaSama political customary practices.

The focus group discussion (FGD) suggested further, above all, the peace and development embodies the process of conscientization of our critical empowerment whereby the BangsaSama people, most especially the disadvantaged sectors like the small agri-aqua farmers’ holdings and the fisher folk to shape their own destinies and improve their lives.

The traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices at present are just only a reflection of their old day's practice. The BangsaSama of Tawi-Tawi world today is already the by-products of adaption from the Migrants as this coin with Tan(2001)and cited by (Noor, 2010) the BangsaSama was not known as Tawi-Tawians. In fact, it has the name. Not surprisingly, they are more comfortable being called by ancestral or chosen historical names such as: BangsaSama, BangsaDilaut, BangsaJamaMapun, Tausug, Chinese or Christian. While it fails to captive ancient origin of the inhabitants, it suggests the needs to bring unity of purpose, vision and ideals to various ethnic groups that constitute the pluralistic fabric of Tawi-Tawi society.

The important contributions of the migrants to the peace and development of the BangsaSama is their cohesiveness to help their fellow migrants to whatever undertakings especially when it comes to social, economic obligation and politics. Both the Muslims and the Christian migrants are the change agents of the religious practices of their respective believers. The BangsaSama as a Muslim, they tend to strengthen deeper their knowledge of Islamic teaching, like Roman Catholic faith, they establish different religious denomination such as Seven Day Adventist, Jehova Witness and others. On education, Migrants especially the Christian have been an eye opener for the BangsaSama to a formal schooling.

On the other side, the migrants also brought some discontentment to the BangsaSama. First, they are now socio- politically marginalized; second, they are now stranger in their home of aborigine. Third, their language *Sinama* is now out of use instead Tausug and Tagalog have become the language for public gathering. Fourth, the BangsaSama for them to survive, they have to compete for getting their nature being peace loving people.

## Findings

1. On the changes of the indigenous socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by the migrants both groups of participants strongly agree that there were changes in the traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices. However, the influx of the migrants was not the sole agent or reasons for the changes in the traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices perspective but also the integrative policy of the national government. The strongest determinants or agents of change were the promotion and the implementation of the Filipino democratic ideals and the concept of governance that replace the common BangsaSama way of governance and titular leadership in their respective communities. Thus, the true traditional BangsaSama socio-political practices were less observed in Tawi-Tawi in general and remote communities where there are few migrants live in particular.
2. On the extent of influence of the migrants on the indigenous socio-political practices of the BangsaSama, the findings revealed that the migrants have very extensive influence on the present traditional BangsaSama political practices. Key informants (KI) and focus group discussion (FGD) confirmed the feedback and findings of this study that to a greater extent the traditional Bangsasama socio-political practices has been altered and believed to be influenced not only by the migrants but also with greater integration policy of the national government. This policy of the national government has given the rise to the participation of affluent migrants both Muslim and non-Muslim, male and female to participate in the political affairs of the BangsaSama in the province of Tawi-Tawi. This rigorously and adversely changed the traditional BangsaSama socio-political practice especially in the manner of choosing their leaders and in the law-making process.
3. Generally, it was found out that the migrants have contributed very much to the development of the indigenous BangsaSama socio-political practices. The key informant (KI) and the focus group discussion (FGD) affirm this finding that the migrants have very much contributed to the socio-political practices of the BangsaSama and not only in terms of politics but also in terms of economic development. Since the migrants were more aggressive in utilizing the economic bounty of Tawi-Tawi and having been economically stable they ventured to politics and gain influence using their economic means to convince the people for their success in their political career. Thus, as seen in the present BangsaSama society they are having either Muslim or non-Muslim especially their leaders to manage and lead the affairs of their community. This scenario paves the way for the fertile ground of the blending of various indigenous socio-political practices of

the BangsaSama in the province of Tawi-Tawi. However, the migrants' contributions alienated the BangsaSama from their true political heritage as peace loving people and practice of patriarchal system of community leadership.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study concluded that there are rigorous changes in the traditional socio-political practices of the BangsaSama as influenced by both the Muslim and Christian migrants. The government integration policies also influenced and changed the traditional socio-political practices system of the indigenous BangsaSama people of Tawi-Tawi. Undeniably, the migrants were the change agents of BangsaSama pride to peace and development. The prowess of their socio-political influences led the way into the new fabric society of Tawi-Tawi.

### Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following measures are recommended.

1. The proper approach for the BangsaSama for whatever situation that may lead to change their traditional socio-political practices must be within their innate culture of peace in its general sense, while the migrants should not abuse the culture of peace and harmony of the BangsaSama in all aspects to avoid future conflict with the natives. Migrants should assimilate with the least disturbance with the BangsaSama and their environment even their purpose of coming to Tawi-Tawi are for economic and other reasons.
2. The Tawi-Tawians, in their way of achieving their aims for unity under one common objective, must cling to their true traditional socio-political heritage to ease the emotional bias. After all people who desire to live in Tawi-Tawi are called Tawi-Tawians and are all Filipinos in general who are useful and potential in preserving and reshaping their traditional socio-political practices heritage especially along the framework of peace and development paradigm.
3. The academic community must incorporate the importance of peace and development studies in the school curriculum making students realize that knowing one's culture that is the basis of understanding one's life.
4. The researcher further study of this kind is encouraged to tackle on some BangsaSama aspect of life in order for them to know better the origins of their traditional socio-political way of life.

### References

- [1] Abubakar, Ponchita S. (ND) Glimpse of Tawi-Tawi.
- [2] Alih, Abdullah Y. (1989). The holy Qur'an text, translation and commentary. USA: Amana Publishing Co.
- [3] Asakil, Iba J. (2005). The social world of the Sama. Paper read at the National conference on the preservation and sustenance of BangsaSama culture and arts, Rachel's Place, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, (2005, November).
- [4] Hassan, Mahmud S. (ND). The socio-economic world of the Sama of Tawi-Tawi.
- [5] Kurias, Mohammad II (1979). The history of Tawi-Tawi and its people. Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, MSU-TCTO Development Center.
- [6] Maulana, Mohammad A. (1965). A Manual of Hadith. Lahore, Pakistan
- [7] Noor, Jeffrey Yasin A. (2010) Lecture Series on Peace and Development, ACLCFI, Simandagit, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.
- [8] PPD (1994). Tawi-Tawi: Its Profile Then and Now.
- [9] Tan Samuel K. (2001) Tawi-Tawi: the Philippines' Southernmost Frontier. Bongao Tawi-Tawi: Sahaya Development Center Foundation, Inc.