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## The impact of weather calamities in (semi)sedentary indigenous communities in the Philippines

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### Abstract

The Sama Badjao people practised mobile boat-dwelling for hundreds of years and traditionally crisscrossed the waters of Southeast Asia. They considered the reefs and the sea as their home. Since the late 1960s, their challenging conditions—tightening border controls, continuous armed conflicts, gradual decline of fish, and restrictions on movement, led them to follow a (semi)sedentary lifestyle. One of the largest sedentarized Sama Badjao communities settled in the coastal area of Bato, Leyte, Philippines, where strong weather disturbances threatened them. One case was when super-typhoon Rai devastated the region on December 16, 2021. Rai was a category-five typhoon that brought massive destruction to the central and southern Philippines. This study aims to investigate how Sama Badjao experienced disasters and recovery efforts after a typhoon calamity. Fieldwork was conducted for ten months by utilising an ethnographic approach. Guided by the theory of otherness, findings revealed that the Sama Badjao experienced structural discrimination within the disaster recovery programme in the municipality. Their lack of social articulation as well as representation in the public sphere made it hard for them to demand or access whatever means of resources so they can bounce back from the disaster. This augmented their existing political and social issues making them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, I suggest policymakers and development practitioners acknowledge Sama Badjao’s right to self-determination by giving them a platform for social articulation. They should always consider their culture and include them in decision-making processes in designing policies and programmes for integration.

**Keywords:** Bajau, disaster recovery, indigenous peoples, Sama Dilaut, subaltern