

**Nativizing the Imperial:  
The Local Order and Articulations of Colonial Rule in Sulu,  
Philippines 1881-1920**

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
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of  
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## Statement of Originality

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, my own original work, except where acknowledged in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cesar Andres-Miguel Suva', with a stylized, cursive script.

**(Sgd.) Cesar Andres-Miguel Suva**

# **Nativizing the Imperial: The Local Order and Articulations of Colonial Rule in Sulu, Philippines 1881-1920**

## **Thesis Abstract**

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This study is of how local legitimacy anchored and influenced colonial regimes in the southern Philippine archipelago of Sulu in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, it explores how the internal contest to establish a native moral order defined the dimensions of Sulu's incorporation into the American Empire upon its arrival in 1899. It also provides further insight into a general pattern of native-colonial interaction throughout island Southeast Asia: a region where chiefly rule was often leaned upon by western empires of the nineteenth century. Through this discussion, orthodox notions of colonization, conquest, resistance and of the workings of modern colonial states, are re-examined. Most importantly, it will reveal how local understandings of governance and legitimacy, much more than American ones, profoundly affected the formation of the 'modern' order in Sulu.

Through an examination of correspondence and dialogues with colonial officials, combined with contemporary and later twentieth century ethnographies and local oral literature recording colonial events, this study will venture to make the following key points: Firstly, The Americans, at their arrival in Sulu in 1899, slid into a long-established role as the colonial faction in the lingering contestations between elite rivals after the death of Sultan Jamalul Alam in 1881. Secondly, the Tausug, the predominant ethnic group in Sulu, were not opposed to foreigner rule, as much as they were opposed to what, in their understanding, was *immoral* rule. Individual Americans filled the local role of the stranger king, an institution produced out of the highly mobile, cosmopolitan Austronesian world of which Sulu and other insular Southeast Asian societies form a part. The alien-ness of the stranger king gave them the objectivity to mediate and bring justice over native faction leaders, who themselves were too enmeshed in the web of vendettas and jealousies that fueled conflict. When Americans played this locally determined role incorrectly however, they could rapidly lose their legitimacy. Third, what emerged in the first few years of the twentieth century were two different articulations of rule in Sulu. One was the rapidly constructed 'modern' colonial state found in American annual reports and correspondence to the metropolises of Manila and Washington. The other was the state as performed in Sulu by colonial agents for the local inhabitants, framed in the morality evidenced in the rituals of rule by local *datu*. As time went on, the Americans built the physical and institutional trappings of their modern state *around* the Tausug, reifying the cleavage between colonial and local. What resulted was ambivalence toward the modern state for its disconnection with the locality, and the persistence of an unofficial, locally driven para-state with its pre-colonial rituals fully functioning in the shadow of the colonial state. Colonial rule in Sulu was a delicate, multi-faced and mutually stabilizing balance sustained by local leaders and colonial officials in keeping these rationalities complimentary rather than contradictory. A closer look at this interaction reveals the ways in which human societies in close, often antagonistic interaction, can rationalize and legitimize the operation of the state

## Acknowledgements

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## A note on names

In alignment with this study's attempt to bring emphasis to the Tausug perspective, I have chosen to use the place name 'Tiange' as opposed to the more colonial 'Jolo'. While the name 'Jolo' is ubiquitous in colonial records when referring to the archipelago's primary settlement, it is equally consistent that it appears as 'Tiange' whenever a Tausug refers to it in those same records. The additional benefit of using 'Tiange' is that it avoids the need to continually have to clarify whether the text is referring to the town or the island. As such, Jolo in this thesis refers always to the island, whilst Tiange refers to the port town that was successively the seat of the Sultanate and that of the colonial regimes that followed.

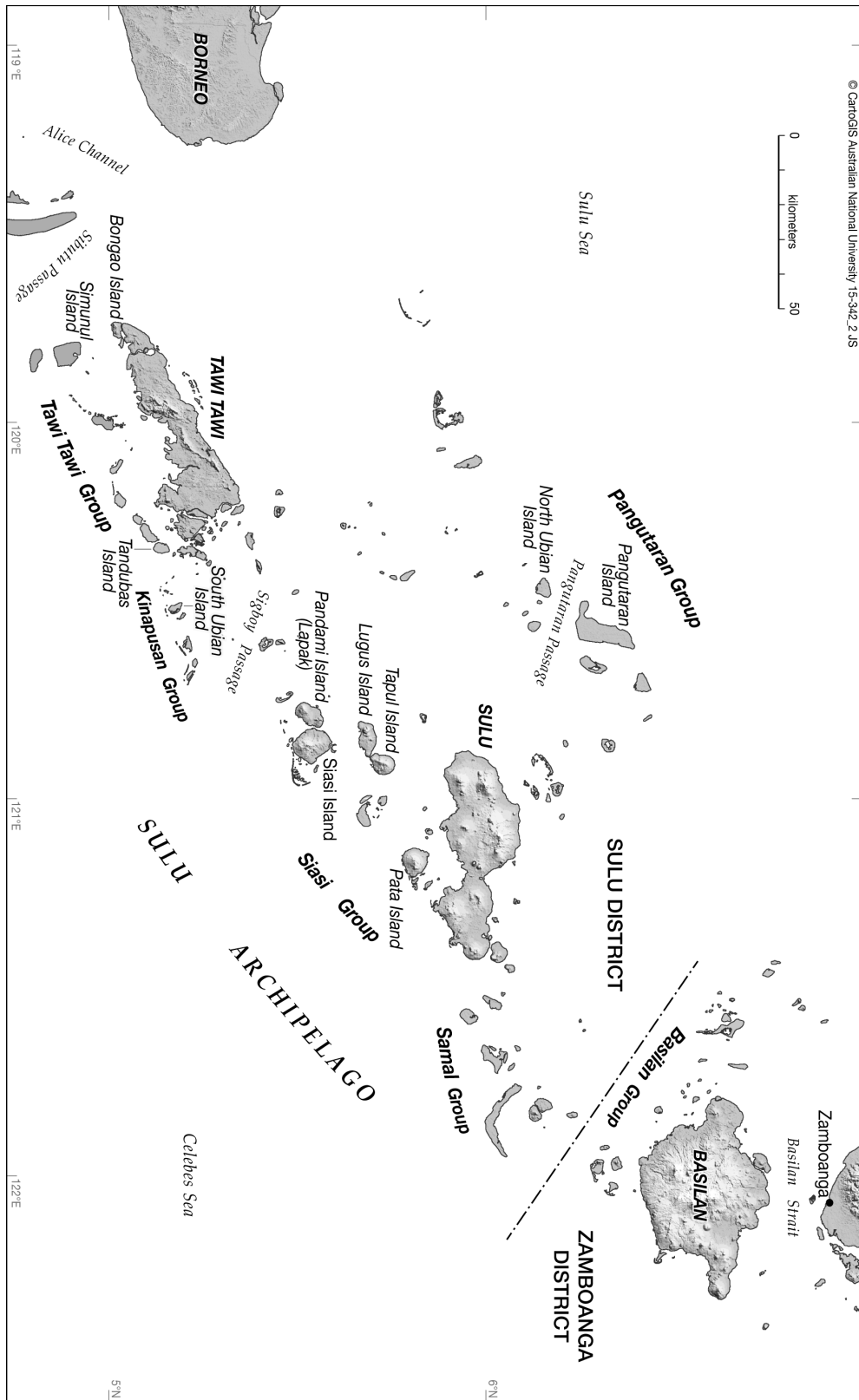
In terms of Tausug names, while scholars of Sulu have used varied approaches to their spellings, I have taken what I felt to be the simplest with regard to readability and recognisability, without compromising the native pronunciation. While Majul's spellings are perhaps the most authentic in considering many a Tausug name's Islamic origin, I found this approach to be somewhat confusing for the reader who may be unfamiliar with such. I have thus settled for aggregating, as much as possible, sections of a name into one word. Thus while Majul might have referred to the Sultan of Sulu at the arrival of the Americans as Jamal ul' Kiram II, I have chosen to use Jamalul Kiram II. Similarly, while he may have referred to Kiram's older brother as Badar ud' Din, I have gone with Badarrudin. The key figure whose name varies the most – Datu Klalbi's younger brother, often appears in the sources as Joakanain, Joakanayn, or Julkarnayn. This name is common in Arabic tradition and is perhaps most accurately spelled as Dhul-Qarnayn. In keeping with the aggregative approach I explained above, however, as well as because it is the more common spelling in contemporary Sulu, I have chosen to use Julkarnain.



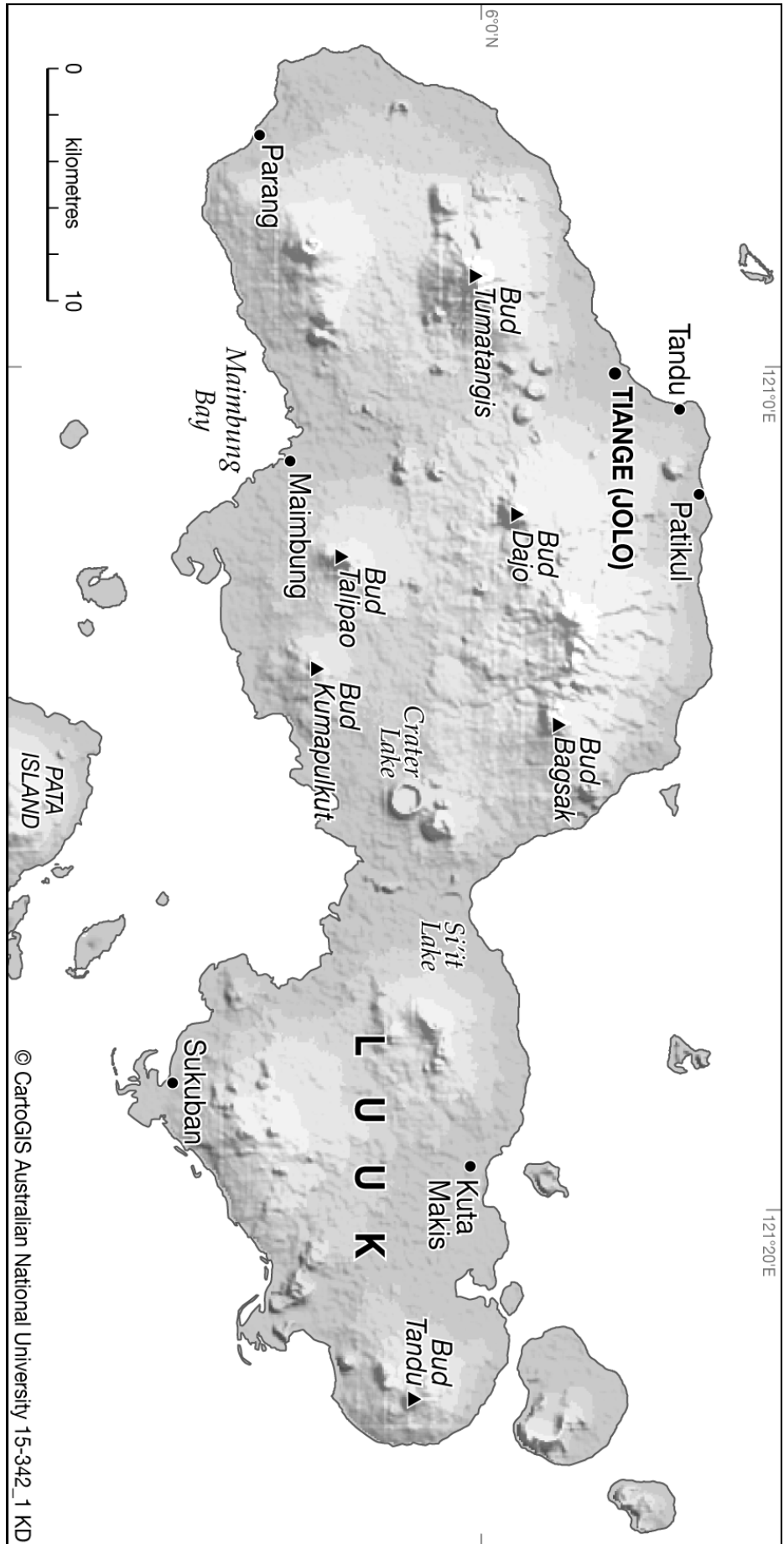
# Map of the Philippines



# Map of the Sulu Archipelago



Map of Jolo Island



## Key Figures in Sulu by locality 1876-1904

Community	Jolo Town/Tiange	Maimbung	Patikul	Parang	Luuk
Location	North western Jolo Island	South central Jolo Island	East of Tiange, North Coast	Western coast	Region of Jolo island east of Lake Siit
<b>Year</b>					
<b>1876</b>	Gov.Gen. Jose Malcampo	Sultan Jamalul Alam Panglima Adak	Datu Asibi Datu Pula		
<b>1877</b>	Gov. Carlos Martinez				
<b>1880</b>	Gov. Rafael Gonzalez de Rivera	Pangian Inchy Jamila (2 <sup>nd</sup> Wife of Alam)			Panglima Sakandar
<b>1881</b>	Gov. Isidro Gutierrez Soto	Sultan Badarrudin (Son of Alam's 1 <sup>st</sup> wife)			Maharaja Abdulla
<b>1882</b>	Gov. Eduardo Fernandez Bremon  Brig. Gen. Jose Paulin				
	Gov. Julian Gonzalez Parrado			Sharif Usman	
<b>1884</b>			Datu Aliuddin* (appointed regent by Badarrudin)	Datu Harun Al-Rashid*	
<b>1885</b>	Gov. Francisco Castilla	Amirul (Jamalul) Kiram II* (son of Alam & Jamila)		Maharajah Towasil	
<b>1886</b>	Gov. Juan Arolas				
<b>1893</b>	Gov. Cesar Mattos Gov. Venancio Hernandez	Hadji Butu (Prime Minister of Kiram II)	Brothers Datu Kalbi & Datu Julkarnain	Maharajah Indanan	
<b>1897</b>	Gov. Luis Huerta			Sakatie (Brother of Indanan)	
<b>1899</b>	Major. Owen Sweet  Col. William Wallace			Panglima Dammang	
				Datu Ambutong	
<b>1903</b>	Gov. Hugh L. Scott	Hadji Abdullah		Paradji Biroa Panglima Tahir (father of Paradji)	Panglima Hassan Laksamana Usap
<b>1904</b>					

\* Claimant to the Sultanate in 1884

## Introduction

This study examines how the people of the Sulu archipelago in the southern Philippines came to terms with their eventual incorporation into the American colonial state after developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also provides insight into a general pattern of native<sup>1</sup>-colonial interaction throughout island Southeast Asia: a region where native societies possessed a high degree of similarity. Through this discussion, notions of colonization, conquest, resistance and of the workings of modern colonial states, are re-examined. Most importantly, it will reveal how native understandings of governance and legitimacy, much more than American ones, profoundly affected the configuration of the 'modern' state in Sulu. The case of Sulu can thus provide a unique lens through which the student of history can contemplate answers to three questions: How did modern states incorporate pre-modern ones? How did later colonial empires in the nineteenth century, such as that of the United States, establish their authority over native states? What were the implications of this process for the Tausug and in a broader sense, other societies edged onto the colonial borderlands?

The work in the following pages takes as its methodological starting point the intention to de-centre the colonial narrative, and adopt a more locally grounded viewpoint in writing a history of Sulu in this period. It will thus focus primarily on the internal motivations for the developments in the period between 1881 and 1920 to better understand the role the Tausug played in the transition from the Spanish to American regimes. A secondary approach this thesis adopts is to contextualize this history into regional patterns of local and alien rule. Owing to recent work on neighbouring Southeast Asian societies and the Pacific, the author feels that fresh insight can be provided by these external studies on the people of Sulu. Thus through an examination of correspondence and dialogues with colonial officials, combined with contemporary and later twentieth century ethnographies and local oral literature recording colonial events, this study will venture to make

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to use the term 'native' because it is often not synonymous with the word 'indigenous' in the Philippine context. While 'native' can be any inhabitant of the archipelago, 'indigenous' often carries connotations that imply animistic and pagan heritage. It is an arbitrary distinction, but one that might be helpful for the task at hand.

the following key points: Firstly, the Americans, at their arrival in Sulu in 1899, slid into a long-established role as the colonial faction in the lingering contestations between elite rivals after the death of Sultan Jamalul Alam in 1881. This drawn-out process, lasting for decades, was the result of the inability to seat a universally accepted, morally ascendant sultan and the inclination of the Tausug, Sulu's predominant ethnic group, to choose contestation and instability over what they perceived to be immoral rule and stability. The Americans had merely filled Spain's role in these contestations, serving as a military bulwark for the faction they allied with. They consequently did not make the initial epoch-making impact upon their arrival as is often assumed. Indeed, they entered a scene in the midst of the reverberations triggered eighteen years prior.

Secondly, the Tausug were not opposed to foreigner rule as much as they were opposed to what, in their understanding, was *immoral* rule. This morality in this case, was that expected of rulers, which centred on the ability to discern between good and evil, right and wrong, just and unjust as defined by Tausug cultural codes. Individual Americans filled the local role of the stranger king, an institution produced out of the highly mobile, highly cosmopolitan Austronesian world of which Sulu and other insular Southeast Asian societies form a part. The alien-ness of the stranger king gave them the objectivity and moral ascendancy to mediate and bring justice over native faction leaders, who themselves were too intertwined in the web of vendettas and jealousies that fueled conflict. When Americans played this locally determined role incorrectly and in a manner that was inconsistent with what was expected of them as stranger kings<sup>2</sup>, in essence demonstrating the inability to carry out just rule, they could rapidly lose their legitimacy in the eyes of the Tausug, in the way that rival sultans did in the final years of the nineteenth century.

Third, what emerged in the first few years of the twentieth century were two different articulations of the government in Sulu. One was the rapidly constructed 'modern' colonial state found in American annual reports and correspondence to the metropolises of Manila and Washington. The other was the state as performed

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<sup>2</sup> This is a concept historians of the pre-colonial Austronesian world, which includes Sulu, have used to refer to the case when an outsider is accepted as local ruler. This will be explored in-depth in the next chapter.

by colonial agents for the local inhabitants, framed in the morality expressed in the rituals of rule by local *datu*. As time went on, the Americans built the physical and institutional trappings of their modern state *around* the Tausug, while in the locality native notions of legitimacy and good governance persisted, reifying the cleavage between colonial and local. What resulted was ambivalence toward the modern state for its disconnection with the locality, and the existence of an unofficial, locally driven para-state with its pre-colonial rituals fully functioning in the shadow of the colonial state.

Fundamental in this historical process is the aforementioned morality of rule, and a ruler's susceptibility to challenge when his moral ascendancy over rivals was questioned. The moral dimensions of a native ruler included his lineage and connection with the Prophet Muhammad, which was embodied in illustrious ancestors who also served as sultans. Another dimension to moral rule, this one shared with foreigners who did not possess the link to previous sultans, was that of juridical wisdom evidenced by the ability to mediate conflict equitably and to be able to produce and administer justice. In the context of the contestation of the final years of the nineteenth century, this ability to mediate and bring various factions together – a manifestation of this juridical dimension to moral rule, came to the fore. This study therefore focuses on moral practice successfully (or unsuccessfully) exhibited and implemented by rulers in Sulu, and how this affected their legitimacy. The Tausug search for a candidate imbued with this quality over a perceived 'immoral' ruler determined the history of Sulu in the four decade period encompassing death of Sultan Jamalul Alam in 1881 and the abolition of the colonial Department of Mindanao and Sulu in 1920.

When we speak of morality in Sulu and in other parts of the Muslim Philippines, we are naturally drawn to consider Islamic morality. Sultans have been in the Sulu archipelago since the fifteenth century while Islam itself has had a presence since the thirteenth. Islam thus permeates the idiom of authority and justice and is evident in many a letter and correspondence from that period. Intellectual developments in this period's Islamic world have impacted the societies of Southeast Asian Muslims, as the tradition of the Hajj, combined with the facility of steam-powered travel, led to a flourishing exchange between scholars of varied

geographic origins.<sup>3</sup> The worldview of the people of Sulu in the late nineteenth century was that they were part of the Ummah, a global Islamic community with shared notions of right and wrong. The intellectual debates occurring in the Muslim heartlands in the late nineteenth century did indeed manifest themselves in the political inclinations of various factions in Sulu, particularly after the death of Jamalul Alam, as we shall see. In acknowledging this, however, I would like to diverge a little from authors such as Riddell and Voll by bringing into this mix of factors the influence of a more Pacific-oriented, Austronesian world along an avenue of inquiry framed by authors such as David Henley and Hans Hägerdal.<sup>4</sup> What I hope to articulate therefore, is the notions of justice and authority that take as their context a more oceanic Southeast Asia and the impulses of its native inhabitants, with a particular focus on Sulu. In this sense, the possibility is also raised that this is a base of political morality that is shared with other non-Muslim part of the Philippines.

### **Creating the margins**

The last decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century were a time of tumultuous change on the frontier of colonial rule for the Tausug people of the southern Philippines. The eventual incorporation of native states into imperial ones was the end point of a long process of *creating* the margins of colonial states in Southeast Asia. These decades remain an area of contested historical interpretation on related questions about the impact of colonial rule and the continuity of indigenous influences. This dissertation examines a vital aspect of this historical juxtaposition.

The circumstances Sulu experienced at the turn of the twentieth century were a product of three overlapping external factors. The first of these involves the expansion of territorial control by British, Spanish, Dutch, and even French and German empires over island Southeast Asia. This caused the people of the Sulu

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<sup>3</sup> John Obert Voll. *Islam: Continuity and change in the modern world*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, (1994); Peter G. Riddell. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian world: Transmission and responses*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, (2001).

<sup>4</sup> David Henley. "Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King: Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere." *Modern Asian Studies*. 38.1. (Feb., 2004). pp. 85-44; Hans Hägerdal. *Lords of the land, lords of the sea; Conflict and adaptation in early colonial Timor, 1600-1800*. Vol. 273. BRILL, (2012).



archipelago to lose much of their access to traditional long distance trade fostered over the previous millennium. This trade characterized its early prosperity and influenced the development of the native state. A less recognized, but arguably equally significant a factor, was the arrival of rinderpest, or cattle plague in the 1880s. This disease affected bovines and other ungulates, including the critically important water buffalo, known locally as *carabao*, used in rice production and universal beast of burden. By the arrival of the American empire in 1899, accounts had indicated that the disease had wiped out well over ninety percent of the ungulate population of the Sulu archipelago, and spurred the ubiquity of cattle raiding – a primary security concern during this time for colonial regimes.

Another factor was the echo of political and intellectual debates in Egypt and Arabia carried to the region by travelling leaders and scholars.<sup>5</sup> In particular, the contentious relationship between reason and revelation and its influence on notions of absolute power and charismatic power. The dynastic push by the descendants of the much beloved Jamalul Kiram I and son Pulalun through the second half of the nineteenth century suggests the influence of cosmopolitan Islamic thinking at the time. As factions of datu still committed to charismatic leadership and a more speculative, mystical Sufi tradition clashed with the Kirams and what may have been legalistic leanings picked up from that family's travels to the Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

These circumstances helped set off reconfigurations of power within the Tausug polity, highlighted by the decade long succession crisis that followed the death of the Sultan Jamalul Alam in 1881. Despite the ascension of Jalamul Kiram II in 1894, the shadow of this crisis was long, and provided the anxious political climate into which a third factor was added - a transition of colonial regimes from Spanish to American. The processes in play in Sulu at the time of this transition profoundly affected the way in which its society was incorporated into the American colonial state, and simultaneously, the way the Americans incorporated themselves into Tausug political processes.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Francis Laffan. *Islamic nationhood and colonial Indonesia: the umma below the winds*. Routledge, (2003).

<sup>6</sup> Peter G. Riddell. *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian world: Transmission and responses*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, (2001).

## States in Sulu

Recent queries into the everyday workings of states have revealed considerable dissonance between its articulated ideal and the reality lived by local participants. This is particularly evident in the context of Southeast Asia, where colonial states, and their inheritor nation states, had been superimposed upon pre-existing native ones by western and western-style empires. Native and colonial centres initially occupied each other's distant peripheries, far removed from one another's effective reach. As colonial states expanded and the native maritime ones in island Southeast Asia contracted, places like Sulu suddenly found themselves on the periphery where once it was they who were the centres. The fact that this has occurred in several places makes the region an excellent source of examples on how 'modern' states have established themselves and their power on a foundation of indigenous state power bases.

It is important at this stage to understand the type of polity that was present in Sulu at the end of the nineteenth century. The sultanate of Sulu was a Southeast Asian Islamic polity that shared many features with polities in other parts of the Austronesian world, which extends from the Indian Ocean to the Eastern Pacific. Evolving out of kinship-based communities a Sulu 'king' by the name of Abu Bakr adopted the title of sultan in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Records of Tausug kings date back further, most notably in Chinese accounts of tribute embassies beginning in the early fifteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

The orthodox understanding of the development of states in the region outline an ever-centralizing process, with power increasingly concentrated in those exercising governance. In most studies on the difference between chiefdoms and states, emphasis is placed on the transition from the relatively temporary nature of political authority to that which is more secular, institutionalized and permanently

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<sup>7</sup> Cesar Adib Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, (1999). p. 68

<sup>8</sup> Zhenping Wang. "Reading Song-Ming Records on the Pre-colonial History of the Philippines." (2008). Web. Accessed 10/27/2015. <<http://www.icis.kansai-u.ac.jp/data/journal01-v1/journal01-19-wang.pdf>>

agile enough to muster coercion to prevent dissent and dissolution.<sup>9</sup> These scholars perceive the replacement of locality-based, kinship affiliations by more territorial ones as indicative of this process of centralization. Making this possible is the use of taxation and tribute levied against trade and agricultural production.<sup>10</sup>

Various scholars have characterized the societies of the Philippines in this light. Archaeologist Laura Lee Junker described pre-colonial Philippine polities as being closer to chiefdoms, with tentative rule by community strong men reinforced by kinship ties with other nobles and individuals of repute.<sup>11</sup> Power had to be continually legitimized through feats of leadership and skill – in war, commerce as well as in adjudication. William Henry Scott also referred to the majority of Visayan and Southern Philippine polities as chiefdoms, noting that in larger port cities, the paramount chief would adopt foreign titles such as the Sanskrit 'Rajah', the Malay 'Paduka' and the Islamic 'Sultan'.<sup>12</sup>

Some, on the other hand, have taken the adoption of these titles as indicative of a greater degree of systematic governance reflective of more centralized states. Majul, for example, believed government in Sulu had become sophisticated enough by the end of the seventeenth century to have expanded into an empire.<sup>13</sup> American accounts in 1901, however, reveal a fragmented polity with much internal conflict, ambivalence and even defiance for the sultan being common amongst the more powerful chiefs.<sup>14</sup> The common analysis by contemporary Americans was that absolute power resided in the hands of the local chief or *datu*, characteristic of the pre-colonial chiefdoms described by Junker.

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<sup>9</sup> Paul D'Arcy. *Transforming Hawaii: Balancing Coercion and Consent in 18<sup>th</sup> c. Kānaka Maoli Statecraft*. Canberra: ANU Press, (2016). In press. P. 8

<sup>10</sup> Michael Mann. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and results." In John A. Hall, ed., *States in History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, (1986). P. 38; Henri JM Claessen and Peter Skalnik. "Limits: beginning and end of the early state." *The Early State* (1978). P. 619-35; Grant D. Jones and Robert R. Kautz. "Issues in the study of New World state formation." *The Transition to Statehood in the New World* (1981). Pp. 14-17.

<sup>11</sup> Laura Lee Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting: The political economy of Philippine chiefdoms*. University of Hawaii Press, (1999).

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Scott. *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine culture and society*. Quezon City: Ateneo University Press, (1994). P. 129

<sup>13</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 380.

<sup>14</sup> War Department. "Synopsis of interview had by the Commission with Maj. O.J. Sweet, Commanding Officer, Jolo, P.I., March 30, 1901." *Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Philippine Commission*, Part 2. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1901). p. 85

Contemporary observers, such as Najeeb Saleeby, the superintendent of schools in Moro Province, explained this difference as coming from the fact that Sulu had undergone a half-century of pressure and encroachment from Spanish and other colonial powers, and that the Sultanate of 1898 was but a shadow of its former grandeur.<sup>15</sup> In essence, to Saleeby and many other Americans, Sulu was undergoing a gradual process of being conquered and incorporated into foreign colonial empires, which the arrival of the United States in 1899 completed.

Saleeby's analysis seems to explain the situation for the Sulu that he saw at the turn of the twentieth century, where the sultanate's centralizing process in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was interrupted and overcome by the expansion of western colonialism in the region. This may certainly be true of Sulu as an independent state. Its internal workings however, remained intact enough to have been apparent to anthropologist Thomas Kiefer, who in 1967 and 1968 observed local governance in a dynamic that practically matched in detail that which existed at the arrival of the Americans sixty years prior.<sup>16</sup>

Authors looking to the Islamic world have attempted to articulate how notions of authority developed in the Southeast Asian region as a whole. In his study on Makassar, Thomas Gibson explores how Southeast Asian societies were influenced by successive imported social and political concepts he called 'intellectual emanations'.<sup>17</sup> He epitomizes these concepts into seven ideal types of authority that emerged more or less chronologically as a result of increasing contact with the Middle East and South Asia. The first model Gibson describes is the sufi-influenced 'perfect man' inspired in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by rulers such as the Mughal Akbar and Shah Ismail of Persia. This type of leader is perceived to possess supreme religious and political authority. The second model is that of the wandering cosmopolitan Shaykh (master scholar) travelling via the extensive Sufi networks. As wandering Shaykhs began to frequent the region in the seventeenth century, they brought

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<sup>15</sup> Najeeb M Saleeby. *The History of Sulu*. Manila: Carmelo & Bauermann. (1963). P. 148

<sup>16</sup> Thomas M Kiefer. *Tausug armed conflict: The Social Organization of Military Activity in a Philippine Moslem Society*. PhD Thesis, Anthropology, Indiana University (1969).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Gibson. *Islamic narrative and authority in Southeast Asia: from the 16th to the 21st century*. Macmillan, (2007).

with them Middle Eastern reformist doctrines to emerging anti colonial struggles as these powers grew in influence. These journeyman scholars established local centres of learning strengthening Southeast Asia's ties to the larger Islamic world. Two other types described by Gibson relevant to the current study include the Islamic martyr, which emerged in reaction to increased colonial encroachment, and popular mysticism Sufi orders began to recruit individuals outside the local elites. Each model, Gibson explains, enabled local Southeast Asians to articulate their place and roles in a global Islamic community.<sup>18</sup>

Recent studies, particularly those dealing with ones in the Pacific, have asserted that any state, regardless of how 'modern' it is, is characterized by processes in which local networks of authority and power are intertwined. D'Arcy describes government as "...balancing and seeking broad consensus among competing interest groups rather than concentrating or even monopolizing power in the hands of the state."<sup>19</sup> The imposed American colonial state in its formative years made these integrative compromises at the local level in order to ensure its stability and security. The Tausug reactions over the following decades prevented any additional inroads by the colonial regime into the locality. Instead, the modern American state in Sulu has had to lean on local patterns of authority and rule. In this sense, one could take the perspective that Tausug polities have sacrificed external independence in order to successfully preserve its cultural identity in rituals of local governance.

### **The colonial state in society**

To early twentieth century imperialists, there was no doubt that their own forms of the state, be they European or American, was organized along rational, scientific, secular and objective lines. This perception of their own political systems was contrasted with perceptions of those of the people they ruled in their empires. In building a colonial state in Sulu, for the Americans the broad strokes of this endeavour were to replace the 'feudal' and 'superstitious' notions upon which the Tausug system of *datu* rule was based, and establish a version of the rational, modern American republic. An American style state would be inherently rational,

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Gibson. *Islamic narrative and authority in Southeast Asia: from the 16th to the 21st century*. Macmillan, (2007).

<sup>19</sup> D'Arcy. *Transforming Hawaii*. P. 14

in complete contrast with Tausug practices of governance, which were considered un-developed and irrational. Indeed, their type of primitive political system was to be superseded not merely by the efforts of imperialists, but by the inevitability of time itself. Imperialists would simply be accelerating the natural pace of progress.

<sup>20</sup> These notions of the 'modern' state were articulated in the metropolises like Washington D.C. and colonial centres like Manila. They formed part of the justifying discourse that explained the occupation of foreign territories and the incorporation of alien societies.

The empire's administrators who were sent to the localities, however, often found that the inevitability of the 'rational' state had to be compromised in favour of maintaining control of subject populations. The new colonial state was compelled to establish its authority in Sulu by building on pre-existing Tausug precedents. In colonial empires where this has happened, this was not necessarily by design but as a compromise to deal with powerful local political and social forces. Joel Migdal addressed the difficulties in establishing authority and legitimacy in the locality, and explained that a state is an inherent paradox of being a part of society and apart from society simultaneously.<sup>21</sup> In other words, for the state's 'rational' superstructure to be secure, it must be anchored to foundations steeped in local social patterns and notions of legitimacy and authority. Migdal articulates this in his 'state in society' approach, where the emphasis is on the interactive process by which groups within the state establish influence and control.<sup>22</sup> To him, there are multiple ways in which the state is configured and practiced in the local milieu, and that state laws and regulations have to compete with an array of other different forms of normative behavior with unexpected results. The state, in this sense, is the product of unintended consequences.<sup>23</sup> The modern state, such as that introduced in Sulu by the Americans therefore, may have actually been, in practice, as chaotic and as 'irrational' as how native states were often characterized as being. And indeed, considering the speed with which many colonial states such as the one created by the U.S. in Sulu were set up, did they truly displace local

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<sup>20</sup> Michael C Hawkins. *Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines' Muslim South*. DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press. (2013).

<sup>21</sup> Joel S. Migdal. *State in Society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. Cambridge University Press, (2001). p. 23

<sup>22</sup> Migdal. *State in Society*. p. 23

<sup>23</sup> Migdal. *State in Society*. p. 23

patterns of legitimacy and power? It seems unlikely that within the space of a decade the Tausug would have completely abandoned their notions of governance. Indeed it seems more likely that it was the Americans that needed to abandon practical aspects of rule in favour of the more pressing need to provide an image of stability. This brings us to the question posed by anthropologist of Southeast Asia, Michael Eilenberg who asks: how should the relationship between state government and non-state forms of authority be understood?<sup>24</sup>

In fact, in the case of Sulu, the U.S. colonial state's actual authority amongst the Tausug was founded on native precedents, acquiescing to their logic of legitimacy in order to gain a foothold in that society. This rationality involved a locally-driven logic behind legitimacy, just rule and moral behavior between ruler and ruled. The public performance of these imbued the regime with what could be understood to be good governance, although the caveat was, as we shall see, this performance needed to be consistent and relatively frequent. It needed to be performed in the locality, where the Tausug could experience it directly, as they had been accustomed to experiencing 'good' rule in the past. If there really was a distinct set of colonial institutions in Sulu built by the Americans, it operated in relative isolation from the everyday lives of the Tausug. In this sense Sulu again provides insight into the relationship between a nascent state government and alternate forms of authority. A closer look at this interaction reveals the ways in which differing human societies can rationalize and legitimize the operation of a shared state. The implications of these multiple frameworks of legitimacy, are that violence can result when these diverging rationalizations come into conflict. Colonial rule therefore, was a delicate balance by local leaders and officials in keeping these rationalities from overstepping their practical delimitations and coming into contact with each other, producing violence and conflict as a result.

### **Borderlands and the colonial state**

Recent research has made it more apparent that pre-modern 'native' systems of governance could continue and persist within the framework of more recently imposed western-style states. Joel Migdal explained that the state, like any other

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<sup>24</sup> Michael Eilenberg. *At the edges of states: Dynamics of state formation in the Indonesian borderlands*. Leiden: KITLV Press, (2012). P. 7

group or organization, is constantly changing, reconstructed, reinvented as it “allies and opposes others inside and outside its territory.”<sup>25</sup> Eilenberg adds to this by suggesting that the ‘ideal’ state is actually always in a constant process of formation. A fully formed state, in whatever ideal form, is thus never completed. State formation is an historical continuum - a fluid process of negotiation and contestation.<sup>26</sup> In fact with a reality where it emerges and stabilizes out of competition and compromise with its constituent groups, Sharma and Gupta argue that it is essential that we avoid the assumption that the formal Weberian state is the source of all legitimate power.<sup>27</sup>

In this study we will consider how legitimate power of the colonial state could emanate from the context of the ‘primitive’ locality. Administrators at various levels of colonial government filled and performed roles that were in the Tausug understanding, those of *datu*. They communicated in the local idiom of power, and gained credibility by adjudicating along local notions of justice in the endeavor to demonstrate their proficiency with issues of ‘right and wrong’. As such colonial articulations of authority were set within the changing patterns of native authority. These dimensions of colonial rule were mainly imperceptible to observers in the metropolis because it could be re-articulated and packaged into the context of American Empire. In a sense, the colonial state in Sulu could be what the observer desired it to be, depending on the perspective taken. We arrive therefore, at an historical anthropology of the American colonial state in Sulu. This builds on work by Sharma and Gupta in that we examine examples of everyday practices of authority and legitimacy to gain a better idea of the nature of both colonial and native rule as they came together focusing, in this particular case, on Sulu in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

## **History and the margins**

Historians have found recently that at its fringes, states unravel and reveal often hidden and yet key aspects of their true nature. The borderlands are areas of relatively weaker central control, and those inhabiting these regions have a much

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<sup>25</sup> Migdal. *State in Society*. P. 23

<sup>26</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. P. 52

<sup>27</sup> Akhil Gupta, et al. "Globalization and postcolonial states." *Current anthropology* 47.2 (2006). P. 277



more ambivalent relationship with the state. It thus provides a window into what the state was like before it became established and what mechanisms it used to gain stability. Likewise, it also provides an opportunity to understand how pre-existing societies deal with a state that is inexorably coming to encompass it.<sup>28</sup> As Sulu itself became a borderland, it is fitting to take inspiration from this body of literature to gain a better understanding of the problem addressed in this study of how exactly the American colonial state established itself over the Tausug one, and conversely, how the Tausug themselves dealt with their new colonial context.

It is important, however, at the beginning of this study to note that one of the pitfalls of using borderlands' history is the tendency towards a particular binary. With border regions being a convenient counter to state narratives, the rationale of its study often involves nomadism as presenting the opposition to centrism and teleology. In his recent innovative, a paradigm-shifting study of the Comanche nation, Pekka Hämäläinen has suggested that these histories inadvertently reinforce imperial and state histories in that borderlands and the societies occupying them are static in geography and behavior. He suggests that a new shift should focus more on a better understanding of indigenous centres and the role they played in these histories. Historians need to find *new* centres of borderlands history in a way that Hämäläinen explains is "Plotting change differently."<sup>29</sup> In other words, instead of looking from the outside in, as historians relying on colonial sources often are compelled to do, we must look from the inside out, tapping into recent attention paid to oral literature and a more in-depth revisit of native correspondence and dialogues with colonial officials.

The Tausug present one of several cases in Southeast Asia, where pre-colonial centres were gradually edged into colonial peripheries. Or, conversely from the Sulu perspective, colonial centres building on Southeast Asian peripheries eventually marginalized Southeast Asian centres. This complicates the more orthodox borderlands binary. It in fact puts into question what exactly is a borderland? If considered in its usual sense merely as a space 'in between' states

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<sup>28</sup> Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett. "On borderlands." *Journal of American History* 98.2 (2011): 338-361.

<sup>29</sup> Hämäläinen. *On borderlands*. P. 338-361.

or on their periphery, this borderlands discourse can merely 'reinforce' imperial and state histories, as Hämäläinen warned.

It is thus important to take the perspective that borderlands, like states, are not static spaces, but the result of shifting centres and nodes of power. Significantly, people and societies shift their behavior to suit new circumstances presented by shifting nodes of power, depending on their location vis-à-vis the current centre of power. The characteristics of a borderland society seem to be adoptable when a new centre overshadows the old one. Centralized states could gradually become more mobile, less sedentary, less centralized and more localized as other centres overshadow their own and push it onto the periphery. The configurations of authority, power and legitimacy in the locality were therefore subject to these shifts, and may have even played a role in driving them.

### **Rationalities of rule**

In light of this, has the historiography placed too much stock in the colonial centre's characterization of the indigenous state, which, at one point in time may have itself been a centre? Perhaps it is misleading to use the terms 'state' versus 'society', in the way Migdal has, in reference to cases when colonial governance overlaps with systems of native governance.<sup>30</sup> So-called indirect rule was a significant means of extending imperial reach in many global localities.<sup>31</sup> As we have seen, it is contentious to assume that the modern state, which in the present case is a colonial one, is inherently rational. This assumption is perpetuated if we were to employ the term 'state' to represent colonial systems of governance, whilst we use 'society' to refer to those processes of governance that have indigenous origins. It implies that native processes of rule, once subsumed into colonial ones, lose their own sophistication and rationality, if they ever possessed those qualities at all. As Veena Das and Deborah Poole argue that the state cannot be detached from local practice and tradition, it cannot therefore, be the inherently objective and rational entity it is often characterized as being.<sup>32</sup> It is more accurate then, to

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<sup>30</sup> Migdal. *State in Society*. P. 23

<sup>31</sup> See Newbury *Patrons, clients, and empire* for a more in-depth discussion where he asserts a greater degree of continuity if viewed merely as the latest episode of patron-client relations rather than a colonial disjuncture)

<sup>32</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. P. 51

propose that there was a colonial rationality, and a local rationality of rule behind governance and authority. Eilenberg argues that the ways in which the state and local societies colluded is understudied.<sup>33</sup> I would expand on this and argue that likewise, the emphasis has been on the imposition of state order by colonial powers, even in cases when they actually acquiesced to pre-existing patterns of rule to establish that authority. Migdal points out how the establishing of authority by states can lead to a variety of unintended consequences, and should be an area that attracts further study.<sup>34</sup> Indeed in imposing western rule in Sulu, imperialists have had to rationalize rule to various native and metropolitan audiences, and exercised authority in accordance with those rationalities that have led to apparent contradictions that historians have since struggled to explain, such as reasons for concurrent acquiescence and resistance which have often been inadequately explained as reflective of elite versus popular cleavages.

Sulu presents an example where rule over a society on the borderlands of the colonial state was only possible through the adoption of local frameworks or rationalities of authority and rule. Comprehensive rule was a fiction of the colonial state, just as it is often the case for the nation state, as Sharma and Gupta have asserted. When certain western logics of authority that did not parallel local ones were acted upon and imposed, this undermined the image of legitimacy of the regime, and resulted in instability and challenges to the state. In this sense this study helps in upending the notion that a colonizing state replaced or displaced previous pre-colonial frameworks of rule. In fact, in many cases in Asia and the Pacific, colonial rulers needed to be localized or 'nativized' in order to establish and maintain their actual authority.

Colin Newbury, provides a broad swath of colonial examples, from North and sub-Saharan Africa, to the South Asia, to Southeast Asia and the Pacific, where the local practice of governance in essence meant the utilization of an '...older model of relationships at the interface between rulers and ruled...'<sup>35</sup> Hägerdahl points out

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<sup>33</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. P. 55

<sup>34</sup> Migdal, Joel S. In White, Adam, Ed. *The Everyday Life of the State: A State-in-society Approach*. University of Washington Press, (2013). p. xiv

<sup>35</sup> Colin Walter Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire: chieftaincy and over-rule in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific*. Oxford University Press, (2003). P. 283

how even 'traditional' societies in Timor had a capacity to incorporate foreigners in such a way that the fundamental native framework of governance persisted while at the same time utilizing western-derived symbols of rule. While western military titles such as 'colonel' and 'brigadier' were used by the Timorese, they had native meanings and implications.<sup>36</sup> Using Timor as a case study as well, but this time from the Portuguese side, Roque describes the process of incorporating elements of native governance into the colonial system as 'mimesis', and goes on to explain how local administrators found this the most practical approach to ruling in imperial outposts far from the metropolis.<sup>37</sup> In fact, Roque elsewhere goes on to suggest that the mutual relationship between native and colonial state was mutually 'parasitic', where one fed off the other in gaining legitimacy and authority.<sup>38</sup>

One can take the view that while colonial empires assumed rule over these societies, native societies likewise colonized colonial systems of rule. The fiction, perpetuated by metropolises, of comprehensive rule by their rationally organized states disguised the reality that these frameworks often employed indigenous rituals of governance and legitimacy. This is particularly the case in locations where a previous pre-colonial centre, such as Sulu, was well established. In this sense, it is evident that there are two key features of the state in Sulu that are relevant to our discussion: The first is that the uncompromised, rational, territorially comprehensive 'modern' state represented by the U.S. designated and defined Moro Province, was a fiction. It is at most packaging under which the dynamics of authority are native and deeply connected to pre-colonial patterns and logics of rule. The second is that the institutions and tentative systems of western 'modernity' established by American imperialists were separate from, but not un-connected to the native system of governance.

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<sup>36</sup> Hans Hägerdal. *Lords of the land, lords of the sea: Conflict and adaptation in early colonial Timor, 1600-1800*. Vol. 273. BRILL, (2012).

<sup>37</sup> Ricardo Roque. "Mimetic Governmentality and the Administration of Colonial Justice in East Timor, ca. 1860–1910." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57.01 (2015). P. 67-97.

<sup>38</sup> Ricardo Roque, "Parasitism in colonial interactions", in Ricardo Roque, *Headhunting and Colonialism: Anthropology and the Circulation of Human Skulls in the Portuguese Empire, 1870-1930*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, (2010). P. 34

The colonial state therefore was chameleon-like, appearing and behaving differently depending on the audience – and peaceful as long as those two visions are not brought to conflict each other. It is fluid and changeable, maintaining its legitimacy both in the metropolis and in the locality. In colonial states, the premise of rule, therefore, was different per locality. This was particularly the case in areas that were previously centres themselves, where a native rationality of authority was more established and complex. The fringes of states thus are no different from the fringes of empires, apart a more pervasive fiction of rule emanating from the state. This pervasive fiction of rationality masks a reality that is often steeped in what contemporaries termed native primitiveness. What remains of the ‘modern’ imperial state is but an insistent yet comprehensive narrative and fiction of rule and authority. The result of this is a chameleon-like quality in these logics of rule. The logics of governance and legitimacy and authority was replaced externally to fit with what it was understood to be in the metropole, while retaining its local logics of governance. In a sense, empires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century needed to do this. It becomes apparent that, to establish itself over a locally predominant alien, this chameleon like nature, in many cases outweighed in importance even an overwhelming ability to militarily coerce.

### **Friction**

The diversity of populations upon which colonial states in Southeast Asia were conceived meant that there is the inevitable fringe of minorities that do not fit into the logics of the modern state. Whereas they once were merely distant areas of weak control on the frontiers of empires, they then become re-articulated as areas of disorder, chaos and disloyalty in a state claiming control. But that is only half of the story. To a former centre like Sulu, Zamboanga the provincial capital, Manila the colonial capital, and Washington D.C. the imperial capital, were themselves, distant borderlands. Their imposition on places like Sulu were in fact compromised entries, subject to logics of rule in that locality, not in the metropole. Most of the time, everyday governance flowed along overlapping, but parallel lines of legitimacy. In cases where these logics of rule diverged, the bases of legitimacy on which the colonial centre rested could be undermined. The modern empire itself could appear to the natives within it to be chaotic, unpredictable and untamed. Revolts are thus not merely attempts to remove foreigner rule, they are

reactions to perceived chaos, and attempts to re-impose a more familiar, locally articulated form of order. The reassertion of previous logics of legitimacy and rule were at the centre of these actions against colonial governments.

Thus colonial impositions that led to confrontation are often perceived by locals as being acts running counter to their notions of good governance. In this sense, we need to look beyond what is often attributed to revolt and resistance in Sulu in the decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century – dynastic interference by Spain and the implementation of ‘alien’ policies such as taxation<sup>39</sup> and the curbing of slavery by the United States.<sup>40</sup> If one were to limit the analysis to the implementation of culturally myopic policies, one leaves out key aspects of the colonial relationship that have to do with the logic of rule and frameworks of legitimacy employed to establish that rule. We also run the risk once again of denuding the Tausug of their rationality, as these explanations often link to religious taboo, with regard to taxation, and unenlightened attitudes toward other human beings with regard to slavery. As we shall see, the Tausug in fact were all too willing to abandon these two aspects of their society, and became belligerent only when colonial governance became unpredictable and arbitrary in their eyes.

Eilenberg explains that in histories of colonial Southeast Asia, there is often an over-emphasis on resistance instead of ways of collusion.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, there is an often an over emphasis on the imposition of rule by colonial authorities, instead of ways in which they compromised with (and were compromised by) local populations. Indeed, the relationship between the locality and the colonial centre is multifold and complex. Eilenberg asserts that the borderland’s ambivalence toward the centre is a result of how the state and its ideal elements are always in formation and in negotiation in the borderlands. “What makes borderlands intriguing is the manner in which people living there both subvert and support their state.”<sup>42</sup> State formation is an historical continuum involving the tug and pull

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<sup>39</sup> Peter Gordon Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920*. PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University. (1968).

<sup>40</sup> Michael Salman. *The embarrassment of slavery: Controversies over bondage and nationalism in the American colonial Philippines*. University of California Press, (2001).

<sup>41</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. p. 55

<sup>42</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. p. 55

of these forces.<sup>43</sup> If we consider the colonial borderland as the point where these competing rationalities of rule intersect in unstable and unpredictable ways, outbreaks of violence, therefore, ensue not out of a rejection of foreign rule necessarily, but out of friction between these rationalities of rule. In other words, conflict results when differing perceptions of what rule is supposed to be like contradict or run counter to each other.

### **Internal contestation and colonial demi-rule**

When the Americans arrived in Sulu in 1899, the archipelago was in the midst of a re-ordering of power already in progress from within. The interregnum between Spanish and American authority was also a lull in the series of open conflicts that began in 1884 at the death of the Sultan Badaruddin. Americans came into this situation not as a monolithic force, but as one of many players in an ongoing struggle for supremacy. They had, however, emerged from it as the paramount power, in military terms, replacing the Sultan's faction from Maimbung. However, in their efforts to establish their personal authority, American officers in Sulu entangled themselves in the network of alliances, factions and vendettas dictating conflict in that island chain. For the next few decades, this primarily Tausug driven factionalism coloured the imperial endeavour, relegating the articulated colonial objectives of establishing the institutions of a western, colonial state in favour of military security and the peaceful compliance of the chieftains of Sulu, locally known as *datu*.

James Scott has written perceptively about borderland societies on mainland Southeast Asia that resisted the encroachment of centralized, sedentary states he referred to as 'paddy states' in reference to their reliance on lowland wet-rice agriculture.<sup>44</sup> These borderland societies were 'stateless', mobile, nomadic societies, and his argument centered on the proposition that they resisted the impositions of paddy state by maintaining their anarchy. Since Sulu itself was a centralized, rice-based society, it should, within Scott's framework, not be a

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<sup>43</sup> Eilenberg. *At the edges of states*. P. 52; See also Patricio N. Abinales. *Making Mindanao: Cotabao and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Printing). Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, (2000/2004).

<sup>44</sup> James C. Scott. *The art of not being governed. An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, (2009).

borderland society. However, Sulu enters history in two different manifestations: as a centralizing state imposing its will on the periphery, and another as a borderland society *on* the colonial periphery. At first glance, it seems Sulu reverted to anarchy to keep the encroaching Spanish and, subsequently, American colonial state at bay. Contemporary colonial reactions would even reinforce this notion of rampant cattle raiding and criminality and the limited influence of the sultan. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that while there was no modern state as understood by the Americans, there was a perpetuation and use of the changing and developing local practice of power, justice and governance. Rather than relying solely on anarchistic conditions to hold the colonial state at bay, therefore, the local articulation of the state on the periphery of the modern state sustained its previous manifestation in a form of an informal parallel-state, filling in functions in areas where the colonial state was lacking. With Americans pre-occupied with security concerns, the pre-existing native system was perpetuated in local justice and everyday governance.

With the Sulu sultanate being strong and difficult to subdue at the arrival of Spain in the sixteenth century, the institutions of Spanish rule developed at a distance, in places much further north such as Cebu and Manila - on the periphery of that Tausug state. At the transition from Spanish to American rule at the end of the nineteenth century, however, the colonial state had already surpassed Sulu in military power and constricted the local polity's reach, re-orienting the borderland to Sulu. This situation, however, was to have an impact on the way Sulu was to fit into the twentieth century colonial state. In the broad analysis, this study is about the relationship borderland societies have with the modern colonial and nascent nation state and the context for ambivalence toward the metropolis. In some cases, when the state is seen as incapable of providing justice and local notions of moral rule, it never gains legitimacy. Local populations in the borderlands either create or sustain their own systems of providing mediation and dispute settlement for their communities. Sulu provides a case study of how, despite decades of state building efforts, the colonially defined 'modern' state remained distant and illegitimate. The critical beginnings of this lie in the decades surrounding the start of the U.S. colonial era, in the processes by which the United States established the foundations of their rule whilst the Tausug were struggling with their own internal



and ideological issues of legitimacy. Since the native dimensions of this legitimacy centered in the ability to dispense justice and redistribute wealth, the management of cattle raiding in the first few years of the twentieth century takes a central demonstrative role for our study.

### **Narratives of resistance**

The re-examination of this period from an internal, Tausug perspective causes us to reconsider the more orthodox narratives about the four decades spanning the end of Spanish and the beginning of American colonial rule in the Southern Philippines. Much of our foundational knowledge of Muslim Filipino history come from authors who have focused on the colonial regimes that ruled, rather than the people who served as their subjects. As such, American concerns and superficial interpretations of the social and political situation amongst the Tausug polities have defined the history of Sulu in that period. Peter Gowing has provided detailed insight on Moro<sup>45</sup> Province – the military-run colonial administrative unit ruling the Muslim south, which included Sulu. With reference to the outbreak of violence that occurred soon after the formation of the Province in 1903, Gowing reasonably suggested that it was the decision to effectuate a more active and ‘just’ governance of the ‘barbaric’ Moros which led to open rebellion against the American regime.<sup>46</sup> Alien policies such as anti-slavery, the head-tax known as the *cedula*, disarmament and the callous and their heavy-handed enforcement were the central causes of the violent reaction of certain Tausug leaders. Salman follows along a similar, but more specific vein, attributing the outbreak of conflict to the American suppression of slavery, which, he argues, was central to the economic power of the *datu*.<sup>47</sup> But this view leaves the impression that the Moros, and more specific to our study, the Tausug, merely reacted to the actions of the colonizers and were not central to the authoring of events. It has been argued in studies of societies in other parts of the Austronesian Pacific that colonial conflicts are too often assumed to be the natural occurrence of colonial rule. It is important not to characterize the interaction of

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<sup>45</sup> ‘Moro’ is a term derived from Spanish, which means ‘Moor’. The Spanish referred to all Muslims in the Philippines as ‘Moros’, regardless of the existence of separate linguistic groups, of which the Tausug, Samal and Badjao of Sulu were included.

<sup>46</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 384

<sup>47</sup> Salman. *The embarrassment of slavery*.

colonizer and colonized as a binary opposition of two communities where the local 'indigenous' one is subordinate to the foreign, western dominant one.<sup>48</sup>

Some of those who have offered a more locally focused perspective have often tied their analyses to the consequence of the above assumptions: nationalist themes that generalize past Muslim Filipino experience as a unified and continuous struggle against colonial rule.<sup>49</sup> The emphasis on the continuity of resistance by these authors has led to scholarly rebuttals producing more nuanced studies such as Thomas McKenna's discussion of the desire for hegemony by local *datu* over their own subjects, explaining patterns of collaboration as well as resistance.<sup>50</sup> Patricio Abinales describes how politically astute *datu* re-fashioned themselves in the new American order as mediators between the limited colonial state and the isolated peripheral societies of the Moros, clashing with those leaders who were slower to accept change.<sup>51</sup> These authors have demonstrated how colonial interaction involve a host of varied motives and outcomes. While these studies are essential in understanding their specific units of analysis, there is still a paucity of studies that focus on overlaps and continuities from within the Tausug reality and how these have impacted the same events. Histories of the Southern Philippines have been structured by the ending of the Spanish regime and the beginning of the American one. The effect of the attention to phenomena within the separate regimes is the over-emphasis of the bifurcation of processes that actually overlapped the transition from Spanish to U.S. rule. Norman Owen, in fact commented on the preoccupation with this by scholars of the Philippines:

Too much attention may have been paid to the transfer of sovereignty, and too little to the continuity of development [of past patterns] and the passivity or ineffectiveness of American rule, which allowed it.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Bronwen Douglas. *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*. Canberra: ANU Press, (2008). P. 13

<sup>49</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*; A.K. Hedjazi and S.U. Hedjazi. *The Rise and Fall of the Sulu Islamic Empire 1675-1919*. Chapel Hill: Professional Press, (2002); Gerard Rixhon. Ed. *Voices from Sulu: A Collection of Tausug Oral Traditions*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, (2010).

<sup>50</sup> McKenna, Thomas M. *Muslim rulers and rebels: Everyday politics and armed separatism in the southern Philippines*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, (2000).

<sup>51</sup> Abinales. *Making Mindanao*.

<sup>52</sup> Norman G. Owen. "Philippine Economic Development and American Policy: A Reappraisal." in Norman G. Owen, Ed. *Compadre Colonialism: Studies on the Philippines under American Rule*. (Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia. No. 3, Ann Arbor, 1971) p. 103

Cesar Majul for example, abruptly halts his discussion just before the beginning of the American era, ending his book by declaring: "...here our story ends", re-asserting that artificial divide that has been arbitrarily imposed.<sup>53</sup> These studies can thus overlook patterns of continuity in internal social and political phenomena that have had an impact on and straddle both regimes. As historian of colonial New Caledonia Bronwen Douglas points out, colonial encounters were always 'multiplex' with intersections between the locals themselves as well as with the foreigners occurring across external as well as internal social and cultural groupings.<sup>54</sup> A look at the several decades before 1899 reveals a significant set of changes occurring in the internal configuration of power in Sulu as the result of a succession of weak juvenile sultans. This ultimately led to one of the longest succession crises in Sulu's history – ten years of open conflict when three Tausug rivals vied for the sultanate. This period and the array of factions it produced had a fundamental impact on how conflict under American rule played out ten years after its conclusion. While the aggressive enforcement of U.S. policy in 1903 certainly served as a trigger on events, it is evident that the way the first stages of the conflicts played out were framed by the conditions established long before the arrival of the Americans.

Why has the narrative of resistance privileging an outsider vs. local juxtaposition gained such currency despite being too simplistic in describing Sulu's later colonial history? To what degree is it valid? To what degree is it limited? I postulate that there are two reasons for the resilience of this narrative. First, the modern articulation of this narrative of resistance coincided with the articulation of the American colonial mission in the Southern Philippines. This perspective was reinforced by the fact that most sources for this history were written from a colonial perspective. Because Sulu seemed ruled by Spain only nominally, and continued to be a difficult place to govern during the period in which the United States occupied it, they must have had a long tradition of resistance making the Tausug formidable opponents. They after all held a powerful, technological society at bay despite the decade of military pressure. Americans saw their own

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<sup>53</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. p. 372

<sup>54</sup> Douglas. *Foreign bodies*. P. 13

civilization as *inherently* rational and good. So when its military became embroiled in conflict as they sought to establish a rational order over a feudal non-Christian and superstitious one in Sulu, it could only have been for a noble reason, one in which violence was absolutely necessary.

Although it may initially seem counter-intuitive, a narrative of resistance reinforces the imperialist perspective when it comes to the nature of American rule in Sulu. Narratives of resistance have persisted because they are part of the binary of a colonial narrative, the counterpart of a notion of the righteousness and rational superiority of the American Empire. Notions surrounding resistance coincide with images of the Tausug perpetrated by colonial regimes – that of pirates, prone to violence, savage, bloodthirsty, wild and un-tamed. If Filipinos, the people of Sulu included, were rational enough to appreciate U.S. civilization's superiority, they would not have needed American tutelage. But the assumption was that they were far from being capable of self-rule, and this implied the inability to be fully rational in the arts of governance, and to fully appreciate civilization. So when civilization based on 'reason', so to speak, was presented to them, it was natural and indeed *expected* that they would reject and resist it. This therefore necessitated American tutelary rule to teach Muslim Filipinos how to recognize a rational state and society. The Muslim Filipino inability to appreciate rational civilization inevitably led to their resistance against it. The U.S. Empire's presence needed to be justified in the Philippines and in Sulu in that its peoples required American rule more than self-rule. Evidence of resistance, paradoxically, thus became both evidence of the need for as well as the effect of American tutelage.

The initially peaceful establishment of U.S. rule where the habits and practices of native barbarism were not destroyed, meant that the civilizational mission remained unfulfilled. The centrality of social engineering to the cause of American rule in the Philippines meant that native transformation was an essential outcome to measure success. As such there needed to be a target or model, and that was, ultimately, being American in demeanour, values, dress and habits. Initial U.S. rule therefore, was criticized by staunch imperialists such as Leonard Wood, the first governor of the colonial Moro Province, which encompassed Sulu, as being lazy, ineffectual and permissive. In a letter to his subordinate, Hugh Scott, the district

governor of Sulu, Wood justifies taking a more active role in tutelary governance: "We are now paying the penalty for the years of inactivity and harmful non-interference [sic] which has characterized our dealings with the Moros in this part of the world."<sup>55</sup>

When one accepted the two dimensional, barbarian image of the Tausug, it seemed inevitable and rational that the people upon whom America's civilizing mission was imposed would resist it.<sup>56</sup> This colonial understanding of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century history of Sulu has persisted and predominated in the historiography. Histories of encounters between colonial regimes and Sulu are replete with such narratives of resistance.<sup>57</sup>

The second reason why this narrative of resistance has persisted is because of its predominance in twentieth century nationalist discourse. Inspired by accounts by Vic Hurley, for example, many interpretations have not unpacked and deconstructed colonial characterizations. They have simply been overturned, making what was once a prejudice, such as the savage nature of Muslim Filipinos into a virtue. Authors such as Nasser Marohomsalic and Samuel Tan for example are rich in the exploration of primary sources, but tend to lean toward regurgitating colonial understandings and perspectives.<sup>58</sup> Such histories for all their admirable attempts at instilling pride in Muslim Filipino history have often hidden the details of the sophistication of reactions in Sulu and homogenized them.

While some histories have focused on revealing and discussing these diverse reactions from the Tausug, others have struggled to effectively explain instances of concurrent collaboration and resistance. This has obscured or at the very least,

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<sup>55</sup> Leonard Wood. "Personal Letter from Wood to Scott, January 13, 1904." 1904. Folder 7, Container 55, Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (Herein after referred to as Scott Papers)

<sup>56</sup> Vic Hurley. *Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros*. New York: EP Dutton & Co. (1936) <http://www.russbo.com/files/book/KRIS.pdf> accessed 10/27/2015; Samuel K. Tan. *The Muslim Armed Struggle in the Philippines, 1900-1941*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, (1973); Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*.

<sup>57</sup> Hurley. *Swish of the Kris*; Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*; Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*.

<sup>58</sup> Marohomsalic, Nasser A. *Aristocrats of the Malay Race: A History of the Bangsa Moro in the Philippines*. Quezon City: VJ Graphics Arts Inc., (1995); Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*.

deprioritized understandings of the pre-existing social and political conditions there and the role they played in these colonial encounters. Consequently, Sulu's history has been bifurcated between the end of Spanish rule and the beginning of the American, ignoring important continuities, such as latent dynastic rivalries between royal chiefs, which straddle the transition. The resistance narrative – where two homogenous sides, native and colonial, are at odds, ignores the fact that it was the Americans in large part who were the first to fit themselves into a framework of native power and authority, rather than the other way around.

Narratives of resistance, moreover, have often failed to explore the way locals actually understood and conceived themselves and the outsider, and assumed a rather simplified native foreigner relationship, where the latter is viewed with suspicion by the primitive and conservative native seeking to halt their invasion into her land. But most of all, it has not only assumed the successful outcome of the colonial state simply by virtue of Tausug acquiescence, it has also missed the fact that Sulu's own institutions and performance of power persisted well beyond the demise of the colonial state, and have remained largely intact. In its absolute essence, the resistance narrative, where we assume a strict dichotomy between colonial foreigner and local native, ignores points at which both sides interact and transition into new realities, whilst at the same time persisting in parallel with each other.

### **The Tausug perspective**

In decolonising the history of Sulu and in building a contemporary Tausug understanding of the colonial regime they were encountering, we must revisit the sources, and anchor the analysis more on the words they themselves wrote, and the contemporary oral traditions that were spawned by these encounters. This author has thus used manifestations of local contestation such as cattle raiding as a mechanism, or lens through which to examine the other dimensions that encompass the encounters of the Tausug with colonial agents at the turn of the twentieth century. Cattle, here taken to include *carabao*<sup>59</sup> and the disputes surrounding them, are a key pivot because this is where local notions of justice, society, political action, accountability interact with the new colonial order. The

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<sup>59</sup> Native water buffalo. These draft animals were key in rice cultivation.

configurations of property, ownership, crime, justice, warfare, power and authority are by no means universal. Colonial encounters were very much interplays of these notions. It is however, misleading to read colonial accounts of these encounters and assume that their assessment of these notions eventually prevailed. Sulu demonstrates that even in a society so thoroughly defeated militarily, these frameworks survived and persisted. Their enduring nature is largely due to the fact that colonial administrators, having gained credibility through the native idioms of power created a semi-fictional edifice of empire with a western façade on a Tausug foundation. The overlooking of these processes has created an enduring fiction of American empire in Sulu.

In developing this, I begin by asking why cattle raiding was so prevalent and what its significance in Tausug society was. We then explore what its impact was on colonial rule. On the whole, it wasn't revolt or resistance in isolation that posed the most frustrating obstacle to stable colonial rule, it was cattle raiding and the actions and reactions it triggered. It was the most immediate and urgent manifestation of a state of contestation between local chiefs, called *datus*, that had lingered since a drawn out succession crisis concluded just a few years before the American arrival. Indeed, the first episodes of American military action against the Tausug, in 1903 with a chief named Hassan and 1904 with his surviving subordinate Usap was inadvertent participation in these native factional disputes. This type of conflict, however, was to shift into more familiar colonial conflict where native Tausug were pitted against colonial troops. But the transition to this second wave of conflict, occurring after the demise of Usap in 1904, involved notions of justice, which, once again are connected and manifest in the persistent cattle raiding throughout that period.

Cattle have additionally had a key parallel in the way the Tausug perceived their treatment by Americans. Arrest and incarceration bore many parallels to the Tausug understanding of ownership of cattle. Mobility was a key aspect of the Tausug sense of liberty and restrictions on movement – such as those imposed on someone under arrest – was not a punishment in an ordinary sense to them. It was the removal of personal dignity – they were in essence reduced to cattle owned by their American masters. In this sense, the attempted imposition of American

justice and punishment was key in the triggering a second wave of animosity, this time focused on the colonial regime's, moral legitimacy and ability to discern right from wrong, which culminated in the battles of Bud Dajo in 1906 and Bud Bagsak in 1913. This fleshes out the details of the analysis of honour and shame and their role in these encounters that have gained much recent attention from scholars. While shame is often seen as trigger for Tausug violence and retributory justice, a more complete understanding of the cultural dimensions of that shame remain largely unexplored, particularly in an historical context. The reasons for this are often cited as being the limits to which colonial archives contain accounts with native voices. The recent publication of oral poetry, as well as the relatively under-explored correspondence and transcript of dialogues kept by the Americans can provide new insight to this. This can be combined with methodology in comparative work outside the Philippines, where societies of similar culture and language have been explored by scholars of other empires in the region.

Rather than being a story of violent altercation, accommodation and resistance, which is how it is often presented, the encounter Sulu had with American colonial rule was one where the notions of justice and political morality were in contention. While periodic outbreaks of violence occurred, cattle raiding was a more persistent, encompassing challenge to both local and colonial authorities. The subject of cattle raids in Sulu are therefore an unexplored context out of which modern Sulu's relations with the state emerged. The struggle to deal with them helped crystallize the relationship between local community rituals of governance and formal state, and their consequent parallel existence. The colonial state in Sulu was co-existent with but apart from what became an informal system of local governance. This begins at the local level where colonial administrators were compelled to adopt native forms of governance. What resulted was not the blending of state and local tradition, but the tenuous parallel existence of both, where hybrid politicians, both American and Tausug, would mediate between the two. Thus the American state largely stopped at the locality, where its functions were served by pre-existing native forms that re-tainted their legitimacy decades into the colonial regime.



## Chapter summary

In the first chapter, this study will focus on the nature of the Tausug polity in Sulu as it was by the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, it will examine how the geography of the Sulu archipelago resulted in a cultural context of impermanence, where polities and communities could appear, settle then relocate for various environmental as well as man-made reasons. Because of this, the focal point of the Tausug community was its headman, or *datu*. Because of the population's general mobility and the consequent volatility of the sizes of these communities, *datu* found it essential to attract and continue to retain his followers. The *datu* held the community together through the cultivation of alliances and personal ties, cemented by the idiom of fictive kinship and gift exchange and the redistribution of prestige goods. The outward rituals of prestige cultivation thus put an emphasis on an individual Tausug's self-image and sense of honour. It became essential, therefore, to defend his honour, and seek retribution in the event it was injured.

Notions of justice are explored in chapter two, where an in-depth understanding of its mechanics in Tausug society is established. This examines how the centrality of the juridical role of the leader, and how the necessity to effectively mediate disputes opened the door to the unconnected, objective outsider. This 'stranger king' concept was the door through which colonial individuals were welcomed into Tausug society and given power. The expectation that they would provide justice was critical to their legitimacy as individual members of the regime. The fact that they entered as individuals is also another critical notion discussed in this chapter. Much in the nature of their own political idiom, the Tausug saw the regime primarily as a collection of powerful individuals, and allied themselves to them in that way. The bureaucratic workings of an American state was nebulous and vague to most Tausug, and they related to the regime primarily through the dynamics of their own political system.

In the third chapter, greater focus will fall on the role of prestige goods and how livestock, particularly cattle, play a significant role in gift exchange. Its value as an

item connected to the honour of its owner meant that retributory justice and expressions of authority were expressed through the exchange of cattle. Cattle raiding, it is proposed in this chapter, was not merely an opportunistic act committed by unsavoury individuals. It was a process intricately linked with rituals of honour, shame and notions of justice.

The fourth chapter places events in the late part of the Spanish regime and early part of American rule into the context established in the first three chapters. It becomes clear that rather than a series of revolts against American rule, violence that erupted in Sulu up until 1905 were re-manifestations of the decade-long succession crisis that ravaged Sulu between 1884 and 1894. Influenced primarily by the pre-existing Tausug centres of power vying against each other in shifting alliances, the Americans, in attempting to exert their own notions of justice, inadvertently embroiled themselves in these rivalries, and single out the region of Luuk for the first series of bloody military actions. American justice, however, in the aspects of arrest and incarceration, was alien to the Tausug, whose juridical system focused on fines and confiscation of possessions such as cattle and slaves. When the Americans treated Tausug 'criminals' and 'fugitives' in terms of arrest and incarceration amounted to confiscating them as cattle or slaves for offenses and affronts. This is what finally put the Americans at odds with many Tausug and served to erode the legitimacy of their rule. These foundations lay in the juridical role of the 'stranger king' where powerful alien leaders were incorporated into local society because of their potential to mete out balanced justice, being disconnected from local rivalries and allegiances.

The fifth chapter puts perhaps the best known and bloodiest altercation between Americans and the Tausug in context of the notions of justice, arrest and slavery articulated in the previous chapter. The attack on Bud Dajo in 1906, is primarily remembered as the culmination of the reaction against the imposition of the requirement for the Tausug to register and pay for a certificate of registration called the *cedula*. This in isolation, however, was not enough to trigger the symbolic rejection of American rule in the relocation of hundreds of Tausug individuals to mountain fortifications, including the one on Bud Dajo, not far from the colonial base at Jolo town. The true root of the eroding legitimacy of the

American regime lay in the frequent mishandling of disputes and the shaming of Tausug *datu* in the process of arrest and incarceration. Interviewed recalcitrants would frequently express, as the primary motivations for their continued resistance, their desire to avoid the mistreatment inflicted upon others who were arrested. This chapter also reveals a shift in the type of conflict in Sulu, from elite rivalry to genuine rejection of the American regime. Previous interpretations of the conflicts at the start of twentieth century assumed just one type – that of contempt for the Americans either for their foreign overlordship or for the specific policies of their rule. This work differs in portraying the rejection of the regime as the result of a much more complex, native dynamic connected to honour and shame in American justice, rather than solely on the offensiveness of the regime's policies.

The sixth chapter examines how the Americans, retreated from the locality by building state institutions around the people of Sulu, rather than involving them in it. The trappings of the modern state – with the economy, institutions of governance modeled on that of America, education, health and infrastructure – proceeded and flourished with surprisingly little participation by the Tausug, apart from a small number of hand-picked individuals. The perception that justice and equanimity could not be obtained from the state was cemented and perpetuated, compelling the Tausug to return to their pre-colonial rituals of justice and power for the legitimacy and good governance they felt deprived of. With the face of the state shown to the Tausug primarily being that of the security apparatus, the state to the Muslim population of Sulu, was the police force and military, whilst fair governance, equitable justice and prestige lay primarily with the men who gained their authority through the native idiom of legitimacy.

The limited framework of state rule in Sulu, supplemented by local practices and processes, resulted in what could be described as colonial demi-rule in the borderlands of the Philippine colonial state. Demi rule preserved Tausug political and juridical dynamics, despite the abolition of the sultanate in 1915, and more than sixty years of state building, first by the Americans, then by the Philippine state after 1946.

Sulu therefore adds to the literature of colonialism as a case study in the ways in which a society on the periphery, transformed from its former pre-colonial situation at the centre, and then defined the way in which the colonial state power was established. As with most borderlands, it offers a rich opportunity to examine the complexities and dimensions of state power, in this case, the interaction between the echoes of the pre-colonial state within the framework of the modern one.

## Chapter 1: Dynamism, the Tausug polity of the late nineteenth century, and moral ascendancy

Island Southeast Asia consists of pockets of fertility centered on river plains and valleys and large, often inaccessible, inland areas that nonetheless yielded rich supplies of exportable jungle products such as camphor and beeswax.<sup>1</sup> Coastal areas, such as those of the Sulu archipelago, could produce valued status and trade items such as tortoise shell and pearls, not to mention an abundance of fish. Access to the sea as well as excellent boat-building material, as well as rich sources of fishing from which to develop skilled mariners, had given island Southeast Asian peoples ease of movement overseas and this in turn facilitated trade.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, international trade that drew merchants from the Red Sea and China had become, by the mid fifteenth century, the prime engine of growth for major trading ports of the region such as Melaka, Ayudhya and Gresik.<sup>3</sup> Despite large concentrations of people at these trading ports, whose size could often rival those of major cities in other parts of the world at the time,<sup>4</sup> scholarship on the pre-colonial population in Southeast Asia suggests one that is sparse compared to the large tracts of mostly forested land.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between a small population in a region of fertile soil and a wealth of natural resources resulted in an emphasis on the control of people over control of territory, as they were the rarer of the two. To gain a more thorough understanding of the society and state they created in Sulu it is essential that we unpack how this context of volatility and impermanence had made its way into the dynamics of this society in Sulu.

Tausug polities in the Sulu archipelago emerged out of a context of what many authors have referred to as the endemic instability Southeast Asian states. Being a smaller trading society that only briefly reached its apex in the mid eighteenth century, Sulu and, for that matter, most of its adjacent states in the Philippine

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<sup>1</sup> David Henley. "Population, economy and environment in island Southeast Asia: An historical view with special reference to northern Sulawesi." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 23.2 (2002). Pp. 167-206.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Reid. "The structure of cities in Southeast Asia, fifteenth to seventeenth centuries." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. 11.02 (1980). p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Reid. *The structure of cities in Southeast Asia*. p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> Reid. *The structure of cities in Southeast Asia*. p. 237.

<sup>5</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay; Junker. Raiding, trading, and feasting*; James Francis Warren. *The Sulu zone, 1768-1898: The dynamics of external trade, slavery, and ethnicity in the transformation of a Southeast Asian maritime state*. Singapore: NUS Press, (2007).

archipelago, was nonetheless part of a wider class of state common in southeast Asia characterized by instability and impermanence. This chapter will examine how this impermanence, or as Freek Colombijn called it, 'volatility', manifested in Sulu's political and social culture.<sup>6</sup> For the Tausug, one's personal merit – his *maratabat* – could override even ethnic and filial ties, because it was so important in assuring the dynamics of authority in the community. This chapter will suggest that the Tausug believed just rule required moral ascendancy in the form of knowing right and wrong, and that they prioritized this over centralization and state stability. The ultimate enforcer of this morality was the individual, leading therefore to a willingness to take personal responsibility over the pursuit of justice and the defense of honour.

### **Chieftoms and segmentary states**

Social anthropologists have referred to the most common type of political organization in the Philippine archipelago at the advent of colonization as being that of chieftoms.<sup>7</sup> With this is an accompanying set of characteristics that is often attributed to chieftoms, the most important of which is the lack of permanence, an emphasis on kinship, and a degree of egalitarianism. Because of the lack of permanent social structure, ranking within society is often reliant on individual achievement as opposed to permanent social positioning. Social status could be augmented through the acquisition of prestige goods and their redistribution to potential allies, in an effort to increase one's number of followers. Those who emerge as leaders with larger followings would in turn be obeyed only temporarily to accomplish immediate goals. Kinship links are the only relatively permanent form of social organization, and the leader had to continuously provide proof of his pre-eminence and success, which was most effectively accomplished by accumulating and judiciously redistributing resources. The importance of popularity to the political survival of the chief meant that his actions were subject to the approval of his followers, who could, in turn, 'vote with their feet' by abandoning him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Freek Colombijn. "The volatile state in Southeast Asia: evidence from Sumatra, 1600-1800." *Journal of Asian Studies*. 62.2 (2003). P. 497-530.

<sup>7</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 129.

<sup>8</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 75

Due to how well the definition of chiefdoms seems to fit the polities in the Philippine archipelago prior to colonial contact, it is this term that has been applied to most settlements there.<sup>9</sup> The more centralized sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu are often described as expanded versions of these chiefdoms, with the sultan as the 'paramount' chief with local strongmen exercising relatively independent control. These are sometimes referred to as 'segmentary states' since the ruler still exercised authority through minor local chieftains.<sup>10</sup> However, the use of the term 'chiefdom' can imply states on a limited scale in terms of territory and population. Indeed, the key characteristics listed above that result in the categorization of these polities as chiefdoms, are shared with even the larger states in the region. These polities, and the scale and power achieved by Melaka, Johor, Ternate and Aceh, among others, demonstrate that the aggregation of chiefdoms into such segmentary states can be impressive in wealth and influence.

## **Volatility**

The rapid rise and decline, or 'volatility' of even the largest centralized states in Southeast Asia has been a topic of discussion amongst scholars of the region. Colombijn defines 'volatility' in Southeast Asia as states having a tendency to change population size quickly, with rulers often finding it necessary to relocate capitals in response to various factors, not the least of which was the frequency of dynastic struggles after a ruler's death.<sup>11</sup> Southeast Asian leader could lose control rather easily, often without a stable bureaucracy to maintain order in the interim.<sup>12</sup> Colombijn cautions against the perception that the instability of states in Southeast Asia were a characteristic of failure, and that instead argues that this was the result of a series of factors. This has led to several conceptualizations of Southeast Asian polities such as the 'Mandala state' by O.W. Wolters,<sup>13</sup> the 'Galactic Polity' by Stanley Tambiah,<sup>14</sup> and the 'Solar polity' by Victor Lieberman.<sup>15</sup> These

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<sup>9</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 67

<sup>10</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 175

<sup>11</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 497

<sup>12</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 498

<sup>13</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 497

<sup>14</sup> Tambiah, Stanley J. "The Galactic Polity: The Structure of Traditional Kingdoms in Southeast Asia." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 293.1. (1977). Pp. 91

<sup>15</sup> Lieberman, Victor. "Transcending East-west Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas". *Modern Asian Studies* 31.3 (1997). P. 475

emphasize the region's pre-colonial polities as non-territorial, population and locality-based.<sup>16</sup> This notion of state volatility, or perhaps more appropriately, 'dynamism' has been fundamental in the concepts of Galactic Polity articulated by Tambiah and that of the *Negara* 'theatre state' in Clifford Geertz's discussion of Bali.<sup>17</sup> These featured endemic internal competition, shifting loyalties, a high emphasis on local power, and the ease with which these polities could reconstitute and relocate themselves, primarily because of the fluidity with which followers could leave and coalesce around promising new leaders.<sup>18</sup>

While Colombijn provides six reasons for the dynamism of states in Sumatra in the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, five of those factors may apply more broadly to Southeast Asian states such as Sulu. The arrival of Islamic and Asian political ideologies that brought notions of centralized sultanates and kingdoms created tension between more egalitarian forms of local rule in the first factor Colombijn describes. Competition for authority between local strongmen and a paramount ruler perpetuated a context of near-continuous competition for followers and resources. The second factor involves the personalization of the state. In essence, the Southeast Asian state was the extended personal network of a ruler without a permanent bureaucracy. Successions therefore were chaotic reconfigurations of individual networks involving competition from numerous ambitious claimants with networks of their own. The third reason involves the key engine of the development of state in the region – international trade – and the ruler's dependence on it for access to the prestige goods used to maintain his network of alliances. Any fluctuation in trade could have direct impacts on the stability of a ruler's personal connections, and thus the state itself. The fourth factor again involves the personalized aspect of the state, this time in application to relations with other states, where alliances and overlords were never enduring, and subject to frequent re-alignment in response to changing configurations of power. The fifth reason for the instability of Southeast Asian polities was increased intervention, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of European powers that, unlike local rulers, could rely on external resources to

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<sup>16</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. Pp. 498-499

<sup>17</sup> Geertz, Clifford. *Negara: The theatre state in 19th century Bali*. Princeton University Press, (1980). P. 13

<sup>18</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 497



underpin their power. The upset the balance of power between local states as rulers could conclude relatively permanent alliances with Europeans that often also involved military protection.<sup>19</sup>

Each of these factors manifested and affected Sulu in the late nineteenth century, and is an important context with which to understand its reactions to colonial encroachment by Spain and the United States. Underpinning the list above is the emphasis on the attraction and retention of followers by rulers, which meant that much political energy was focused on the cultivation of relationships and alliances. The control of territory itself was related more to a question of its locational value rather than its quantity, as estuaries, harbours, river mouths opening access into the jungle interior became important in order to capture the maximum amount of commercial traffic. Key political and social processes in Sulu therefore, stem from the importance of obtaining and sustain a following.

### **Sulu polities**

Polities in Sulu reflected these developments. This construct of power and leadership came out of a fluid, mobile and commercial reality that existed in the Southeast Asian world of which Sulu was a part. Power's demonstrability was emphasized, this being an outcome of the way trade was practiced – unregulated, and dependent on personal rituals of trust and prestige. Power indeed was fluid and contextual. In an incident in 1903, a minor *datu* named Biroa killed his slave causing then Governor William Wallace to compel his arrest, while the Sultan Jamalul Kiram II was in Singapore. Because the monarch had been away when the incident occurred, he felt no responsibility over it and was reluctant to take action, greatly frustrating the colonial regime.<sup>20</sup> In 1904, a Tausug *datu* named Salip Sakib, whose fortunes had apparently shifted over the years, repeated to the American governor what was told to him by one of his followers: "Formerly you were our chief - then your children grew big and you were overpowered; now that you are

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<sup>19</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 517.

<sup>20</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904." F11, C55, Scott Papers.

big again, we come to you because you are the only person that ought to be our chief.”<sup>21</sup>

Power in essence emanated from the individual and was most respected when it was actually exercised and demonstrated. While it could be perceived to lie in bodies of individuals, such as the Sultan’s council, the Ruma Bichara, that body itself did not possess the power, it was the members making it up that did.

Another illustration of this occurred in 1903 when the first Governor of Moro Province, Major General Leonard Wood, attempted to convince then sultan of Sulu Jamalul Kiram II and his first minister, Hadji Butu, to see the Philippine Commission in Manila. For the two Tausug leaders, America was already embodied in the person of Wood – someone they interacted with and had demonstrated and proven his power over them:

Hadji Butu: From the beginning I do not understand what we were going to Manila for; our good health or what?

Wood: You will go there to present your claims to the (Philippine) Commission, if you have any to make. If you don’t want to go we can do that from here, you can make your statement and I will forward it...

Hadji Butu: You are like our father and our mother. Even if we go to Manila, we don’t get anything but what you give us, so we might as well get it here from you.

Wood: I would like you to go for the reason that I want to have you satisfied with whatever arrangement is made and feel that you have seen the highest authority in the Islands.

Hadji Butu: We depend on you. And you are here.<sup>22</sup>

Hadji Butu’s reasoning in the dialogue above reveals his perception of power, which emanated from the person and presence of the individual. More than just the face of the American regime in Moro Province, Wood *was* the regime in Moro province. Going to Manila to see the impersonal Philippine Commission, consisting of men whom Butu and Kiram had never met seemed pointless. The Commission in Manila was distant, nameless, faceless and hence powerless. In similar fashion, Hugh L. Scott, district governor of Sulu, had to clarify that he and the Superintendent of Education, Najeeb Saleeby, were representatives of the same government, and were not rival chiefs vying for power:

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<sup>21</sup> Official Interpreter. “Salip Sakib calls on the Governor, February 3, 1904.” F7, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Official Interpreter. “Conversation between the Provincial Governor, Maj. Gen. Wood, and the Sultan of Sulu, Hadji Jamalul Kiram, Aboard the “Sabah”, June 30, 1904.” Folder 2, Container 217, Leonard Wood Papers. Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (Hereinafter referred to as Wood Papers)

I want you to understand that Dr. Salleeby has control over the schools in Jolo. If you think that he has any executive functions then you are mistaken. And if you base any action on that belief you will get in trouble about it. Datto Kalbi came pretty near getting himself in trouble on account of the same belief. Panglima Hadji Tahir also, and a number of other people. I warn you now. If you have any business with the Government of this nature, you have to come to me. You must not look up to Dr. Saleeby in matters outside of school matters.<sup>23</sup>

Because of the emphasis on personality and an individual's relationship with other individuals, groups had a diminished and secondary significance to the Tausug. Political affiliation was purpose-oriented and often impermanent. Warren points this out in the large scale maritime raiding expeditions mounted by Sulu sultans and *datu* in the nineteenth century. Powerful Tausug elites would form temporary alliances to organize an expedition. Once that endeavor was completed, that alliance expired.<sup>24</sup> An indication of the immediacy, and experiential nature of power is the fact that it was personalized. This runs parallel to the high value placed in confidence-building and trust in inter-community relations, which we will discuss in greater depth in a subsequent chapter. The volatility and impermanence of Sulu's politics came with an emphasis on the individual and his character.

### **Sultans and datu**

Having come under the influence of Islam in as early as the thirteenth century, by the fifteenth century Sulu rulers started implementing Islamic institutions of governance, namely by the establishment of a sultanate.<sup>25</sup> As with other states in the region, this framework was superimposed upon the local system of *datu*, preserving the informal networks of alliances by simply placing upon these groupings a paramount chief. The Sultan of Sulu was originally the *datu* of Tiange, or the town of Jolo as colonial authorities referred to it. *Tiyanggi* means 'market' in Tausug, evidence that the emergence of a paramount chief in that town came by the benefit of trade concentrated there. A dual element of externally imbued prestige played a role as well, as evidence of an embassy of three different Tausug rulers to the Ming Court in 1417 sought recognition as monarchs. The Emperor

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<sup>23</sup> Official Interpreter. "Maharajah Ahang, alias Haji Nur, Reports to the Governor, Jolo, November 11, 1904." F1, C56, Scott Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. P. 189

<sup>25</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. p. 68

diplomatically acknowledged the right to rule of all three petitioners.<sup>26</sup> A flurry of separate missions to the emperor over the next five years by the courts of those three designated 'Kings' reveals the intensity of competition as well as the wealth of these rulers at the time for being able to afford such expensive overseas expeditions. By mid-century, however, it was the ruler of Tiange who emerged to become the Sultan of Sulu after Islamization.

Majul explains that in comparison to other sultanates in the Philippine archipelago, Sulu's was the most centralized and reflective of Islamic institutions.<sup>27</sup> Jamalul Kiram II, Sultan in February 1901, wrote a letter to the American governor in Tiange outlining ten points that described his power.<sup>28</sup> In these ten points, he described absolute power over regions that recognized his sovereignty to "...establish judgement of the Islamic religion and rightfully the one to govern according to customary law...(*...magpatindug sin huduldulla* (punishment), *hati niya sin agama Islam. Wajib na siya magpanaug parinta ha adat sarah ha katan ambarayat niya.*)"<sup>29</sup> In his second point, he claims to be "...free in the Community he rules up to the outlying islands that recognize his sovereignty to do anything he wishes. Nobody can oppose him because it is conferred on him by the Prophet as "asultano jullanda fiardihi" which means that the Sultan is the Shadow of God in the land that he rules. (*...in Sultan makapaglimaya ha banua piagdaturan niya mabut pa manga kapuh-puhan taalluk kaniya. Diin-diin in bayah niya way makasaggah kaniya karnah sapda sin nabi (salu) 'asultano jillaula fiardih'.*"<sup>30</sup> In this sense the expectation was that the sultan was the centrepiece of good governance and moral rule in Sulu. This moral power implied an inherent awareness of what was right, and therefore, his actions throughout his dominions were always in the interests of righteousness.

Despite his claims, however, Kiram's authority in practice was far from absolute. Americans anxious to establish their own power in Sulu, in 1901 were keen on detecting and reporting on any gaps in the Sultan's power and found many in his

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<sup>26</sup> Wang, *Song-Ming records*. P. 258

<sup>27</sup> Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*. p. 377

<sup>28</sup> Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*. p. 388

<sup>29</sup> Samuel K. Tan, *Surat Sug: Letters of the Sultanate of Sulu: Kasultanan*. Vol. 1. Manila: The National Historical Institute, (2005). Pp. 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Tan, *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. Pp. 50-51.

relationships with local *datu*. Major Owen Sweet, the Commanding Officer in the Sulu Archipelago, between 1899 and 1901, described Kiram's power and relationship to his *datu* to the Philippine Commission in March, 1901:

The Sultan is too weak to admit of consideration. There is nothing to him. He is merely Sultan in name through heredity. He is wholly incapable of self-government. Any of his subjects are as capable of exercising authority as he if they had his advantages. There are *datos* [sic] by heredity and by appointment of the Sultan. They have different sections of the country assigned to them, in which they live and in which they are not disturbed.<sup>31</sup>

This damning assessment of Kiram does reveal that his power over the archipelago was limited, but underestimated the prestige he still possessed. Colonel Hugh L. Scott, who had succeeded Sweet as the District Governor of Sulu in 1903, acknowledged that despite the lack of power to directly impose on the *datu* under him, Kiram was still highly regarded. Scott however, concludes that "...there was in reality no central government, of sufficient power to execute [the sultan's] own mandates...if his wishes ran counter to those of the chiefs he was powerless..."<sup>32</sup> Majul, however, suggests that this weakness was more on account of the personality of Kiram II, rather than for disregard for the position of Sultan in general.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, only a decade prior did the *datu* finally rally around Kiram against two other rivals, one of whom was supported by the Spanish in Manila. Kiram at the time was a youth and the designated heir of the dead Sultan, Badarrudin. He may not yet have exhibited the proclivities that undermined his popularity later on in life. The support of the *datu* at that time suggests a collective regard for the position of the sultan, with Kiram being given the benefit of the doubt owing to his youth.

Evidence of a more centralized era of the Sultanate was the position of the *Panglima*. Kiram II still possessed men of this title, although exercised little control over them. Serving as a sort of provincial magistrate, *Panglima* were appointed directly by the Sultan and were often commoners who had distinguished themselves through exploits or the demonstration of exceptional ability. One of their tasks was to sustain support for the sultan in their region, and possessed the

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<sup>31</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 85

<sup>32</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904." F11, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>33</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 389

power to recruit men to defend the sultanate should it be necessary. Because of this they often were local men with networks in the area, and could serve as a counter weight to the ambitions of local *datu*.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, they also possessed appellate juridical power, and could override judgements made by the *datu* if either or both parties of the suit were dissatisfied with the decision.<sup>35</sup>

In carrying out their duties to support the sultanate in the provinces, *Panglima*, in turn, were subordinate to the *Ruma Bichara*, or small council of the Sultan. While the size of the *Ruma Bichara* varied throughout its history, numbering as many as ten members, some consistent positions included the *Rajah Muda*, or heir apparent, the *Raja Laut*, or commander of the navy, and the *Datu Bendahara*, who served as the chief minister.<sup>36</sup> By Kiram II's time, he had a *Raja Muda*, who was his brother Attik, and a *Datu Bendahara*, who was the future senator Hadji Butu.

Sulu had therefore, over time, developed centralizing features that in a way reflected the influence of Islamic ideals of an absolutist sultanate. These features, however, seemed to weaken, with a reversion to *datu* control when the abilities or personality of the sitting sultan did not inspire enough respect. Kiram II's letter describing his traditional authority was as much an attempt to solicit support from the Americans to reinforce his authority, as it was a response to expanding colonial rule over Sulu. As Colombijn pointed out in cases in other parts of Southeast Asia, the ebbing of the Sulu sultanate's centralizing features was also facilitated by its personalized nature.

Ideologically, however, Kiram's case indicates a notion of moral leadership that is prioritized over state cohesion. Despite the existence of a state hierarchy and centralized features, the Tausug did not feel bound by them when their ruler lost, by failing to demonstrate, what they might have perceived as moral imperative.

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<sup>34</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 392

<sup>35</sup> Adolf Gunther. "Correspondence, papers and reports relating to the Sulu Moros." *Moro Ethnography*. Vol. 3. Manila: H. Otley Beyer Collection: National Library of the Philippines, (1918). P. 35 (Hereinafter referred to as Beyer Collection)

<sup>36</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 391

## Fictive kinship

The seventh point in Kiram II's letter outlining his powers reveals the key metaphor informing political relations in the Sulu sultanate:

The Sultan is the mother-father of all the people. He will care for all his subjects. They are all his children to be treated equally. (...in *Sultan inaama sin katan ra'ayat. Yakinum niya tuud in katan ambara'ayat niya, anak niya salih-salihun niya in kaagi niya mamalihalah.*)<sup>37</sup>

Familial affiliations were more permanent than mere political alliances, and this therefore served as the framework of relationships by which longer-termed alliances functioned. Political relations were articulated through kin-based models depending on the relative degrees of prestige and power between the parties. Andaya had previously discussed how the family structure served as a framework for diplomacy in South Sulawesi, in Indonesia. The roles between parties to a treaty, for example, could be understood clearly through their articulation in terms of a fictive kinship relationship. An agreement between equal parties would therefore be described as one between brothers; one between unequal parties – between father and son – with the party described as the father being the one with more power, in order to define each party's responsibilities and obligations to each other.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the Tausug understood and exercised political relations with everyone – including those with colonial powers - along these lines. Tausug correspondence were frequently couched in these kinship terms, as is evident in the letter below from a rival claimant to Kiram II's throne, to the Spanish Governor.

This is a letter of your brother, His Royal Highness, Commander of the Faithful, Sultan in Sulu, who is in Palawan, Muhammad Harun al-Rasid, to my brother, His Excellency [Señor], Governor, Captain General of all the Philippines. I appeal to my brother if it is possible for you, a brother of mine, to assign Sergeant Mungus in this island to take care of the affairs of the prisoners...<sup>39</sup>

The following letter, written in the first years the American period, reveals how fictive kinships were employed by Tausug elites, even in their relations with colonial authorities. Reference to the sibling relationship is an appeal to its

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<sup>37</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 52.

<sup>38</sup> Leonard Y. Andaya. "Treaty conceptions and misconceptions: a case study from South Sulawesi." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-enVolkenkunde* 134.2/3 (1978). Pp. 275-295.

<sup>39</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 125

obligations of loyalty and bonds of respect that unrelated strangers do not, in the Tausug understanding, possess:

This is the letter from your sister Paduka Pangiyang Inchi Jamila addressed to my brother the Governor of Sulu, as well as my son, informing you of the case of the children of an elder, brother Akil. If your being a brother and elder to me is really true, I thought of asking from you the custody of those children as soon as the issue of brother Akil is resolved, in as much as I heard that the talk on brother Akil's case had been done; in fact the children will be returned to him. Thus if you have any concern for me, I would like to really have the children. I am very confident that a son like you can face the Governor in my behalf to ask for those children. End. Lastly, peace and thanksgiving to you, good luck and long life to you also. Sent 14<sup>th</sup> of the month Jumabil Akir, 1319 [1902 C.E.].<sup>40</sup>

In this message the sultan's mother, Sultana Inchi Jamila, appeals to fictive kinship relations shared with the governor to override the previous decision to revert custody of children she desires to another fictive 'brother' Akil. Jamila is quite direct about the commitment to her by the governor, putting any claim to kinship under question should her wishes be denied. This also suggests that in her eyes, any juridical decision, such as that involving the children in the letter, could be superseded by the obligations of kinship.<sup>41</sup> This was taken to be extreme by her in fact when she sought to advance her son Amirul Kiram (who eventually became Jamalul Kiram II) to the sultanate, as she prioritized direct blood kinship in the succession.

This emphasis on fictive kinships in close political relationships also meant that there was less appreciation for power emanating from a corporate group. This personalized, kinship oriented structure also meant that group relations functioned in a dyadic fashion. Groups in fact consisted of a network of dyadic, person-to-person ties where one's relation to the other was the paramount affiliation. The group's structure of ties, therefore, spread outward from the individual and the next individual's relations.<sup>42</sup> This conceptualization of political dynamics was to define the way the Tausug interacted with colonial powers. As Colombijn attributed the kinship-based, personalized nature of Southeast Asian state as a key cause of its instability, this next section will examine in detail how this manifested in Sulu. Many notions about leadership, virtue and honour –

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<sup>40</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 52

<sup>42</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 87



potential causes of conflict -develop from this political and social situation of volatility or as Tambiah put it, continuous 'micro-upheaval'.<sup>43</sup> The tenuousness of a local leader's position, and the bases of his authority meant that much effort and value was placed on perceptions of ability and prowess – traits that followers sought. This influenced an emphasis on a comprehensive personal relationship with as many followers as possible. Or at least placed a premium on the perception of personal relations – from which followers gleaned an essential sense of importance in the society. A community therefore, consisted of a set of individual relationships that radiated out from the leader. The leader cultivated a personal relationship with followers from the nobility, who themselves had followers maintained via dyadic relations. Social prominence, and its consequent authority, stemmed from one's proximity and relations to the local leader.

Dyadic relations were the cornerstone of allegiance and affiliation in Sulu. Relationships between individuals were both private as well as political. An individual relationship thus had a fundamental impact on the cohesion of the community. The maintenance of one's perceived honour in those relationships and the prevention (or avenging) of shame could in this way pre-occupy the personal and political behaviour of the Tausug. Junker suggested that the importance of prestige good trade was predicated on a ruler's attempt to limit the generally accepted right of followers, to switch allegiances if they became dissatisfied with their current chief.<sup>44</sup> Using sixteenth century sources, historian William Henry Scott also mentions this tendency amongst Filipinos of that period, asserting that "A ruling datu boasted heirloom wealth called *bahandi* – goldwork, imported porcelain, and bronze gongs – but not real estate".<sup>45</sup>

In his anthropological study from the 1960s, Kiefer notes the immediate goal-specific function of alliances amongst the Tausug, usually to obtain revenge from an individual who has offended the leader of that alliance.<sup>46</sup> The habit of shifting loyalties was certainly present at the turn of the twentieth century and American

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<sup>43</sup> Stanley Tambiah. *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, (1985). Pp. 320–21.

<sup>44</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 292

<sup>45</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 129

<sup>46</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 135

accounts corroborate this. In an interview with the Philippine Commission, an officer assigned to Sulu in 1900 named Captain Hagadorn described how the peripheral jurisdictions of *datu* would sometimes be complicated when some of their followers switched sides and offered loyalty to another *datu*:

The *datos* exercised authority in distant towns through subchiefs or *datos*: might be called mandarins. Sometimes it created trouble when a Moro separated himself from one *dato* and joined another and sometimes not.<sup>47</sup>

Conspicuous wealth was evidence of ability, and hereditary chieftains, who had become impoverished saw their influence and thus ability to exercise authority, diminish over time. Datu Uto, of Mainland Mindanao just north of the Sulu archipelago, was the preeminent ruler of that region in the 1880s through his blood connection to the previous sultan. Due to his resourcefulness in finding alternate routes to trade around colonial controls, he gained considerable wealth in the interior of Mindanao, and, as a result, attracted a large following. After a series of defeats against tenacious Spanish officers wishing to curtail the slave trade in Mindanao, however, Uto saw the source of his wealth and power, evaporate within twenty years.<sup>48</sup> By the time of the arrival of the Americans, Uto was already a broken man whose heyday had long since passed, despite his legitimate blood claim to power. Major Sweet commented to the Philippine Commission about Uto: "Utto is...the great hereditary *dato* of Mindanao, but, being poor, does not now exercise much influence."<sup>49</sup>

*Datu* and even sultans, therefore had to continuously prove their worth in order to maintain their political relationships. This was apparent to and a source of frustration for Col. Edgar Z. Steever, district governor of Sulu in 1907, who agreed with his superior, Gen. Tasker Bliss, governor of Moro Province in July of that year:

When you state that "the whole trouble with him, as with other Moro chiefs, is the constant reiterating desire to secure authority and get possession of the means to

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<sup>47</sup> War Department. "Synopsis of interview had by the Commission with General Kobbé, Colonel Pettit and Major Morrison at Zamboanga, Afternoon, March 30, 1901." 1901. *Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Philippine Commission*. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1901). P. 89

<sup>48</sup> Reynaldo Clemena Iletto. *Magindanao, 1860-1888: The Career of Dato Uto of Buayan*. M.A. Thesis, Cornell University, (1971).

<sup>49</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 88

enforce either our law or their own in the old accustomed way," you most assuredly and most accurately cover the case.<sup>50</sup>

Challenges could emanate from any section of the community, as long as the challenger could provide evidence of his (or in some cases her) prowess. In fact, those who could demonstrate ability were often not barred from advancement, despite how humble their origins might have been, as the example of a man named Janarin demonstrated. Janarin was a former slave, notorious for lying, who, as a consequence of his dishonesty, had his mouth slit from ear to ear. Despite this reputation however, he still managed to gain the trust of his master likely because of his commercial acumen, and was eventually put in charge of a village and his *datu's* business interests, and performing this task well.<sup>51</sup>

While family-inspired political relations and evidence of success and prowess in leaders often worked in tandem, these sometimes would come into competition. Some *datu*, particularly sultans and other royals, were keen to emphasize and prioritize closer blood relatives as a criterion for power. As Colombijn explained, this may have been inspired by exposure to centralized hereditary monarchies in other parts of the Asian maritime world and in particular political ideologies tied to Islamic sultanates. This naturally would undermine the traditional power of the local *datu*, who in the segmentary-style states of Sulu and Southeast Asia exercised power within the same parameters of practice as did the sultan, albeit in a more localized dimensions. There was still much ambiguity in Tausug society as to which deserved primacy, and this would come into contestation, as we shall see in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

### **Prowess, honour and shame**

In this next section, we will digress from the broader narrative of our history to explore key virtues in Tausug leadership. Indeed, the most respected 'abilities' that attracted followers was cleverness and intelligence both politically and commercially. These qualities are often celebrated in folk tales and legends, where

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<sup>50</sup> Edgar Z. Steever. "Letter from Col. Edgar Z. Steever, District Governor of Sulu, to Gen. Tasker Bliss, Governor of Moro Province, July 24, 1907." 1907. *Correspondence: July 12 – August 14, 1907*. Tasker Bliss Papers, Volume 66, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (Herein after referred to as Bliss Papers, V-)

<sup>51</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 95

feats of mental prowess solving seemingly unsolvable problems impress and may even win princesses and thrones. In the Tausug version of the story of King Solomon, his throne is threatened by the mythical giant half-human, half-bird, Sumayang Galura. Unable to capture Galura, Solomon, or Sultan Sulayman, as he is known in the story, sends the woodpecker Bulantuk to attempt to apprehend the great bird so that he can be beheaded for his coveting of the throne. Bulantuk is able to fool Galura into trusting him, and convinces the larger bird to return to Sulayman and surrender. When they arrive before the Sultan, Bulantuk also convinces Sulayman to forgive Galura and spare him because of his sincerity in surrendering.<sup>52</sup> In this tale, it is evident that wit, represented by the smaller but smarter Bulantuk, can overcome power and strength, represented by Galura. And while the ambition to overthrow the sultan is presented as morally wrong, it is also evident that Sulayman's benevolence is equally important, in order to retain the loyalty of Galura. In this story we see evidence of the essentials of Tausug leadership – the importance of intelligence over brute force, and, despite the right of the ruler over his throne, the need to exhibit lenience over one's followers, for the foundation of one's power lay in their continued loyalty.

The importance of constantly proving one's worth to one's community meant that the value of the public projection of personal qualities was magnified. A negative public image could be socially and politically disastrous for a Tausug. The consequences could mean a total loss of power in the case of a leader, or isolation in the case of more common individuals. Fundamental in understanding the cause of Tausug conflict is their notion of honour and shame, or *maratabat* and *sipug*. The Tausug social construction of *maratabat* and *sipug* stems essentially from this anxiety with regard to the consequences of a negative public image. Much dishonour centred on various ways individuals believed they had been cheated. Out-witting an enemy was the ultimate victory - an example of intellectual prowess. The victim or loser could often be perceived as the one who could not match the intelligence of the victor, thus his inherent weaknesses are revealed in his defeat. The very origin story of the Tausug begins with an act of subterfuge, as the daughter of a visiting Chinese trader was stolen from him and hidden in a stalk of bamboo. Discovered by a native man (born in Sulu, albeit of a bird) the woman

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<sup>52</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 198

in the bamboo proceeded to marry her rescuer and produced Paramisuli, the legendary mother of all the chiefs of Sulu.<sup>53</sup> Doing nothing after having been outwitted therefore implies acceptance or admission of that weakness. Since cheating someone was tantamount to insulting one's intelligence and honour, the offended individual was expected to seek retribution.

Such an incident, referred to by Philippine scholars as *rido*, or the localized form of vendetta, was observed by Kiefer in the 1960s, when a man felt tricked by another for not paying the debt he owed on the purchase of a cow. The offended individual insisted, despite Kiefer's attempts to calm him, that it was the custom of the Tausug to kill a man that tricks him.<sup>54</sup> A relatively well-documented example during the American era involved *datus* Ambutong and Dammang of Jolo island, in 1904. While the original trigger for the *rido* is unknown, the two Parang chiefs engaged in months of retaliatory raids of livestock which included goats, cattle, carabao and horses, all in attempts to outdo the previous raid. When the American governor attempted to mediate the dispute, Ambutong related an inventory of items and offenses in order to justify his own attempts at obtaining equivalent compensation and hence, retribution.<sup>55</sup>

Tausug *datu* at the dawn of the twentieth century, would frequently steal livestock to induce a rival into action against them. The immediate act of taking property from under the eye of one's rival was evidence of cunning and intellectual prowess. Naturally, that prowess had to be apparent to the rival so there was often little attempt to conceal who was responsible (or in the case of the act being done by a *datu*'s men, who was ultimately responsible). This is evident in cases where the stolen livestock would be ridden blatantly in public by *datu*. The prominent *datu* Amilhussin was known to have done this during tensions between himself and the sultan.<sup>56</sup> Since an unprovoked attack was generally seen as overly aggressive, the defense of one's honour, injured after having one's property stolen, became a

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<sup>53</sup> Damiana L. Eugenio. Ed. *Philippine folk literature: The myths*. Vol. 2. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, (2001). P. 307

<sup>54</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 18

<sup>55</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

<sup>56</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 98

viable avenue to justify retaliation.<sup>57</sup> Cheating someone extended beyond one's mere material possessions to one's own people such as one's family and followers. From this perspective, offenses that are often regarded as 'moral' offenses, such as the violation of womenfolk, might also be considered an extension of reaction against having been cheated. Stealing one's possessions, kidnapping or violating one's family members or simply insulting someone are fundamentally connected to underestimating and belittling the worth of that individual. Proving the offender wrong therefore, became a vital duty for social survival. Much conflict in Tausug society emanated from this desire to regain the honour lost from having, in various ways, been cheated.

### **The defense of honour: *rido***

The enthusiasm to which *maratabat* was defended by Tausug has long mystified outsiders. It has evoked analyses where the Tausug were 'fanatical warriors' to ones that emphasized their determination to 'never surrender'. In the context of the public perception of an individual's worth and its ultimate impact on the cohesion of the family and of the community, however, it becomes more understandable. Goods and property carried a symbolic value as well as a utilitarian one, so that damage to them was an affront to the owner's honour. This therefore demanded an appropriate response to maintain that honour. Honour was intimately connected to the maintenance of personal ties through gift exchange and prestige goods. The stability and the volatility of communities depended on the cohesion of these person to person ties. An individual who isn't careful about the maintenance of those dyadic ties, and who does not cultivate the skills necessary to do so, can go so far as to undermine the community. A Tausug community therefore can ensure accountability for one's actions by developing and encouraging consequences that deter behaviour that might undermine these ties. This is evident in the way that retaliation for offenses to honour are celebrated in literature such as *kissa*. *Rido* is a frequent theme in *kissa*, or epics, and events in them often accurately reflect how these conflicts play out in reality, thus providing us with a window into how the Tausug thought about these incidents. The *Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun* (Story of the Fight of Baddun) provides a wealth of details about the progression of *rido* from a simple

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<sup>57</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 18

disagreement between acquaintances over having been cheated of one's property to a conflict that involved the entire community. It also provides evidence of how heroic figures are seen, and what is expected of them should they be faced with injustice. One of the first stanzas muses on the mundane cause of the bloody conflict:

*Kadal diq kasalanan  
Biyaq sin siyaynan  
In nahinang puqunan  
Nagbus luluqunan.*

(Fate could not be changed  
As it is a predestiny.  
The cause of all  
Was the borrowing of a sack.)

*In baytaq ku hapat  
Bang aku waq nalipat  
Paranan nagdapat  
pasal sin karut upat.*

(My story is clear,  
if I have not forgotten .  
The four borrowed sacks  
were the cause of the blame.)<sup>58</sup>

Baddun, who had lent the sacks to the son of a local nobleman was clearly established as a pious and moral individual, which contextualizes his subsequent actions as necessary and essential for the maintenance of that moral qualities.

*Karut busi aku  
Kuqnisa hiatud  
Baddun nagumbul satu  
Minsan nagkaput litu  
Nagjajaga sin waktu.*

*Waktu diq pagkadaqun  
Tindugun sawnuqun  
Kalu bang taymaqun  
Bang matay diq siksaqun.*

(Lend me your sacks.

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<sup>58</sup> Khali, Habib I, Brian Tubaton. (Chanters) "Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun (The Story of the Fight of Baddun)." June 29, 1998. *Philippine Oral Epics*, University Archives System, Ateneo De Manila University. (1998). Web. Accessed 12 February, 2013. <<http://epics.ateneo.edu/epics>> P. 1

I will return them the day after tomorrow.” The kind Baddun,  
even operating a business  
was very punctual on the time of prayers.)

((He) never misses his (praying) time for he renders it immediately.  
If it is accepted,  
in death he would not suffer.)<sup>59</sup>

Despite assurances to return the sacks on ‘the day after tomorrow’, the young  
nobleman failed to keep his promise, leaving Baddun to wonder why:

*Subay ku na kadtuqun  
Pa Tianggi nyataqun  
Bang anak Datuq duqun  
In karut pangayun  
Awn isab hiluqun.*

(I have to go  
to the town and check  
if the son of the Datuq is there.  
I will request the sacks  
for I have something to put in them.)<sup>60</sup>

When Baddun went to inquire about the sacks he had lent, the son of the *datu* was  
indignant, expressed great resentment being pressured by Baddun and proceeded  
to lecture him on his manners. Having come with blameless intentions, the  
treatment Baddun received was, from his perspective, unjust:

*Addat way liyuhun  
Way pa katauhun  
Diq pa sarang susahun  
Subay pa binasahun.*

(Your manner was unequal  
and without mercy.  
You are not satisfied in giving problem  
but you keep on tormenting me.)<sup>61</sup>

Baddun’s sense of having been offended led him to the conclusion that the  
nobleman’s intentions were, from the beginning, dishonest:

*Hi Baddun waq dimungug  
Magtuy na nanaqug*

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<sup>59</sup> Khali and Tubaton. “Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun.” P. 1

<sup>60</sup> Khali and Tubaton. “Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun.” P. 2

<sup>61</sup> Khali and Tubaton. “Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun.” P. 2



*Anak Datuq kangug  
Asal gantaq manglingug.*

(Baddun did not listen.  
He left immediately.  
“The crazy son of the Datuq  
of course, had intended to make trouble.”)<sup>62</sup>

Baddun was thus faced with the prospect of having to right the wrong done to him. To reclaim his honour as well to generally correct an injustice inflicted, Baddun made the conclusion that he had to kill the man who was the local *datu's* son:

*Minuwiq namuntulan  
Laqip sin karugalan  
Datuq bang kalanggalan  
Niatun pagsabilan.*

(He went back home straight,  
full of anger.  
He planned to kill the Datuq  
if he meets him.)<sup>63</sup>

After tracking down the movements of his victim, Baddun learns that the man is in a neighbouring village playing cards with friends. This group is subsequently ambushed and gunned down, with only one survivor escaping. Baddun and his accomplices become fugitives, and the police consequently and in turn, hunt him down. It is interesting to note that, instead of the police being represented as agents of justice, they are the natural consequence of seeking justice, which is represented by the act of killing the *datu's* son.

Throughout the *kissa*, Baddun is represented as the one who understood his obligations as an honourable Tausug man and correctly felt bound by them. He is not portrayed as overreacting – as an outsider might understand him to have done. On the contrary – Baddun is described as being deliberate and thoughtful, taking time to think and pray about his predicament before deciding to seek retribution. In this sense, justice is not to be obtained through the processes of the state, but through the actions of pious and committed members of the community. These individuals, like Baddun, understand and are brave enough to act against those

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<sup>62</sup> Khali and Tubaton. “Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun.” P. 2

<sup>63</sup> Khali and Tubaton. “Kissa Kan Parang Sabil Baddun.” P. 3

who could potentially undermine the moral balance in the community by violating very basic but essential notions of honour. Oral *kissa*, such as Baddun's above, in celebrating and articulating these stories of individuals who are committed beyond a doubt to Tausug society's moral code, reinforced and emphasized the critical importance of protecting an individual's honour. It fell upon individual action to acquire justice when the state could not guarantee it. In fact the state here is represented as being not much more than an agent of coercion, aloof and amoral. Since aspiring to kill one's offender naturally entailed mortal risk, demonstrating absolute commitment to avenging one's honour often meant an awareness of and willingness to embrace death.

### **The defense of honour: *parang sabil***

The willingness to die in the defense of one's honour is encompassed in the act known to the Tausug as *parang sabil*, a term borrowed from Malay, where the concept originates. *Parang*, coming from the Malay word *perang* or 'war', and *sabil*, meaning 'in the path of God.'<sup>64</sup> The Spanish referred to those committing *parang sabil* as *juramentados*, or literally, 'one who has taken an oath', the oath being to die in the name of honour. According to Tan, these attackers were known by the Tausug as *sabilallah*, taking its root from the word 'sabil'.<sup>65</sup> Because 'dishonour' could in reality - by function of secondary impacts which ultimately lead to the dissolution of one's group - might indirectly *cause* death anyway, a reasonable way to redeem oneself, perhaps to rescue other group members from a similar fate by association, was to give or demonstrate willingness to give one's own life in its defense. *Parang sabil* can therefore be the effect of *rido* pursued to its ultimate extreme. Contrary to what colonial accounts often understood, the intent was not necessarily to die for death's own sake, but to be *willing* to die in order to bring about a return to a just order. While the purification rituals surrounding it involve the preparation for death,<sup>66</sup> a successful *parang sabil* almost inevitably involves the killing of one's enemy or offender. But in failure of that, nothing demonstrated a

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<sup>64</sup> Thomas M. Kiefer. "Parrang sabbil: Ritual suicide among the Tausug of Jolo." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 129(1), 108-123 (1973). p. 109

<sup>65</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*. P. 25

<sup>66</sup> This often involved approaching an imam or religious authority for endorsement. The committer of *parang sabil* then shaves his hair and eyebrows, dons white to represent purity, and bounds his torso tightly in cloth to slow the bleeding from wounds inflicted by his or her victims.

commitment to avenge one's dishonour more than to give up one's own life for it. As with *rido*, *Parang sabil* is another popular topic of Tausug oral literature, and valuable insight on how they thought about it can be gleaned from its examination. The *kissa* or epic below, relates how the engagement of a young couple is tainted by the advances of a Spanish officer upon the bride-to-be. The shame inflicted has tragic consequences for the couple as well as their families:

*In tininti kastila'*  
*Ba dusa sabab dakula'.*  
*Hangkan napas kiyawa'*  
*Hi Abdulla nahina'.*

*Hangkan piyagsabilan*  
*Di' na kapangandulan.*  
*Amu kiya langgalan*  
*Ba in tau gagandilan.*

*Hangkan na biyunu'*  
*Ba in hinang nakalandu'.*  
*Tininti mang hihindu'*  
*Amu hinang ha' nila manglummu'.*

(The Spanish lieutenant  
Had committed a serious offense.  
The reason for his breath taken away  
Was Abdullah's dishonor.

The reason for his death  
Was that he no longer could be trusted.  
Those he had met  
Were invincible people.

The reason he was slain  
was that he had abused [her].  
The lieutenant who ought to teach  
Did nothing but debauch.)<sup>67</sup>

Abdulla in this epic, was not only coming to the defense of his wife, but was in essence seeking to overturn an assumption made by the Spanish lieutenant that he lacked the ability to protect that which was precious to him - a blatant affront to Abdulla's honour and manhood. This miscalculation on the part of the lieutenant is articulated in the final verse above, where he, as a colonial official, was premised to

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<sup>67</sup> Annura, Indah. (Chanter) "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara in Spanish Times." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 297

lead by example – ‘to teach’ – but instead took to violating local women. This identifies the immorality and inherent flaws in the character of the Spaniard. The lieutenant was incapable of controlling his impulses. This tale also comments on the colonial regime – where its right to rule which rested on noble grounds: to ‘teach’ was undermined by the immorality of one of its agents. This contrasts with the description of Abdulla as being honourable and pious – an emphasis meant to counter the conclusion that he did not possess the ability to protect his wife - that he himself had little ability, social and moral worth. Indeed, his piety imbued him with divine protection:

*Hi Abdulla mahumput  
Ba akkal bukun dulaput.  
Bang in Tuhan magtugut,  
In punglu’ di’ mag-abut.*

Abdulla was humble  
And was not a bad man.  
With God’s support,  
The bullets could not hit him.<sup>68</sup>

The *kissa* however, presents the root of the incident as being the refusal of Putli’ Isara to obey her father, a local official, who warns her about bathing in a nearby river without her future husband to protect her honour:

*“Hangkan ta kaw hawiran  
Maka baba’ ha baran  
Bang awn kasipugan,  
Mu mahunit bawgbugan.*

[“I forbid you because [going there]  
Would degrade your own self.  
If ever something embarrassing happens  
Hard it will be for you to outlive it.”<sup>69</sup>

Despite her father’s admonition, Isara persists until the old man relents, and she proceeds to the river with only her younger brother as chaperone. This stanza sets up Isara’s moral offense, as she dismissed her father’s warning about going to the river. This was to magnify her sense of shame in the next passage. At the river she

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<sup>68</sup> Annura. “The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli’ Isara.” in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 298

<sup>69</sup> Annura. “The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli’ Isara.” in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 288

is spied upon by passing Spanish soldiers, whose lieutenant, despite Isara's warning about Abdulla being her fiancée, approaches her:

*Hi Putli' Isara  
Giyuwa' in suwara  
"Pagkilakilaha ra  
Tunang ku hi Abdulla."*

Putli' Isara  
Shouted a warning,  
"Do you remember that  
Abdulla is my fiancé."

Ignoring Isara's words, the lieutenant embraces her confident in his own bravado and dismissive of her fiancé:

*"Dayang bisan tunangan,  
Ba ikaw na in limbangan.  
Hi Abdulla mandangan.  
Ba timbakun ku ra kuman."*

"Dear, even if you are engaged,  
You will be my partner.  
Abdulla might be enraged,  
[But] I will just shoot him later."<sup>70</sup>

Isara thus succumbs to the Spaniard's advances. However, despite removing her engagement ring in a symbolic attempt to protect her betrothal to Abdulla, she later is overcome with the shame and confesses details of the encounter to her father:

*"Ama' di' kukawaan.  
Ba in sipug ku sangkaan.  
Tunang ku ha tulakan  
Subay ku kabaytaan."*

*"Ama' di' ku hugasan.  
In sipug ku tatasan.  
Duun maghinapusan  
Ba bang tuning kabukisan."*

"Father I cannot erase it.  
I shall bear my shame.  
My fiancé who is on a journey  
Must be informed by me."

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<sup>70</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 290

“Father, I will not wash it off.  
I shall endure my shame.  
It will come to an end  
When my fiancé [cleans] the stain.”<sup>71</sup>

When Abdulla is informed by Isara of the incident, it is clear to him that only he can remedy the situation. It is a deep and permanent stain on her, and consequently his honour. He decides therefore, that the antidote for this shame is *parang sabil*. Abdulla promises Isara:

*“Maglagut sulayan ku  
Ba bang pasal mu dayang ku.  
Kuwatil panawun ku  
Parang sabil aku.”*

“I will try to fight  
If the cause is you, my dear.  
I will go to the headquarters  
To do parang sabil.”<sup>72</sup>

Isara, to address her own sense of dishonour, makes the suggestion that if they died together, the shame they both feel would be purified and they could be married in death instead of in life:

*“Tuwan bang kaw magsabil,  
Duwa kita matapil.  
Di’ kita sumurindil;  
Ba umatu ha kapil.*

*Bang kita masabil na,  
Niyatun ta kaw bana.  
Di’ makawin ha dunya,  
Ha kamatay didtu na.”*

“Sir if you do *sabil*,  
Let us do it together.  
We will not surrender  
In the fight against the infidels.

“Should we be slain,  
I will regard you as my husband.  
Though we are not married on Earth,  
In death it shall be done.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Annura. “The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli’ Isara.” in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 291

<sup>72</sup> Annura. “The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli’ Isara.” in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 293

Instead of being separated by a tragic death, Isara suggests that the morality of their act – balancing the measure of their honour by avenging it - will in fact unite them after life. With this, the couple make their way to the Spanish headquarters, and after some diversionary banter between the lieutenant and Isara, they kill him in his office. Having made no attempt to conceal their attack, Abdulla and Isara are then surrounded by soldiers. Because of their willingness to die, and also perhaps because of the perceived righteousness of their endeavor, they become imbued with superhuman strength and proceed to kill thirty Spaniards. The soldiers, being associated with the lieutenant's crime, are perhaps made weaker because of their associated immorality. Despite their initial prowess however, the couple become riddled with bullets. To restore their moral worth, Abdullah and Putli' Isara needed to demonstrate the willingness to pursue the offender to the death if necessary.

Dishonour however, could have unexpected consequences for the rest of the family as well. When Putli Isara's father, a *Panglima*, was informed of what his daughter's death, he refused to collect her corpse. Shamed by his treatment of his kin, Isara's mother likewise decides to seek redemption for her now stained reputation in the same way her daughter did:

*"In sabab sin anak ku,  
Ba in mût di' naaku  
Pasâri na madtu  
Ba di' mahagad agi ku."*

"Regarding my daughter,  
I will not get [her corpse].  
Just leave her there,  
She disobeyed my counsel."<sup>74</sup>

The *panglima*'s refusal to acknowledge his child in death was, perhaps, being prudent given his position in government and his presumed relations with the Spaniards. He also distances himself from her actions by citing his previous advice against bathing alone, in a sense unjustly absolving himself of his own dishonor. In his wife's eyes, however, the rejection of his daughter's actions was an act of moral

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<sup>73</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 294

<sup>74</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 301

weakness that amounted to a slight against the honour of their family and relatives. Here we also see a microcosmic example of the tension in Tausug society of the nineteenth century, between blood ties and the process of governance. In this kissa, however, family honour possesses moral ascendancy:

*"Pûta makaulung  
Makasipug ha kampung."*

"Pick her up, she looks so miserable [and]  
[Avoid] shaming our relatives."<sup>75</sup>

The *Panglima* refuses, eliciting his wife's reproach:

*"Way biya' kaymu;  
Yan limandu' in buga' mu.  
Way tuwi' sipug mu  
Ba ha usug pagkahi mu."*

"There is nobody like you;  
You're too much of a coward.  
That you do not feel shame  
Before men like you."<sup>76</sup>

Since Isara's father's reaction to her death brought shame upon the family, her mother takes it upon herself to redeem it. She calls for her *kris*<sup>77</sup> and announces that she herself will collect Isara's body, regardless of the risk. Once again we see a metaphor for the issues concerning Tausug society at the time: The father as ruler was responsible for the moral order evident in his clan. As he proves himself incapable of maintaining this order, the responsibility to act rests with someone who is aware of the injustice and is willing to act – in this case Isara's mother:

*"Usug kaw way tantu.  
Karian in kalis ku;  
Ba hirayang pûtun ku."*

"You are a useless man.  
Give me my *kris*,  
I will pick up my dear daughter."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 301

<sup>76</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 301

<sup>77</sup> The *kris*, a corruption of the word *kalis*, is the traditional dagger of the Tausug. It features an undulating blade 30-50 cm long.

<sup>78</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 302



Upon her arrival at the Spanish headquarters, Isara's mother is overcome by the sight of the corpses of her daughter and Abdulla, and immediately runs amok with her *kris*:

*"Kailu sin anak ku  
Ba mgtu' na in napas ku.  
Hi ama' mu way tantu;  
Di' mauling kaymu."*

*Limumpat pa namahit  
Ba siyayang na in kalis.  
Kailu hi Matagpis;  
Nag-unung hangka gulis.*

"How awful is my daughter!  
It is as if my breath is stopping.  
Your father is useless;  
He has no compassion for you."

She jumped and raged  
As she raised the kris.  
Matagpis [Isara's mother] is pitiful:  
She will meet the same fate.<sup>79</sup>

Before finally being shot down by Spanish bullets, Isara's mother battles with superhuman strength, empowered by the willingness to die for her family's honour. Witnessing her death is her youngest child – the boy who guarded Putli' Isara while she bathed in the river. Anguished by the death of his mother and sister, he too declares to his father that he will commit *parang sabil*:

*Anak nag-umbul satu  
Ba nagkabatan na ridtu,  
"Ama' murul na aku.  
Makasipig ha tau."*

*Anak tunggalan usug  
Ba ha langgung namawgbug.  
In hangkan nagmakusug  
Ha kampung makasipug.*

The son who was the best [around]  
Then said,  
"Father I will follow them [as]  
We are so dishonored!"

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<sup>79</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 304

The only son  
Upheld his sister's [honor]  
The reason he was firm  
Before his relatives so dishonored.<sup>80</sup>

The ending to this saga, however, provides an interesting perspective on Tausug attitudes toward colonial rulers and what they believed was the universality of these notions of justice. Just as Isara's younger brother commits to *parang sabil*, the Spanish commander order him not to be harmed. In fact the captain adopts the child and promises to love him as he would his own son.

*Huun marayaw na. Ba giyuwa' in  
Sundalu  
Bata'-bata' kiyadtu.  
Kapitan imalistu,  
"Ba ikaw na in anak ku."*

*"Huun marayaw na  
In ama' ku ikaw na."  
"Huun marayaw na,  
Piyag hatihan na.  
In anak mu aku na  
In ama' ku ikaw na."*

Yes very well then.  
The soldier went out  
And approached the child.  
The shrewd captain [said],  
"You are my son."

"Yes very well then,  
You are now my father.  
Yes very well then,  
It is already understood.  
I am now your child,  
And you are now my father."<sup>81</sup>

*Parang sabil* could therefore guarantee redemption from shame, for if one fails to kill one's offender, the giving up of one's own life demonstrates an absolute commitment to it that living after failure never could. A surviving committer of *parang sabil* could arouse suspicion as to the degree to which he or she was dedicated to avenging himself or herself, while the commitment of one who dies

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<sup>80</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. Pp.306-307

<sup>81</sup> Annura. "The Parang Sabil of Abdulla and Putli' Isara." in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 309

trying is beyond question. This ending is interesting because of the priority placed on honour and honourable behavior above all else, even that of foreignness. Because of his shameful reaction to the death of his daughter, the *Panglima* seems to have lost all right as head of what remains of Isara's family – her younger brother. However, the new father is not another prominent Tausug, but the Spanish Captain of the garrison that Isara and Abdulla fought and died against to recover their honour.

What is important to note is that the animosity is individually focused, and not necessarily generalized by ethnicity or nationality. Despite the Spanish lieutenant committing the original offense, his own superior, the Spanish Captain, becomes a new father to Putli' Isara's younger brother, whom he accepts wholeheartedly as he rejects his own biological father for his shameful reaction to Isara and Abdulla's *parang sabil*. One's individual moral merit, therefore, can overcome one's affiliation to a group. This therefore delineates the extent to which familial relations are important. Isara's mother insists on a familial obligation to collect her daughter's body from the site of death. However, when the father refuses, he violates that moral obligation, and thus alienates himself from the family. The Tausug understanding of the foundations of society is that it needed to be centered on a virtuous, capable, moral individual. Should that individual demonstrate an inability to live up to these ideals, he or she, even if the affiliation is familial, can lose status, even in favour of an outsider, such as the Spanish captain who replaced Putli' Isara's father to care for her surviving little brother. Checks to the power of rulers therefore, lay in the hands of their followers. Isara's mother, the ultimate follower, being a woman as well as the wife of a *panglima*, still possessed the moral right to reject the authority of her powerful husband and condemn him. In this sense, obtaining justice and a moral outcome depended on the individual and his or her actions. Institutions, such as those of the state, and even the family, had little standalone value and were extensions only of the moral authority and 'justness' of the individuals occupying them. This therefore has a direct impact on American imperialists, as the assumptions by which they were accepted as new rulers by the Tausug clashed with policies and actions they pursued, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

## Conclusions

The Tausug polity in Sulu, by the end of the nineteenth century, as with many peripheral societies around the Southeast Asian world, was a product of its environment. The availability of the sea to vast archipelagoes of land, combined with the abundance of relatively fertile soil allowed for a high degree of mobility to the populations making up its societies. This mobility, which later was measured in terms of the quickness by which members of a community could abandon their community head, seems to have had a pervasive effect on the politics and society of Sulu. With the availability of various options for settlement, members of a community could easily relocate, sever old ties and create a new community should the conditions in their old one cease being favourable. This made the polities in island Southeast Asia highly dynamic, in that they could appear, expand, retract and disappear in a relatively short amount of time. This dynamism meant that the focal point of a community was not the abstraction of a state, but the direct influence and prestige of an individual. This individual embodied the state and held it together in a network of person-to-person relations that extended throughout the community.

Local leaders, in Sulu referred to as *datu*, were thus at pains to retain their populations, developing conceptualizations and rituals of power that accentuated perceived prestige and prowess. The role of a public image of honour was thus augmented in critical importance – to a *datu*, it meant the difference between his retaining his power and losing it to a rival. In a broader sense, to a community, it could have been the difference between its continued existence and its dissolution. The activities of *datu* focused on increasing and maintaining this public image, to the extent that Geertz referred to Southeast Asian polities as ‘theatre states’ where ostentatious display became central to its cohesion.<sup>82</sup> The result of this attention to public image at a more immediate level was that honour and its defense had become key motivations for political and social behaviour in Sulu. Sulu’s dynamism and the structural weakness of its state may not necessarily be due to a failure of Tausug society, but the result of prioritizing moral leadership over state

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<sup>82</sup> Geertz. *Negara*. P. 13

cohesion. The assumption was that a just, legitimate society and polity extended, through personal linkages, from a single virtuous, capable individual.

*Datu* used various strategies to add stability to their communities, held together, as they were, by person-to-person, or dyadic, linkages and alliances. One was the use of fictive kinships to cement and clarify the roles of parties to these alliances and dyadic ties, since family was one of the more stable social relationships in Tausug society. The framework of these kinship obligations involved material ones as well, and as an extension of their efforts to augment their prestige with ostentatious display, *datu* also cemented alliances with gift exchange. Prestige goods therefore played an important social and political role in the cohesion of the Tausug polity in Sulu. Tausug oral literature such as the *kissa* examined in this chapter provide clues as to how these notions coalesced into an ideology about rule and a sense of political morality. Rulers had the responsibility to establish and maintain a moral order where justice, honesty and piety were rewarded and prevailed. Should the rulers themselves be violators of this moral order, it was then the duty of the individual who was 'good' enough to detect the wrong to re-establish that order. We thus see suggestions of individual responsibility in sustaining political ideals in Tausug society. This perhaps is the product of state impermanence and dynamism - the lack of a central bureaucracy to maintain its cohesiveness has led to the perception that the processes of good governance could only be protected by the actions of individuals who understood its moral underpinnings. Moreover, these ideals were not the monopoly of the sultans, as ordinary folk such as Baddun, women like Putli Isara and her mother, and as we shall see, local *datu*, self-made commoners and fugitives from colonial justice could become primary proponents of the moral order.

## Chapter 2: Stranger kings and justice

In November, 1904, Hugh L. Scott, District Governor of Sulu, found it necessary to warn one of the *datu* he was interviewing about treating the superintendent of school, Najeeb Saleeby, as a rival to the governor.<sup>1</sup> This example helps illustrate the fact that notions of rule in Sulu were in dissonance with those of the colonial regime that had been established just a few years earlier. Newly arrived Americans were regarded in similar fashion – as potentially powerful new allies individually for individual *datu*. In the same way their own alliances were impermanent and purpose-based, the Tausug assumed American unity was also malleable and temporary. Rather than perceive the American colonial state as a unitary regime, many Tausug saw individual members of that regime as potential focal points of alliance and power, in much the same way their own system of political alliances functioned prior to American rule.

Indeed, more recent works have explored the notion of the stranger king, originally articulated by renowned anthropologist of the Pacific, Marshall Sahlins,<sup>2</sup> in contexts closer to the Philippines, as with Hagerdahl's book on Timor, and Henley's article on the phenomenon of the stranger king in other parts of Southeast Asia, including the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> In this model, rather than being superfluous, invasive, undesirable or even troublesome, there is a role for the foreigner in the native community as an objective mediator of local dispute and rivalry. It was not uncommon for outsiders to be in possession of native power. Being in a region of frequent cultural exchange, exposure and interaction, the Tausug were often incorporating new dimensions into their social and political system. The regional circumstances of political and social impermanence seem to manifest even in understandings of identity, as it is the foreigner's which is also impermanent. Thus the notion of foreigner rule was a familiar part of Tausug notions of governance. The caveat however, was that foreigner rulers needed first to be nativized and operate within the framework of local legitimacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Official Interpreter. "Maharajah Ahang Reports to the Governor."

<sup>2</sup> Marshall Sahlins. "The Stranger-King or Dumézil among the Fijians." *The Journal of Pacific History*. 16. 3 (Jul., 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Hägerdal. *Lords of the land, lords of the sea*; David Henley. "Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King: Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere." *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Feb., 2004).

## From foreigner to native

David Henley explained how outsiders would make their way into local societies in Southeast Asia during periods of conflict and high contestation. Beyond just opportunities for additional material and political support, outsiders offer a peacemaking dimension to local societies in strife.<sup>4</sup> As communities became polarized by internal conflict, outsiders offered a promising degree of objectivity and aloofness from vendettas and alliances that entangled local figures. There is, however, more to it than just a practical mediatory role for outsiders. As Sahlins argued, this ready absorption of foreigners into Pacific societies points to the fact that the very notion of 'the foreigner' was negotiated and changeable. After entry into native society, outsiders in a sense were not exactly 'foreigners' or natives, but natives with foreign *qualities*. This could make them extraordinary and even worthy of supremacy. Sahlins explains this in the context of Fijian oral literature and its metaphors:

Having moved from the sea to the land, the foreign to the indigenous, the [foreign] chief is now encompassed by the people. True, the axis of his divinity rotates from the earthly plane to a position above...at the same time, he has been domesticated and humanized, brought from the natural periphery of society to its centre.<sup>5</sup>

Although Sahlins may have exaggerated the adulation of outsiders to the point of their being considered by natives to be divine,<sup>6</sup> themes outside of deification were paralleled amongst the Tausug and are evidenced in their oral literature from around the region. They include an archetypical trope of an outsider's marriage to a ruler's daughter to become the new heir to a faraway throne. This theme can be seen in popular folk stories such as that of Lisuan,<sup>7</sup> and reflected metaphorically in even more 'unnatural' situations such as that of a bird establishing command over a water buffalo, or a sea turtle dominating an elephant.<sup>8</sup> These suggest familiarity and comfort with the notion of the outsider 'winning' his place at the head of an alien community. The lopsided issue of size as well, with the tiny sea turtle

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<sup>4</sup> Henley. "Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King." p. 87

<sup>5</sup> Sahlins. "The Stranger King among the Fijians." p. 127

<sup>6</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere. *The apotheosis of Captain Cook: European mythmaking in the Pacific*. Princeton University Press, (1997).

<sup>7</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. p. 76

<sup>8</sup> Ivor H.N. Evans. "Folk Stories of the Tempassuk and Tuaran Districts, British North Borneo" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. 43 (1913). p. 434

exercising dominion over the enormous elephant, re-states Tausug glorification of intelligence and subterfuge over brute force.

The historical record provides evidence of foreigners becoming incorporated into Sulu society. Religious foreigners were highly influential throughout Sulu's history, and well into the early twentieth century, when many revered Islamic teachers, or *panditas*, were of alien (often Arabic) origin.<sup>9</sup> Late thirteenth century traders who first established a tentative foothold for Islam to the Philippines, such as Tuan Masha'ika and Tuhan Maqbalu came to Sulu and started families, preparing the ground for future Muslim newcomers.<sup>10</sup> The arrival of Karim ul-Makhdum a century or so later is seen as a major turning point for Sulu, resulting in its Islamization. He is said to have been a native of Mecca, and came as a Sufi missionary and trader via Melaka. Over the course of several years, Makhdum travelled throughout the Sulu archipelago, establishing himself in several communities founding what local tradition holds as the oldest mosque on Simunul island. The legends surrounding Makhdum include having made his way to Sulu in an iron pot, the ability to walk on water, the ability to fly and save people from drowning.<sup>11</sup>

Another century after Makdhum, in the middle of the fifteenth, Sharif ul-Hashim, Sulu's first sultan, came the archipelago after wandering from Arabia to Baghdad, then to Palembang and Borneo before settling in Sulu at a community called Buansa. Legend asserts that he was so respected and admired by the local population that they made him their ruler. Sharif ul-Hashim, known colloquially as Abu Bakr, married Paramisuli the daughter of Rajah Baginda, the local ruler, to later inherit the throne and establish a sultanate.<sup>12</sup> Incidents of Arab travelers making historical impacts continued into the American period, when a teacher from Mecca named Salip Masdali sold charms to the rebel leader Laksamana Usap in 1904 promising to make him invincible.<sup>13</sup> This only encouraged Usap, who

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<sup>9</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 68

<sup>10</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 68

<sup>11</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 58

<sup>12</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 62

<sup>13</sup> Charles Livingston, Maj. *Moro Paper No. 1. Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu, Jolo, November 15, 1915*. Manila: H. Otley Beyer Collection: National Library of the Philippines, (1915). (Herein after referred to as the Beyer Collection) Pp. 104-105



continued to defy colonial authorities until his death by a contingent of American and colonial troops in 1905.

The role of influential foreigner was not limited to Arabs, as the examples of Chinese and European traders throughout the previous millennium, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, reveal. The family of German arms trader Hermann Leopold Schück had a notable impact on the American regime. Schück arrived in the late nineteenth century, and was accorded *datu* status by the sultan of the time. Two of his sons, Edward and Charles, born to his European wife, also became local *datu*, marrying into local Tausug families.<sup>14</sup> With none of the Americans at the beginning of their colonial tenure in Sulu knowing how to speak Tausug, it was inevitable that the English and Tausug-speaking Schück brothers would find roles as the regime's translators and interpreters. They appear frequently throughout the reports of all the major events in the first decade of U.S. rule.

Just as the internal requirements for power amongst locals, discussed in the last chapter, essentially came down to evidence of capable and righteous rule, so too did it extend to outsiders. The more astute American officers, like Owen J. Sweet and Hugh L. Scott, who often were experienced in making their way through the cultural sensitivities of Indian societies on the North American frontier, read and exploited these local dynamics of authority and power. These administrators allowed their own exercise of authority to become imbued with local notions of rule, articulating it in the native idiom in their correspondence with them. This was unintentionally reinforced with the initial consideration of indirect rule by the Americans. William Howard Taft, president of the Philippine Commission, explained in 1901 how the Moros, such as the Tausug, preferred to have rule through their own political system. There was a general feeling, at the beginning, that indirect rule to keep the Moros appeased and peaceful, was a viable option.

The 400,000 or 500,000 Moros in Mindanao preferred, he understood, to be treated and dealt with through their own natural and selected leaders, or *datos*, which would remove them from the operation of the general laws of the Commission. It had been the policy heretofore, and the Commission saw no reason

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<sup>14</sup> Official Stenographer. "Report from Stenographer, Sulu district, Jolo, Oct. 18, 1904." F1 C56, Scott Papers.

for changing it, to permit the Moros to continue the form of government which they had among themselves and with which they appear to be entirely satisfied.<sup>15</sup>

With the priority in the first few years being the establishment and stabilization of their new regime, local officers were left to their own devices to gain respect and recognition from the natives. This was not unlike the approach taken in the Northern Philippines, where alliances forged with the provincial elites reflected previous patronage patterns already operating under Spanish rule in the previous century.<sup>16</sup> This provided the context within which American administrators would express themselves in the idiom of native power, and the natives themselves saw the new arrivals as operating within it. This practice which scholars have referred to as mimesis, where the colonial regime would imitate and adopt local patterns of power and rule, was not uncommon and was also practiced in other European empires, such as that of the Portuguese in Timor,<sup>17</sup> as well as the British in the Straits settlements, in India and in the Pacific.<sup>18</sup>

### **Outsiders and transformability**

This also brings to focus the contrast in notions of the outsider between the Tausug and the Americans. The United States came to the Philippines on a racialized tide of imperialist discourses. Domestic resistance to the embrace of overseas empire was often countered with rhetoric articulating an inherent impulse of Anglo-Saxon races to bring good governance to races that had none. Kramer explains how empire-building was seen as an outgrowth of a natural compulsion to spread republican institutions: "Anglo-Saxons were said to be the possessors and progenitors of unique 'free' political values and institutions. At their most inward looking, Anglo-Saxons were a consistently liberated people...when they looked outward, Anglo-Saxons often liberated others."<sup>19</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, connected the conquest of the Philippines to the North American

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<sup>15</sup> War Department. *Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Philippine Commission*, Part 2. 1901. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1901). P. 91

<sup>16</sup> Michael Cullinane. *Ilustrado politics: Filipino elite responses to American rule, 1898-1908*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, (1989).

<sup>17</sup> Roque. *Mimetic Governmentality*.

<sup>18</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*.

<sup>19</sup> Paul A. Kramer. "Empires, exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and rule between the British and United States empires, 1880-1910." *The Journal of American History*. 88.4 (2002): 1322

expansion westward of what he termed as the “English-Speaking Race”.<sup>20</sup> Expansion was a near-biological drive which was “In obedience to instincts working half blindly within their breasts...”<sup>21</sup> Even at its most generous, when Anglo-Saxonism was considered more cultural than biological, authors still believed it took at least a generation, if not more, before its virtues could be imbued. Kramer relates how authors such as Frederick Chapman would open the door to other races to become absorbed by Anglo-Saxon culture, but required a lifetime of exposure: “Any rational being brought up under the dominance of these ideals and identified therewith...whatever his ancestral life currents – Teutonic, Celtic, Semitic, Mongolian, Malay or African – is an Anglo Saxon.”<sup>22</sup> With regard to Filipinos and other Malay races, Americans saw their political and civilizational impulses to be equally anchored to their racial identity. A.R. Colquhoun, deemed an “authority” on “Oriental peoples” propounded on an *inherent* inability of Filipinos to run effectively conduct their own governance:

Wherever they are found they have certain marked characteristics, and of these the most remarkable is their lack of that spirit which goes to form a homogenous people, to weld them together. The Malay is always provincial; more, he rarely rises outside the interest of his town or village. He is never honest as we account that virtue, never truthful, and never industrious or persevering.<sup>23</sup>

These racially based assessments suggested that these identities were almost inescapable. Well-educated American administrators thus believed that the task of ‘civilizing’ Filipinos was a monumental one. As Anglo-Saxons needed centuries to develop their now ingrained capacities for good governance, and so Filipinos needed generations to shed their ingrained habits and acquire new, better ones. D.R. Williams, writing in 1924 after having lived in the Philippines for twenty years believed their racial characteristics still hindered Filipinos’ development:

That ingrained respect for the will of the majority, and that long discipline in self-government acquired by Anglo-Saxon peoples through centuries of participation in town meetings and elective assemblies, find no counterpart in Filipino heredity and training. As a race, Filipinos not only have very much to learn, but very much to unlearn.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Kramer. “Empires, exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons.” P. 1331

<sup>21</sup> Kramer. “Empires, exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons.” P. 1325

<sup>22</sup> Kramer. “Empires, exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons.” P. 1324

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Roderick Williams. *The United States and the Philippines*. New York: Doubleday, Page, (1924). P. 50

<sup>24</sup> Williams. *The United States and the Philippines*. P. 60

The difficulty non-whites had with becoming a part of Anglo-Saxon society was contrasted with the relative facility with which foreigners could be embraced in the higher echelons of communities in Sulu. For the Tausug being foreign was a malleable, and transformable state. With mobility prevalent in Southeast Asian communities, few residents were far removed from being an alien from another community, often from overseas. It was in fact the exoticness of foreigners that made them potentially important in their adoptive communities. They possessed an important degree of objectivity – being disentangled from internal rivalries and local alliances – to allow them to offer levels of justness and equitability that other locals could not offer. In addition to this more functional role, the Tausug didn't perceive membership to communities – such as affiliation to the United States or indeed, the Anglo Saxon Race – as permanent. Being an outsider lasted for only as long as the new arrival was unknown and unfamiliar. Once he or she established the trust of the locals, they had in essence, *become* local.

There was nothing really very mysterious about being foreign, as it was a quality that was commonplace in the broader Southeast Asian world of the Tausug. The malleability or transformable quality of the alien, one which Sahlins suggested in the discussion above, was actualized in everyday relations between the Tausug and outsiders. Literary examples we've seen, such as the adoption of Putli Isara's brother by the Spanish captain and a similar 'familial' relationship with colonial agents by members of the Tausug elite, which we shall see in the following pages, are evidence of this. Indeed nothing in the Tausug world was permanently local, and nothing remained exclusively foreign for very long. The only pre-requisite to this transformation was to mingle with and embrace native society. Unlike the Spaniards, who kept their distance, individual Americans were keen, especially at the beginning of U.S. rule, on interacting with and participating in Sulu society on its own terms. The reasons for this, however, had much to do with the initial American preoccupations. The priority until the founding of Moro Province in 1903 and a more assertive imperial policy, was security and the acquiescence of the Tausug to the imperial state.

This understanding of how the Tausug viewed the foreigner, therefore, can provide a new perspective on contradictory responses to Spanish and American empire

that historians have often had to contend with. The drawing of lines between native and foreign along a western understanding has made it difficult to make sense of the range of reactions between acceptance of colonial rule, resistance, disdain for colonialism and affection for America and Americans. It has inspired analyses of duplicity of character,<sup>25</sup> and accusations of Machiavellian motives by the Muslim elites.<sup>26</sup> To recast these reactions within the context of the stranger king model provides a more elegant and sophisticated explanation, and points to the fact that the Tausug were actively attempting to incorporate new dimensions to their society and political system, as they had done in their precolonial past. In this sense, the monumental nature of the change brought about by the American arrival, which is a prevalent assumption in the historiography, is diminished. An American imperialist in 1899 may very well have been considered as being just another foreigner in Sulu after a long line of other outsiders had come to live with the Tausug in centuries past.

### **The just ruler**

The grounds for the incorporation of a foreigner into Tausug society are found in the perception that a good leader was a juridical one, who mediated disputes and ruled equitably. A demonstration of effective leadership, in its most immediately apparent form for members of a *datu's* or sultan's community, was in adjudication. Indeed, justice was the defining character of good rulers in the Southeast Asian world that Sulu was a part. In the Malay Annals, great rulers were characterized almost exclusively for their ability to be just: "After Rajah Tengah (grandson of Sultan Iskandar) had been some while on the throne, he shewed [sic] in the treatment of his subjects such justice that no other Raja of his time in this world could equal him."<sup>27</sup> In Majul's survey of Sulu sultans based on *kitab*s – notes on the character of the rulers, the ones identified as the most beloved almost invariably possess juridical prowess. The first Sultan, Shariful Hashim, or Abubakar, who reigned in the fifteenth century, was noted as being an expert in jurisprudence. Sultan Shahabuddin ruling the seventeenth century was also well versed in the

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<sup>25</sup> Patricio Abinales. "The Good Imperialists?" In Abinales, Patricio N., and Nathan Gilbert Quimpo. *The US and the War on Terror in the Philippines*. Pasig City: Anvil, (2008). P. 87

<sup>26</sup> Samuel K.Tan. *The Muslim South and Beyond*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, (2010). P. 36

<sup>27</sup> Charles C. Brown. Trans. *Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals*. London: Oxford University Press, (1970). P. 42-43

law, while his younger brother and successor, Shafiuddin, was “knowledgeable in the law, a good judge, and considerate.” The sultan that followed him was also noted for being “just”. Perhaps one of the most beloved of the nineteenth century sultans, and whose fame reinforced the legitimacy of his successors, Pulalun, was described in Tausug genealogies as being primarily “just”, and a “good governor.”<sup>28</sup>

The Philippine Commission found that its own military officers in Sulu understood that *datu*, to the inhabitants, were the sources of laws and their interpretation.<sup>29</sup> This was paralleled by Thomas Kiefer’s ethnographic work in the 1960s. In fact the most common reason to interact with a local leader was to seek adjudication (*hukum*) of a grievance or the mediation (*salasay*) of a dispute.<sup>30</sup> This association between juridical roles and authority was indeed found in the popular folktale *Tugbuk Lawihan*, about a treasure that was disputed between four companions:

A lively quarrel ensued among the four [companions] over who should get possession of this treasure. Unable to reach an agreement they brought the case before the sultan.<sup>31</sup>

The sultan, in this tale, was seen as the natural person from whom the companions should seek a solution to their quarrel. ‘Great’ leaders would invariably be associated with their ability to dispense justice. In the Tausug myth about the creation of rice, Adam and Datu Saytan (Satan) quarrel over the ownership of a new plant (which eventually turns out to be rice). Jibrail (Gabriel) takes them before God to present their cases. God interrogates the two and determines that Datu Saytan is lying, and grants ownership of the new plant to Adam, who represents humankind.<sup>32</sup> It is apparent that authority, in this case God, must deliberate over the dispute, but also exhibits astute juridical ability. God’s ability to determine who possesses the morally righteous position – Jibrail - who is honest vis-à-vis the sinner – Saytan – who is dishonest, exhibits the moral ascendancy connected to his supernatural supremacy. Although the scale is diminished to that

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<sup>28</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. Pp. 12-21.

<sup>29</sup> War Dept. “Report of the Philippine Commission, 1901.” p. 88

<sup>30</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 60

<sup>31</sup> Jainal, Tuwan Iklali. (Chanter) “Tugbuk Lawihan (The Disputed Treasure).” in Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 181

<sup>32</sup> Salahuddin, Muhammad Absari ‘Mullung’. “In Kaawn sin Pay (The Creation of Rice).” In Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 45

of ordinary human interactions, the key abilities exhibited by God in the tale is transferred to expectations of Tausug rulers who possess power legitimately.

Throughout the points Kiram presented to the Sulu governor on his Authority and Prerogatives, there is a strong emphasis on the power of the sultan to interpret customary law and mete it out. In fact the very first point begins with his authority as judge:

First, the Sultan is the Caliphal representative within the community over which he rules to establish the judgment of the Islamic religion and rightfully the one to govern according to customary law all his subjects.<sup>33</sup>

The third point in the document explains more explicitly the sultan's role as mediator and handler of disputes – particularly commercial ones - within his community:

Third, the sultan is the receiver of all his subjects' concerns including all their business affairs from whatever origins and to take care of them so that they will not be hurt by people.<sup>34</sup>

In light of the importance of gift exchange in cementing alliances in Sulu, the role of the ruler-judge was also redistributive – in that those members of the community who deserved material reward got it, while those who committed offenses did not. Adam, in the story above, was honest while Datu Saytan lied. Adam therefore was granted sole possession of rice by God. The overall effect of having a good ruler was that the community prospered – deservedly – a *datu* or sultan would ally with and reward the right people while chastising and alienating those who were unjust.

### **Fictive kinship**

In order to establish their own regime and effectuate the acquiescence of the Tausug, American officers would participate in the idiom of power as they observed and understood it. They therefore would adopt personalized discourse and interaction with Tausug power brokers, strengthen these personal relationships with gift exchange, and fill the native leader role of local adjudicator and mediator of disputes. The idiom of fictive kinship was common in Southeast

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<sup>33</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 51

<sup>34</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 51

Asian societies and was used to understand roles and obligations in agreements and arrangements between allies.<sup>35</sup> The letter below from Owen Sweet, District governor in Sulu in 1901, reveals his understanding of and appreciation for the function of fictive kinship roles in the diplomatic discourse of the Tausug. In his message to the mother of Kiram II, the *Sultana* Inchy Jamila, even the wording of the letter was aimed at reflecting Tausug idioms of alliance, loyalty, power and authority:

From your father, Col. Sweet, commanding officer of the Sulu Archipelago, to his daughter the Sultana Inchy Jamela, Maibun, Jolo Island, P.I., with greetings and best wishes for a long life and a happy, prosperous future:-  
Being in Zamboanga recently on a visit to my great, good brother General Kobbé, greater governor of Mindanao and Jolo, I mentioned to him your great loyalty, friendship and zeal for American interests, and your faithful attitude towards us since American occupation of Jolo. I further reported at length your great interest and untiring personal effort for the welfare of your people and the peace and prosperity of the sultanate. The Governor, Gen. Kobbé, was so greatly pleased to hear such commendable reports, that he said he would be highly pleased to present you with a large and handsome silken United States flag on behalf of the American people. It is my great pleasure to now hand you this very beautiful banner, the emblem of American love, power and respect throughout the universe.  
– Then please accept this token in the same spirit with which it is tendered...<sup>36</sup>

Sweet embraces this discourse of fictive kinship, and immediately articulates his role as ‘father’ in order to emphasize American overrule. He also refers to William Kobbé, his commander, as his brother making himself equal to him in authority vis-a-vis Jamila. She, however, pushes back in her reply, characterizing the relationship as that of equals personified in the *sibling* relations between herself and Governor Sweet. This suggests the type of colonial relations Sulu had heretofore experienced with other powers in the region, as well as that which she understood as being more appropriate:

This is the letter from your sister, Paduka Pangiyang Inchi Jamila addressed to my brother, the Governor. I wish to inform you that your letter and that of my brother, the Governor in Zamboanga have been received and, certainly, understood what is therein. I thank you very much for the brotherly way you have treated me and accept also your concern for me. And the flag sent to me by my brother, the Governor in Zamboanga, has strengthened in my heart our mutual relation. In fact, now that I have your flag as an inheritance from you, I hope to see you in the readiness to really help me when there are nations that come to oppress us, and, also, I wish to inform the Governor that it was reported that the ways of Maharadja Indanan’s people cannot help him in his battles. They have been

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<sup>35</sup> Andaya. “Treaty conceptions and misconceptions.” Pp. 275-295.

<sup>36</sup> Owen J. Sweet. “Letter from District Governor of Sulu, Col. O.J. Sweet to Sultana Inchy Jamela, June 20, 1901.” 1901. F2, C55, Scott Papers.



blocked by Panglima Hadji Tahil. If the report is true, my brother the Governor should stop the act. After finishing the comment to my brother on the report concerning Panglima Hadji, he has been duly apprised. Now it is asked of him to really forthwith do something to remove whatever prevents the help of the people of Maharadja Indanan. In fact, they are concerned of him. And also, I like to verify from my brother the case of my father-designate, Amilusin. And, also, whatever is the thinking of my elder, the Civil Governor, I wish my letter to be duly answered soon by my elder the Governor. End.<sup>37</sup>

Jamila's repetitiveness in insisting on sibling, rather than paternal relations with Sweet and Kobbé demonstrates how the royal family initially perceived the relations of Sulu with the United States – as two nations equal in status. This is a negotiation in Jamila's eyes, as she counters Sweet's attempt to place Sulu in a subordinate role. It also indicates Jamila's self-assurance with powerful Americans, hinting at the type of role mothers of sultans might have actually played in diplomacy. She could make concrete demands for support against a rival, Hadji Tahil, one of the Sultan's less cooperative *Panglima*, or district headman.<sup>38</sup> It is therefore evident that, despite being outside the sultanic as well as colonial framework of authority in Sulu at the time, Jamila had a relatively active role in diplomatic exchanges due primarily to her being Kiram's mother. Jamila was even attempting to intervene in escalating tensions between her son and other *datu*, appealing to the Americans to provide support as allies.

American officers, Sweet among them, knew that they had to deal with Jamila in order to deal with the sultan, and imitated Tausug political conventions in their discourse with her. The understanding that family roles defined the type of authority an individual possessed facilitated the initial articulation of the relationship between Americans and Tausug elites. In this way the first few American administrators would reveal the native roles they aspired to: fathers and family heads which they hoped, in practice, to be equated to that of overlords. Jamila's refusal to accord the role of father to both Kobbé and Sweet may seem like the mere hyperbole of a nineteenth century Oriental potentate, but there can be no

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<sup>37</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 16.

<sup>38</sup> This political assertiveness is characteristic of Jamila, who was a dominant figure in Sulu during the time was alive, being the widow of a former sultan, Alam, and the mother of both the elder Badaruddin, Kiram's predecessor and the mother of Kiram II. She played a key role in presenting her fourteen-year old son for the throne in 1884, against two other rivals, in the succession crisis at the death of Badarruddin.

doubt that the exchange at least reveals the degree to which Americans were negotiating their authority in Sulu at the time.

As Sweet, Kobbé and their successors used the kinship idiom to define their power roles, it also meant that they had found a pathway to becoming locals, albeit with the extraordinary qualities that only an outsider could possess. While Americans understood this 'extraordinary quality' to be their military power, however, what was also expected by the Tausug was evidence of the moral ascendancy to rule, an inherent juridical wisdom and fairness. Americans who could prove their abilities in all these aspects could become absorbed into the Tausug political and social system and accepted fully.

### **Gift exchange**

What was also evident in the interaction above between Sweet and Jamila, was the use of symbolic exchange. In the twentieth century instance, it was a simple presentation of the American flag, which Sweet extols as a symbol of American love. But with the amount of attention it receives in the exchange between the two figures, it is apparent that both understood the political meaning of the gift and its implications. This echoes past foreign transactions in the precolonial Philippines, such as accounts of the passing of white umbrellas to local headmen by Chinese traders.<sup>39</sup> The dimensions of the meaning – to Jamila it was the strengthening of the relations between them – reveals the nativized symbolism involved that appropriated the use of the American flag as a symbol of membership to the colonial state. In fact to Jamila this was a personal promise of protection and trust, not between nations, necessarily, although she certainly understood the impact on their respective communities. Jamila, as many other elites in Sulu at the time did, understood the exchange of gift flags to be the confirmation of her fictive kinship with Sweet in a political and social alliance.

The gift-giving, indeed, involved various other important items in addition to flags. Sweet's successor, Major Hugh L. Scott promised new American-made ploughs to

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<sup>39</sup> Friedrich Hirth, W.W. Rockhill. Trans. *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*. St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, (1911). P. 160

the regime's Tausug allies, Hadji Butu, Bandahalla and Hadji Taib.<sup>40</sup> Even after returning to the United States, Scott presented Hadji Butu with a pendant for his granddaughter, who was, in ultimate tribute by Butu to the former district governor, named Scott, despite her gender.<sup>41</sup>

For the Tausug, who at the time were still feeling the aftershocks of their decade long succession war, these new foreigners seemed the epitome of the objective outsider. They had the potential, in the eyes of some of the *datu*, to bring balance to the tenuous situation that persisted despite the conclusion in 1894 of hostilities stemming from the decade long succession crisis at the death of Sultan Badaruddin in 1884. For four years Americans assumed and performed the roles expected of a 'nativized' foreign ruler. Indeed, the roles they were expected to fill were primarily as bringers of local justice where they would mediate rivalries and disputes and ensure the equitable distribution of property. This was indeed something one of the most powerful *datu* of Sulu in 1900, was hoping for:

[Datu Kalbi] was very glad when the Spaniards left and the Americans came here, and he hopes the governor here will watch them and see if it was true what [the sultan's] people were saying about them that they were two bad datos, and if any chief or the Sultan was fighting them that it would be investigated and seen that they should not be fought against unjustly.<sup>42</sup>

From the outset, some expectations of Americans by elites such as Kalbi, was to provide a degree of objectivity and balance in situations where no disconnected and uninvolved party could be found to adjudicate. Indeed they were quickly approached as mediators in a variety of seemingly petty disputes. In June 1902, Kalbi's brother, Julkarnain, sent a letter to Governor Wallace listing items that were stolen from him and asked the governor to recover them. This was a long list, which included several cattle, water buffalo, horses and goats, not to mention a few weapons. Wallace, less concerned about Tausug sensitivities than some of his other American counterparts, refused to track down the items listed by Julkarnain,

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<sup>40</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation between Scott and Panglima Bandahalla and Hadji, Friday, August 12, 1904." 1904. F1 C56, Scott papers.

<sup>41</sup> Hadji Butu. "Letter from Hadji Butu to Gen. Hugh L. Scott. Jolo, September 19, 1907." 1907. F4, C57, Scott Papers.

<sup>42</sup> United States Senate. *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*. Document No. 136, 56<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. February 1, 1900. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1900). P. 76

and offered to send help only if they had been located by other means.<sup>43</sup> A month earlier, Wallace refused a request by Kiram to recover runaway slaves, citing his government's anti-slavery stance.<sup>44</sup> His successor, however, was much more willing to engage in these roles and as a result, quickly won lasting admiration from many Sulu *datu*s. Scott, replacing Wallace as the district Governor for Jolo in 1903, was most remembered for his ability to dispense justice. In 1907, after Scott had returned to the United States, Hadji Butu, the Sultan's Prime Minister wrote to the former District Governor:

I and all the Moros, especially the Sultan and the Headmen still remember you very much because you are our father who opened our eyes to American justice. We hope you will come again to Jolo.<sup>45</sup>

Every U.S. officer in charge of a district was expected to play the role of local mediator. While the majority of these cases involved the theft of livestock, they also included cases involving kidnapping as well as those of runaway slaves.<sup>46</sup> Even when Moro Province was formed in 1903, and its first District Governor, Hugh L. Scott arrived, he filled the role expected of him by his new constituents. Scott, a veteran of the western frontier, despite being an imperialist like Wood, was still more astute in appreciating local discourses of authority and power. While he frequently sought to correct misinterpretations of the nature of the U.S. regime, as when he compelled *datu* to treat Saleeby as a member of the regime, not a potential rival for the American governor, he was better than most U.S. officers in understanding what the Tausug respected and believed. Cases of disputes were frequently brought to Scott on appeal up from local *datu* and judges who had not produced satisfactory decisions.

While embracing this juridical role, Scott at times struggled with Tausug notions of justice. The Governor's deliberation of the persistent cattle raiding between two Parang chiefs Ambutong and Dammang (represented by his follower, Asakil) which we will discuss in the following chapter, reveal much in terms of the juxtapositions between the American concept of justice and that of the Tausug. This case brings to

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<sup>43</sup> William Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Julkarnain, June 27, 1902." 1902. F3, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>44</sup> William Wallace. "Letter from Col. William Wallace to the Sultan of Jolo, Jolo, May 12, 1902." 1902. F3, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Butu. "Letter to Scott, September 19, 1907."

<sup>46</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

the fore the expectation from American justice of equanimity in the settlement of disputes that it did not always fulfill. The implications of this 'nativization' of authority was that in addition to the *power* the Americans gained, they also obtained *authority* over the Tausug. Authority, to differentiate it from power in this case, involved the intricacies of the moral bases of rule. Inevitably connected to these were expectations – patterns of behaviour that Americans now had to exhibit to sustain their pre-eminence. In Scott's records of cases between September, 1903 and May, 1904, his more frequently invoked resolution to the many cases of livestock theft he was faced with was to have all 'stolen' items returned.<sup>47</sup> This would often satisfy parties to simple disputes, however, his involvement in more complex cases, especially those that involved vendettas or *rido*, required a better appreciation for the honour and shame were connected to Tausug property and their theft and exchange.

## Conclusions

The framework of power by which the Americans initially established themselves in Sulu was that practiced and understood by the Tausug. By fitting into a local notion of the stranger king, American *individuals* were welcomed into Sulu society and political culture by gaining respect and pre-eminence over other *datu*. This was achieved via the objectivity offered by their 'foreignness' in an environment of contestation, through their ability to dispense justice. They participated in the idiom of fictive kinship, which reinforced the notion that they had become part of the community and 'nativized'. Individual Americans additionally cemented these connections by engaged in alliance forming and symbolic gift exchange. While they became part of a re-calibrating political landscape in Sulu at the beginning of the nineteenth century, becoming new players in a competition for power, they also were involved in the social and political implications of the notions of honour and shame in Sulu. This relationship with the local elites, and the *rido* that came with it, meant that the Americans were vulnerable to the rivalries that had continued from before they arrived. They had to answer to the demands of honour and pride and the offenses and retributions that were entailed in them. The American failure to embrace the type of equanimity aspired to in Tausug adjudication and mediation, and their implementation of western-style notions of justice would

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<sup>47</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

eventually be the basis by which the moral ascendancy of their regime began to be questioned by the Tausug.

### Chapter 3: Prestige displays and cattle raids

A chain of several hundred islands at the extreme southwest of the Philippine archipelago, Sulu emerged as a trading centre during the expansion of Chinese tributary commerce in Southeast Asia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> A rich variety of marine and jungle products including tortoise shell, mother of pearl, bird's nests and beeswax, were exported from the main port on Jolo Island, known locally as Tiange, but known the outside world as Jolo.<sup>2</sup> In addition to these, Sulu's most famous export were her pearls,<sup>3</sup> which were used in Tiange to import large quantities of porcelain dinnerware, cotton cloth, silk, brassware, iron arms and munitions as well as sugar, oil and lard.<sup>4</sup> Sulu was also an emporium for trade goods going to China from other parts of southeast Asia, as Ming records from 1421 noted products presented by the Sulu embassy included various types of camphor, tin, black pepper and brazilwood – not products of the archipelago.<sup>5</sup> Ships of various sizes called in from the southern Chinese port of Amoy, making their way down via Taiwan, the Batanes isles just north of Luzon, stopping by Manila, Panay and Tiangge before continuing to Ternate and Makassar in Celebes, modern-day Indonesia.<sup>6</sup>

This trade was very lucrative, rewarding its participants with as much as three hundred percent profit on the goods alone, in addition to, on the Tausug side, imposts on arriving ships and rents for spaces on shore to set up markets as well as warehouses.<sup>7</sup> The sultan would collect a duty amounting to as much as ten percent of the total value of the goods in the Chinese ship. The sultan and the ruling class, known collectively as the *kadatuan* and individually as *datu*, essentially became a commercial class accumulating power through a redistributive network of person-to-person alliances with lesser chieftains and inland suppliers of the raw commodities for trade.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 3

<sup>2</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 178

<sup>3</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 178

<sup>4</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 8

<sup>5</sup> W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 178

<sup>6</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 6

<sup>7</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 6

This commercial orientation, with its honed awareness of changing resources and markets helped make Sulu polities both flexible and volatile. When European emporia began to divert Chinese ships to their capitals such as Manila and Singapore, the Tausug adjusted their orientations. Sulu increasingly by the end of the eighteenth century, became an emporium for jungle products from the surrounding region, bringing in rattan, clove bark, cotton, gold and ivory from Borneo,<sup>8</sup> amongst other places, to trade with European ships from Calcutta and Penang carrying Indian and English goods.<sup>9</sup>

An even later alternative commodity the Tausug successfully exploited were slaves. Growing commerce in some local commodities such as trepang and pearl created a voracious demand for more labour compelling the Tausug to turn to Muslim Filipinos from other parts of the region.<sup>10</sup> With the arrival of settlements of slave raiding specialist Iranun from Mindanao in the late eighteenth century, and with their shipbuilding and seafaring Samal vassals, Sulu had acquired the tools for a new and significant vocation. On the basis of successful, wide ranging slave raiding and the benefits to trade its naval prowess brought about, the Tausug had by the early nineteenth century, established themselves as one of the most powerful maritime states in Southeast Asia. Sulu's slave raids gathered captives from across the Sulu and Celebes seas and as far north as Manila.<sup>11</sup> But when the slave trade itself was stifled by colonial regimes under Spain, Holland and Great Britain, Sulu's source of commercial prowess was severely reduced in scale, and needed once again to shift in order for its rulers to survive. A reversion to resources plied in the pre-colonial Chinese tributary trade was effected, as Sulu re-oriented itself once again despite the profound social changes created by the raiding and trade. Pearl shells, coconut products, hemp and dried fish became important items for an increasingly illicit cross colonial border trade as these frontiers gained greater definition by the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 94

<sup>9</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 40

<sup>10</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. P. 252

<sup>11</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. P. 252

<sup>12</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*.



As the inflows of prestige goods were reduced to a trickle, livestock, being mobile and significant culturally in rituals of feasting and alliance building, became a major item of prestige and wealth for Sulu's elite. In fact livestock would play a significant, albeit unrecognized, role in the turn of the century history of Sulu, as a new American regime would have to contend with rampant cattle raiding just as they were attempting to establish their rule. A web of retributory justice, notions of honour, shame and ownership were linked to politics in the conflicts over cattle. Configurations of power in Sulu were expressed and contested via cattle raids, and the early American regime had to navigate and manage these dynamics to gain a foothold for their new empire amongst the people of Sulu.

The frequent and ubiquitous theft of cattle in nineteenth century Sulu became an early point of concern for the newly arrived American regime in 1899. An examination of the interaction between Americans and the Tausug in dealing with this issue provides insight on how the relationship between state and local authority played out early on in the U.S. colonial era. The colonial regime was inclined to seeing cattle raiding as the manifestation of inherent lawlessness in Sulu society. The capture of livestock in fact was a feature the numerous conflicts occurring during the first two decades of the U.S. regime. The raiding of livestock continued throughout these years, and was a key tactic figuring in every major dispute and altercation occurring between the natives as well as with colonial authorities. While colonial administrators vaguely understood its connection with vendettas and grudges between *datus*, they believed the simple stopping of the practice through the enforcement and imposition of western-style justice and arrest was sufficient to establish what they understood as being the rule of law.

This approach to criminality and justice however was to have an impact on the perceived legitimacy of the colonial state. While Americans saw cattle raids primarily as crimes of opportunity representative of what they perceived as the lawlessness of Sulu, the Tausug regarded them as part of a ritual contest of power and dispute mitigation imbued with social and political symbolism. The failure of Americans to manage the raiding along these lines made their rule seem arbitrary, inconsistent and even tyrannical to local eyes. The mishandling of the issue of

cattle theft thus provides context for the failure of the American state to fully establish its legitimacy in the eyes of the Tausug.

### **Displaying prestige**

Since the loyalty of a *datu's* followers could at times be tenuous and ever-ready to embrace a new, promising leader, the chiefs themselves were continually at pains to demonstrate their prowess and moral preeminence.<sup>13</sup> In Sulu, the relationship between leader and follower, and hence the structural volatility of polities, was stabilized in great part through the exchange of prestige goods. The possession of livestock, much like the collection of a following, was representative of a ruler's 'prowess' and helped cement loyalty to him. Combined with other prestige goods that varied through time, from white umbrellas during the era of Chinese tributary trade to the ostentatious use of American flags in the early twentieth century, these became essential kit in the reinforcement, and indeed the establishment of a *datu* or sultan's authority.

Geertz provides insight into this type of rule common in Southeast Asia in his description of an elaborate cremation ceremony in Bali, where a massive, eleven-story wooden tower bearing the body of the deceased King would be carried, ritualistically resisted, and then burned.<sup>14</sup> The event involved the entire community and emphasized the types of relations various levels of that society had. Most importantly, it had to demonstrate the importance of the nature of these relationships, and how the king benefitted and enriched those relations. A ruler's power and wealth, therefore, converged to make this ritual possible upon his death, the ritual becoming the end in the acquisition and accumulation of power. Indeed Geertz explains how the rituals and 'pomp' of kingship was an end in itself – to in fact *exaggerate* the power of the king, providing an illusion of stability where there was volatility. To Geertz power served pomp, and not the other way around.<sup>15</sup> While Geertz's model has come under critique for over-emphasizing ritual, he nonetheless brings attention to its inflated value in Southeast Asian societies.

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<sup>13</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. Pp. 71-72; Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P 136; W. Scott. *Barangay*. P. 129

<sup>14</sup> Geertz. *Negara*. Pp. 99-100

<sup>15</sup> Geertz. *Negara*. P. 13

This inflated value is also evident in one of the more extensive studies on the function of prestige items in the pre-colonial Philippines by Laura Lee Junker. At archaeological sites in the central Philippines, Junker found that goods acquired in pre-colonial international trade featured prestige goods, such as porcelain dinnerware and bronze gongs, were to be displayed during extended feasts that involved the attendance of vassals and potential followers.<sup>16</sup> These were distributed to cement alliances between individuals and leaders of communities. As Junker explains, the conferring of gifts from a prominent ruler could offer an individual evidence of a more prestigious alliance, elevating his status in his own community, creating the illusion of expanded power, which consequently could attract more followers, thereby actualizing that illusion.<sup>17</sup> Material signifiers of power would be put on display to impress current and potential followers. The chief of a coastal polity, as the community's primary trader, sought to acquire and accumulate prestige goods such as bronze gongs, used to muster warriors to battle, and porcelain dinnerware and pottery. These in turn could be redistributed to the lesser chiefs of inland communities, who could themselves redistribute them to even lesser village heads in their vicinity.<sup>18</sup> This in essence was the material backbone that tied the Southeast Asian segmentary state together in a loose network of individual relations.

Junker discusses how feasting was central to sustaining these connections. During the feasts, which lasted for days, prestige goods such as porcelain and bronze dinner ware and vessels could be exchanged and displayed to a large proportion of key individuals in the community. Long accounts of the feats of legendary heroes would be sung by professional performers and storytellers in musical *kissa* or epics. These might even be used to parallel and glorify the host chief's own accomplishments. Meanwhile considerable numbers of cattle, and in pre-Islamic days, pigs, would be slaughtered and roasted for these feasts in conspicuous locations to impress and feed the guests.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 318.

<sup>17</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 319

<sup>18</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 238

<sup>19</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 318.

Both Geertz and Junker demonstrate how a large amount of resources would be put into displays to impress individuals who had the power to choose who to follow. While this did not necessarily mean these societies were 'democratic' in the modern sense of the word, as Colombijn explains, the emphasis on proof of prowess meant that leaders had to either constantly exhibit their ascendancy by attracting and controlling trade, for example, or make way for more capable candidates.<sup>20</sup> A *datu* in the era examined in the present study who had the wealth and prestige goods to attract and distribute to followers – such as cattle and slaves – was Datu Piang of Cotabato. Piang was, in contrast to his predecessor, the blue blooded Datu Uto, of humble origins, half Chinese, but "...comparatively young, ...vigorous and enterprising..."<sup>21</sup> Through a combination of local intimidation diplomacy and commercial acumen, Piang attracted many of Uto's former followers, transforming himself into the pre-eminent *datu* the Americans interacted with on the mainland of Mindanao. Concrete proof of prowess as a ruler, regardless of one's background, was the ownership of vast numbers of livestock. Thus, in addition to evidence of a ruler's moral ascendancy through the equitable carrying out of justice, a *datu* needed to further reinforce his authority through the ownership of prestige goods. A ruler could then use these essentially to 'distribute' and promote his magnanimity amongst his followers.

### **Prestige from overseas**

For both coastal and inland communities the trade in prestige goods went beyond their monetary value, and were symbolic of connection to and indeed, affiliation with a larger world community. The inland leader could demonstrate connection to a coastal leader, and the coastal leader, in addition to his link to the inland community, could also demonstrate a relationship to the leader from overseas.<sup>22</sup> This overseas leader, in many early cases, was the Chinese emperor, as well as regional potentates in Srivijaya, Melaka, Johor, Brunei, Ternate. They eventually would become European monarchs, American presidents, and after independence, national politicians based in Manila.

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<sup>20</sup> Colombijn. *The volatile state in Southeast Asia*. P. 500

<sup>21</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Kobbé, Pettit and Morrison, March 30, 1901." P. 89

<sup>22</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 374

The exchange of prestige goods was a feature of international trade during Sulu's historical development. As part of the Chinese tributary network, Sulu engaged in symbolic exchanges with the imperial court in China since as early as the fifteenth century.<sup>23</sup> As trade was morally questionable in the Confucian political idiom, commercial exchange was articulated in political terms such as tribute, recognition of authority, rule and power. This injected a political and social value in the items of exchange, as well as the act of trade by the owners.<sup>24</sup> As a part of this, gift giving became a way of demonstrating sincerity and intention.

Essentially evolving out of situations where there was an absence of a consistent state authority to ensure the security of trade, a ritual exchange of items helped establish trust in order for the parties to move forward with commerce. Even local trade was made viable through the pragmatic and diplomatic use of gift exchange. In this sense, in a region where communities, settlements, power and allegiances were constantly in flux, gift exchange was a practical, individually-driven method of insurance – a gesture of commitment to a commercial, social and political relationship. Trading vessels would turn over their goods to the onshore merchants, who would disappear for months as they peddled and traded for jungle products in the interior. They would then return with the payment for the goods just before the change in seasons that necessitated the ship's return to its point of origin, typically China or other Malay states such as Ternate or Brunei. A thirteenth century official from the Chinese port of Quanzhou, Chau Ju-Kua, left an account of the trading practices in the Philippines. In describing Ma-i, or as translator Hirth concludes, Mindoro, and island in the central region of the archipelago, Chau mentions that settlements were approximately a thousand families large, settled on the banks of a creek or river. The customary practice in dealing with the arrival of trade ships started with the Chinese vessel anchoring in front of the headman's house, as it was the customary place of barter. The natives then boarded the ship and mixed freely with the sailors. According to Chau, traders offered the natives white umbrellas as gifts, as the Chinese at that time were aware of their importance as a symbol of status for local trading elites. After some inspection and discussion, the natives would then carry away the goods from the ship to peddle

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<sup>23</sup> Wang. *Song-Ming records*.

<sup>24</sup> John K. Fairbank and Ssu-yuTeng. "On the Ch'ing tributary system." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6.2 (1941): 135-246.

them throughout the vicinity. Chau even mentions that they were quite trustworthy in this. The natives would barter the goods throughout the neighbouring islands for a period of about eight to nine months before returning to the ship where they would always repay the Chinese for the items sold.<sup>25</sup> To err in this could run the risk that the ships would not return, and consequently result in the loss of the primary supply of goods for ritual exchange.

There were external as well as internal benefits to the conducting of gift exchange during these commercial episodes. The gifting of umbrellas reflect the role gifting played in symbolically guaranteeing honesty. The method of unregulated commerce that characterized the Chinese trade in Sulu at the time, required a high investment in the relationship between the merchant on the ship and the local leader in order to build a strong sense of trust and security.<sup>26</sup> From the *datu's* followers' perspective, prestige property used in these exchanges, from pottery and bronze in the early part of the second millennium, to slaves in the nineteenth and cattle in the early twentieth, was concrete evidence of chieftain's relations with powerful and rich neighbours and beyond. It represented the impressive reach of a ruler's network, which could encompass exotic individuals from afar, magnifying his relative worth and prominence in his own community. Western traders and later, administrators sometimes picked up on these connotations in their own dealings with Tausug. Thus the English navigator, Thomas Forrest, who provides a rare eighteenth century account of Sulu in 1774, records in his journal that he exchanged gifts with the Rajah of Cagayan Sulu, in the Sulu archipelago to establish the good rapport necessary to conduct business:

I presented him with a pocket compass, two pieces of course chintz, and a little tea and sugar candy, which Malays are generally fond of; and of which I had laid in a pretty good stock in Balambangan. In return he gave me a goat, some fowls, fruits &c, and, immediately after dinner, I returned on board.<sup>27</sup>

The importance of ritual gift exchange continued well into the latter half of the nineteenth century, and could ultimately lead to long-lasting relationships spanning generations. An example with particular impact on the American regime

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<sup>25</sup> Hirth. *Chau Ju-Kua's Chu-fan-chi*. Pp. 159-160

<sup>26</sup> Wang. *Song-Ming records*. P. 252

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Forrest. *A voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas, 1774-1776*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, (1969). P. 15

in Sulu is that of Herman Leopold Schück. A German captain who, in 1864, sought to ensure safe passage through Sulu waters, Schück presented the sultan at the time – Jalamul Alam, with a Mauser rifle. Impressed with the gesture as in particular with the weapon, Alam befriended Schück and arranged for him to provide a regular trade in arms. The German eventually settled in Sulu, there raising two boys, Charles and Edward, from his European wife, and Julius from his Tausug wife. Both generations possessed land and status originally granted by Alam.<sup>28</sup> Charles, Edward and Julius served a fundamental role during the early part of the American regime as interpreters, and later Julius would enter politics under the new regime.<sup>29</sup>

Trust through gift exchange could play an important role in delicate diplomatic balancing acts. John R. White, Captain of the constabulary in Moro Province in 1903, recalled how Datu Piang would manage between being allied to Moros hostile to the U.S., and being friendly to Americans himself. Gifts were provided to “...every American officer who came to Cotabato.” The value of the gifts went according to each officer’s perceived power, with large *lantaka*<sup>30</sup> for generals or chickens to junior officers like White.<sup>31</sup>

International trade, and the rituals involved in conducting it, thus encompassed two key elements in the stability and dynamic of Sulu polities: that of ritual display, which attracted the people-based networks which constituted the state; and the rituals of exchange which secured trust. These emerged despite the state, and perhaps even in the endeavour to provide continuity of an essential activity despite the ephemerality of polities. This is consistent with the notion that the individual is ultimately responsible for moral outcomes in Sulu society, and this endeavor towards equanimity in dealings manifests itself in similar ways to the major prestige item of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – cattle.

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Schück Montemayor. *Captain Herman Leopold Schück: The Saga of a German Sea Captain in 19th-Century Sulu-Sulawesi Seas*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, (2005). P. 124

<sup>29</sup> Montemayor. *Captain Herman Leopold Schück*. Pp. 158-159

<sup>30</sup> A bronze cannon of native manufacture.

<sup>31</sup> John Roberts White. *Bullets and Bolos: Fifteen Years in the Philippine Islands*. New York: The Century Company, (1928). P. 235

## Cattle

To the Tausug, cattle, water buffalo and horses represented luxury goods that, like the bronzes and porcelain wares that came during the Chinese tributary trade centuries earlier, came to be symbolic of a leader's ability and power. Bronzes, porcelain and weapons were certainly amongst the most valuable possessions Tausug chieftains could have. Captain White observed how proud *datu* would often place their bronze and porcelain ware in conspicuous corners of their houses in order to demonstrate their prowess ie: their capacity for success in both trade and fighting.<sup>32</sup> This coincides with archaeological work in other parts of the Philippines, which indicated an emphasis in the accumulation of bronze and porcelain wares to extent, at times, where their acquisition and possession did not seem economical.<sup>33</sup>

Late in the Spanish colonial period, these items were no longer as available as they once had been as European navies patrolled ever more frequently borders that were gaining greater definition in the region. What remained to take their place in the rituals of exchange were slaves, and after the demise of this in the mid-nineteenth century, attention would turn to the largest remaining items of prestige: livestock. Cattle raiding has been associated with nomadic societies in other parts of the world and is often portrayed as an important ritual and political activity for these types of societies.<sup>34</sup> The centrality, in the early twentieth century, of cattle raiding to the Tausug, who are a sedentary, farming society, albeit with mobile maritime roots, provides what seems to be a disconnection in this analysis. As the slave raiding by peoples like the Tausug led to suppression by Spain and other European regimes in the region, livestock became the next greatest item of value and was central to local conflict. Cattle raiding in essence became a proxy activity that had replaced maritime raiding, after a period in which other colonial regimes had encroached upon on the naval reach of Sulu. Indeed, what westerners

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<sup>32</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. 250

<sup>33</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 377

<sup>34</sup> Peter Walcot, "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual: The Greek Evidence," *History of religions*. 18.4. (1979). P. 328



described alternately as maritime piracy and cattle rustling are referred to in Tausug by the same term: *langpas*.<sup>35</sup>

### **Cattle in mobile societies**

Animals in pastoral communities were a significant form of wealth and a critical element in social reputation. Evidence of cattle raiding in the Greek heroic tradition, for example, is extensive. The cattle raid was a feature of Minoan-Mycenaean warfare. The two most obvious reasons for war in a 'heroic' society - women and cattle - are twin types of possession.<sup>36</sup> Honour was ascribed to men who were capable of protecting these key possessions against raiders and other individuals who might threaten to dispossess him of them. Greek philosophers such as Callices, who quotes Pindar, suggest that the appropriation of cattle is 'natural' justice. Oxen and all other possessions of those weaker and inferior belong to the stronger and superior.<sup>37</sup> Achilles, for example, tells Agamemnon: "I have no personal quarrel with the Trojans, for not as yet have they raided my cattle or horses or laid waste the crops in Phthia"<sup>38</sup>

Participation in cattle raids were often rituals of passage for warrior youths for such societies. The Nuer of southern Sudan would be involved in wars against others were almost entirely for wealth in the form of cattle. When cared for cattle have the advantage of lasting a long time, reproducing themselves and being easily seized and transported. Through cattle raiding, the Nuer were able to increase their own herds which helped in minimizing the effects of disease.<sup>39</sup> Walcot adds insight to this in Greek literature, emphasizing the value of cattle raids in the development of young Greek men:

There is a ritual quality about [Nestor in the Iliad]'s story of a retaliatory raid and the further retaliation by the enemy which this provoked; it is almost as if both sides are committed to a type of game designed to initiate their young men as warriors.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 180.

<sup>36</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 328

<sup>37</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 329

<sup>38</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 330

<sup>39</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 334

<sup>40</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 335

It is my conviction that we may detect echoes of the ritual cattle raid in which the young warrior established his manhood in Nestor's reminiscences.<sup>41</sup>

In fact Walcot argues that these notions are at the root of the Athenian military tradition, articulated in a way that reveal heroic cattle raiding foundations.<sup>42</sup> For our discussion, it is important to approach the subject from the view that Tausug cattle raiding can be immersed in social and cultural significance, well beyond its pure economic value. It can represent an heroic warrior tradition in mobile societies and is often celebrated in oral literature. It is also evident that the rituals of war are linked with the rituals of raiding, and in fact the two are often intertwined. Although distant in time and space the examples above from Greece and Africa, Sulu's cattle raiding tradition can benefit from a similar context in analysis.

### **Raiding in Southeast Asian tradition**

Despite the mention of horses and *carabao* in a myth on the settlement of Jolo Island, discussed below, cattle raiding as an activity in itself did not immediately figure prominently in oral literature. The frequent theft of cattle at the turn of the twentieth century, therefore, was likely derived from other forms of *langpas* in Sulu. What does figure significantly, however, is the glorification of out-witting opponents and winning prizes, especially women. This trophy-winning ethos was characteristic of the form of *langpas* that developed in Sulu prior to the arrival of colonial powers. In fact, it even was found beyond the Philippines and was evident in Malay literature.

The *Sejarah Melayu* or the Malay Annals, is a semi-historical account of the Melakan Malay dynasty founded by Sri Tri Buana, who was, as per the legend, descended from Alexander the Great. It begins in the legendary past with an account of Alexander's (Raja Iskandar's) exploits and marriage to daughter of the raja of Kida Hindi, and finishes in the historical past with the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511. Iskandar's grandson, Rajah Chulan tries to invade China but only manages to get to Singapore, then known as Temasek. Chulan descends into the sea and marries the daughter of one of the ruling rajas nearby. His dynasty

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<sup>41</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 336

<sup>42</sup> Walcot. "Cattle Raiding, Heroic Tradition, and Ritual." P. 336

comes to rule the settlement of Bija Nagara. He produces three Princes who appear to two widows, and are then taken to Palembang where the eldest is made ruler of Minangkabau. The second prince is made ruler of Tanjong Pura, while the third stays at Palembang. Demang Lebar Daun, ruler of Palembang, abdicates in favour of the prince, who assumes the title Sang Utama. An individual named Bath is born from a cow owned by the two widows. Bath renamed Sang Utama as Sri Tri Buana, who then Temasek and founds a city there, naming it Singapura, or Singapore.<sup>43</sup> Singapore is later invaded by the Javanese, and the Sultan, Iskandar is sent into exile. The new community he settles in eventually becomes Melaka, the greatest of the Malay states. He rules there for twenty years.<sup>44</sup> His grandson, Raja Tengah, converts to Islam (along with rest of Melaka) through the efforts of the teacher Saiyid 'Abdu'l-'Aziz from Jeddah. Tengah assumes the title of Sultan Muhammad Shah.<sup>45</sup> Melaka at this time, begins to reach the pinnacle of greatness.<sup>46</sup>

The Annals continue with stories of the wit of Malay rulers such as one where the Emperor of China conveys his goodwill to the sultan of Melaka with a delivery of a shipload of needles. These needles are sent to Melaka to signify the greatness of the Chinese empire. Mansur, however, cleverly responds by sending a shipload of fried *sago*,<sup>47</sup> each of which he claims represents a household in his own realm. The Raja of China is impressed with this greatness and sends his daughter to marry sultan Mansur.<sup>48</sup> The Annals go on to celebrate Masur's cleverness when he captures the ruler of Pahang, Maharaja Sura, who is brought to Melaka. After Sura displays great skills with elephants, Mansur convinces him to train his own courtiers in handling elephants, producing an integral part of the Melakan military.<sup>49</sup> Another episode recalls the presentation of a Melaka man with elephantiasis to the court in Siam. When his skin deflects a spear that is hurled at him, the Raja of Siam is told that the men of Melaka are all like him and are impervious to injury in battle. This performance, in addition to the fact that a

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<sup>43</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. Pp. 12-13

<sup>44</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. Pp. 41-42

<sup>45</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. Pp. 43-44

<sup>46</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. P. 49

<sup>47</sup> Tapioca.

<sup>48</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. Pp. 80-81

<sup>49</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. P. 85

Siamese attack had recently been repulsed by Melaka, augmented the prowess of the Melakan sultan in the Southeast Asian world.<sup>50</sup>

These episodes may epitomize the references to Malay cleverness throughout the *Annals*. They demonstrate the value such abilities were given to rulers in the island Southeast Asian world. They also reveal the mobility and volatility of ruling dynasties, frequently uprooting themselves from one city to found a new one in a new location. Sulu oral literature follows very much along the same plots and themes. The heroes win the hand of a ruler's daughter and commit acts of cleverness to outwit and gain from figures of authority. The protagonists in Tausug stories are also underdogs, and highly mobile as they move constantly to found new settlements. In the myth about the first man and woman of Sulu, the island of Tapul was originally a boat around which earth had accumulated. There were no other islands in the Sulu archipelago at the time, and the first inhabitant – a man – was born out of an egg laid by a large bird that landed on Tapul. A travelling Chinese prince passed by the island, and anchored his boat near its southern end. When night fell, *diwa*, or spirits, kidnapped the visitor's daughter and hid her inside a stalk of bamboo. Meanwhile, the first man of Tapul, growing lonely, was given a bolo (machete) and instructed by his mother, the large bird, to cut the bamboo stalk. This he did, and found the daughter of the Rajah inside. He married her and lived with her on Tapul. Their daughter became Paramisuli, the legendary grandmother of the chiefs of Sulu.<sup>51</sup>

Another version of this story involved five warrior refugees from a neighbouring kingdom that had recently suffered through a war. As they were seeking a new place to settle, they decided to found their new community on an uninhabited island where they saw horses and *carabao*. Sometime later, as war once again ravaged their old country, a new wave of refugees came to the island, this time five women. They married the original wave of men and together they populated the island. When the population had grown too large, two of the men set out once again to find another home. They were at sea for months, running out of food, wearing out their paddles until they ran aground on an island. One of the men set

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<sup>50</sup> Brown. *Malay Annals*. P. 61

<sup>51</sup> Eugenio. *Philippine folk literature*. P. 307

about cutting bamboo on this island when one of the larger stalks implored him not to cut it. Despite the pleas, he carefully chopped open the stalk to find a beautiful young girl who had hidden there to escape a prophet who had forced her to marry him. The girl introduced herself as Putli Indal Suga, and joined the two men on their expedition to find a new home. After another day at sea, they ran aground once again, but this time decided to stay. This was what turned out to be a place near Bud Talipaw, on Jolo Island. Putli Indal Suga married one of the men, and they had seven boys, each with different coloured eyes. When they were all mature enough, Jolo Island was divided between the sons. Luuk was given to the son with black eyes; Taglibi to the son with green eyes; Talipaw to the son with brown eyes, the trading centre, Tainge or Jolo town, was given to the son with blue eyes; the son with green eyes received Lipid, the son with white eyes got Parang and finally the son with yellow eyes got Sawaki. The children produced by these men in those locations became the Tausug, or people of Sulu.<sup>52</sup>

Just as in the *Malay Annals* we see in Sulu tales the intertwining of overseas voyage and exploit with the discovery and marrying of local women. Cleverness is here represented by virtuous men guided by the supernatural to find their prizes – in this case women - who themselves become key in the establishment of new communities and dynasties. Capture is central to gaining a prize, or winning in these tales. The prize - a woman - is kidnapped by spirits in the first story whilst in the second she is chopped out of a stalk of bamboo and kept from her original husband, despite the warnings of nature.

In the absence of supernatural guidance, however, Tausug men can exhibit supernatural ability in winning their women. The tales of Posong, a cunning, humorous, over-sexed trickster character, enjoy popularity in Sulu that extends to the present. Nimmo explains that the Posong stories follow four stages: the first involving Posong playing a trick, often sexual, after which, in the second stage, he escapes. In the third stage he is caught and is condemned to be punished, and the fourth is when he cleverly escapes his sentence. The key appeal, according to Nimmo, is Posong's "...ability to make fools of high-ranking persons – an ability

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<sup>52</sup> Salahuddin, Muhammad Absari 'Mullung'. "In Tau Nakauna. (The First People of Sulu)." In Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. Pp. 106-110

that would have appeal to people who live in a society where most have to kowtow to a few big men.”<sup>53</sup> One of the best-known episodes involves Posong seen by one of the sultan’s guards riding a stolen horse after he had been condemned to death and escaped. Upon hearing the guard’s report, the monarch was incredulous, and declared that if Posong were truly alive, he would allow him to make love to his seventh wife. The guard did find him, and brought him before the sultan, who was therefore compelled to fulfill his promise. Although he was sent to the house of the seventh wife, Posong actually went to the first wife’s house, and told her the sultan had ordered him to sleep with her. Unwilling to believe this, the first wife refused. Posong then asked if he could at least be allowed to stay in her house overnight as he had nowhere to go. The first wife agreed, but only if he stayed outside the door. In the cool of the evening, however, Posong’s chattering teeth got him invited first inside the house, then inside the first wife’s room, onto her bed and eventually inside the woman’s nightgown until they eventually had intercourse. Despite escaping into the jungle in the morning, Posong is recaptured, brought before the Sultan, but claims it was the first wife who had seduced him. The sultan believes Posong, and divorces his first wife and sets the trickster free.<sup>54</sup>

Another Posong tale involved the trickster plotting to fool a *datu* by stealing his cattle, hiding them with a friend who lived in the forest, and offering to retrieve them. Professing that he had the ability to speak to animals, Posong managed to convince the *datu* in his deception, who proceeded to offer the hand of his daughter in return for the perceived help. Posong retrieves the cattle from the care of his hermit friend, and returns them to the *datu*, who did not fully expect he would be in a position to marry his daughter off to the commoner. Posong is eventually put in fish trap to be drowned in the sea, but he somehow manages to convince a rich trader to switch places with him. The sultan’s guards throw the trader into the sea, while Posong inherits the wares and riches in a boat that the trader left behind. Taking these to the *datu* a few days later, Posong declares that after he had been thrown into the sea, he found an immense treasure at the bottom of the ocean, of which the boatload of riches was only a small part. Taken in by this, the *datu* insists on being thrown into the sea so that he could retrieve more of

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<sup>53</sup> H. Arlo Nimmo. "Posong, trickster of Sulu." *Western Folklore*. 29.3. (1970). P. 186

<sup>54</sup> Nimmo. "Posong, trickster of Sulu." Pp. 187-188.

the treasure. After the *datu* drowned, Posong married the *datu's* daughter, kept the trader's wealth and moved from place to place, getting wealthier by wit and cunning.<sup>55</sup>

Set in a later period of history than those tales on the founding of Sulu, in the Posong stories we start seeing the featuring of horses and cattle, in addition to women, as prizes to be won through subterfuge. Key to these tales is the perception that even a sultan's riches could be won with cunning and wit. The display of such ability brought entitlement to the property of the defeated. In the absence of reliable authority, in disputes over property, the deserving one is the one who proves he is the smartest or the one with the most ability. Indeed, in some manifestations, this cleverness is interpreted as being divine. Spirits guide heroes to making the right decisions, creating the moral framework for the victor's ascendancy over the loser.

### **Cattle and justice in Sulu**

As is the case in present-day Sulu, disputes at the turn of the twentieth century often centered on property, their theft and, in the case of people (primarily women and children), kidnapping. It seems many of the themes in heroic literature were re-enacted in reality, according to cases of what Americans came to term as acts of 'lawlessness'.<sup>56</sup> As the term implies, administrators of the new regime saw these raids as merely symptomatic of the lack of effective governance, the result of opportunism by criminals and bandits. The Tausug view of these episodes of raiding provides a picture of how these acts were tied up in informal, but well-established rituals of justice.

An illustration of how cattle raiding, local governance and justice come together in everyday life in Sulu at the end of the nineteenth century is provided at the beginning of Gerard Rixhon's collection of Tausug oral traditions. The first set of oral tales Rixhon collected were from an interview with a ninety-five year old story teller from Jolo Island named Mullung in 1969. Through the course of the interview, Mullung relates descriptions of his early life in Jolo just prior to the

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<sup>55</sup> Dianne De Las Casas, Zarah C. Gagatiga. Eds. *Tales from the 7,000 Isles: Filipino Folk Stories*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, (2011). P. 114

<sup>56</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

arrival of the Americans in 1899. In particular, he describes his connection with the local *panglima*, Maharajah Indanan, who will become a significant figure in the colonial events we shall discuss in chapter four. Addicted to gambling at a young age, he sold whatever cattle he could find “...regardless of their ownership...” to pay off his debts. For this, he was summoned to the residence of Indanan, who fined him seventy pesos, an amount too large for him at the time, so he entered into the service of the panglima to pay it off. One of the tasks he was to perform for Indanan reveals how labour, agricultural production, cattle raiding and justice could be linked:

There were 200 people working on the farm. They did all the work, cutting the grass, plowing the fields, harvesting, and everything else. All the panglima did was to give orders. After the day's work, the panglima would ask me to visit the people who had not come to work. I knew the people who did not come to work and so when I arrived at their houses, I would not go upstairs but would stay in their yards. If I saw a cow or carabao tied to the post of the house, I would get it...After taking these cattle, I would tell the owners, “If you want your animals back, just follow me to the panglima's house.”<sup>57</sup>

Key areas of American concern – slavery, in the form of Mullung's indentured servitude to Indanan, cattle raiding, in the form of Mullung's collection of cattle from absentee workers, are here shown in the more benign light of local governance and justice, as opposed to its criminalized, barbarized presentation in colonial accounts. While the raiding certainly varied in drama, scale and violence, this provides us with a more everyday perspective on the exchange and role of cattle within a Tausug community. Mullung goes on in Rixhon's book to describe what happened when the absentee workers sought to collect their cattle:

Upon arriving at the panglima's house, I would tell him how many cows I had brought. The panglima would say, “Very good. Take a rest now.” And I also told the owners of the cattle that they could not get their cows back unless they could bring P70...<sup>58</sup>

A cattle raid was both crime and punishment. Mullung entered into the service of the Panglima because he had committed an offense by stealing and selling another individual's cattle. But in Indanan's service, he was sent off to confiscate cows for others' offenses. Just as in the American system where foreclosures and repossession of property can occur with the non-payment of debt, the *datu* here

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<sup>57</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 21

<sup>58</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 21



could collect property on the non-performance of labour obligations. With much disruption occurring in the countryside of Jolo in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it is easy to imagine inconsistencies in the performance of labour obligations and the consequent sanctions imposed by *datu*. But because the traditional system Mullung was participating in was informal and one that the Americans were endeavouring to displace, these acts, as we shall see below, were seen as piracy. Seeing their initial mandate as involving the maintenance of order, cattle raiding became quite a concern. An example of how they understood Indanan's activities with regard to cattle is evidenced in the communications below from Colonel William Wallace, military governor in Sulu in 1902, and the Sultan.

Paradji son of Panglima Hadji Tahir of Parang complains that his father had four horses stolen and they were later seen in the possession of Sakatie - brother of Maharajah Indanan.<sup>59</sup>

In the context of Mullung's account, we might suspect indanan had his brother engage in a similar venture. In the same letter, Colonel Wallace implores the Sultan to implement justice in the American vein, and renders his own assessment of Indanan.

I request my son the Sultan to take this matter in hand and be sure to have these horses returned to the rightful owner. – I have received so many bad reports about Maharajah Indanan that I must believe he is not a good man.<sup>60</sup>

In colonial reports, Mullung's activities in collecting cattle from Indanan's absent workers might have read in a similar fashion to a report of Habib Awab's men's confiscating cattle from local residents:

Paradji's horse was also taken about three weeks ago by Abdul Ahab, Islasi, Laja Muddin and Alamia, followers of Habib Awab who lives a little to the west from Indanan. The [sic] took the horses in broad daylight in front of the house and were recognized by several persons present. Paradji had received this horse and four dollars in payment of a debt only two days before it was taken.<sup>61</sup>

This sort of disconnection between colonial and local actions and motivations defined the relationship between colonial regime and local Tausug communities at

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<sup>59</sup> William Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Kiram. April 18, 1902." 1902. F3, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Kiram. April 12, 1902."

<sup>61</sup> Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Kiram. April 12, 1902."

the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, it was out of these conflicting perspectives on such activities that the first violent clashes between American and Tausug would play out.

### **Shift from maritime raiding to cattle raiding**

At this point in the discussion, it may be helpful to step back again and explore possible reasons as to why livestock and cattle raiding had become such a concern for the colonial regime in Sulu by the end of the nineteenth century. When the maritime reach of Sulu contracted, the heroic rituals and rites of passage, as well as the social and political symbolisms of the maritime raid passed onto what was left available – cattle raiding. When the Americans arrived in Sulu in 1899, they did not encounter large-scale military resistance from the Tausug along the lines of what was occurring in the northern Philippines at the same time. Neither was there open hostility directed at the Americans. Competition and animosity between chiefs, however, was widespread and seen as a key source of tension the new colonial regime had to contend with. Having come to the throne after a drawn out war of succession, the thirty-six year old Sultan Jamalul Kiram II was still insecure in his throne.

Much of this internecine unrest created conditions that were favourable for an increase in cattle raiding. Out of one hundred and thirty-four total cases of lawlessness in Jolo, Siasi and Bongao between September, 1903 and May, 1904, the largest single category – thirty-four cases - involved the theft of livestock. There are some clues that this form of raiding was new and had increased. In Samuel K. Tan's compilation of letters from the Sultanate of Sulu the dates of which straddle both Spanish and American regimes, mention of the theft of horses or cattle during the Spanish era was almost non-existent. However, it became an increasingly frequent issue and complaint during the first years of the American period.<sup>62</sup>

### *Colonial encroachment*

Several factors may have impacted the centrality of cattle raiding in Sulu in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first was the rapid expansion in Spain's effective zone of control over Sulu. In the early part of that century the sultans and

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<sup>62</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*.

*datu* were adept at exploiting the ambiguity of European control in their region at the fringes of the territories of the Dutch, English, and Spanish, with the French and Germans also playing a more tentative role. Sulu filled this ambiguous colonial space and established a raiding and trading empire within what Warren referred to as the 'Sulu Zone.'<sup>63</sup> However, the gradual expansion of European colonial territory in the region meant that the rival powers' territorial ambitions would overlap and threaten to limit Sulu's maritime scope, as they attempted to establish mutually exclusive trading blocs.<sup>64</sup> It is arguable the maintenance of this system was a prominent diplomatic concern for Sulu's sultans in the nineteenth century, and significant efforts were made to ensure that Tiangge would maintain its access to international commerce. In the letter below, Sultan Muhammad Fadhi appeals to the Spanish governor in Mindanao to ease restrictions being imposed on trade.

Through my Secretary, I have been informed by the sovereign authority of Her Majesty the Queen on 29 October of the past year that no foreigners are allowed to trade in Sulu because no open trade exists with the islands of Sulu... They will look for opportunities to trade and, if there is no tobacco and opium that come into Sulu through the foreigners, the Tausug people will suffer because trading is their traditional activity since the beginning...In the month of July, 1827. Sultan Muhammad Fadhi.<sup>65</sup>

Spain in fact became increasingly aggressive in 1848 when they purchased steam-powered warships from England to finally put an end to raids by the Samal – the Tausug vassals that manned their fleets.<sup>66</sup> After several one-sided encounters at sea where the wooden Sulu *prahus*<sup>67</sup> were annihilated by the Spanish steamships, the final defeat of the Samal came at Sipak in 1848. Here Spain managed to ground their fleet and destroy several of their *cotas* along with several hundred of their fighters.<sup>68</sup> While it did not yet stop Samal raids completely, it had largely destroyed them as a significant maritime force in the region. But it was fear of the English, however, that drove the Spanish to finally gain irrefutable control over Sulu in the latter half of the nineteenth century. An agreement between Sulu and James Brooke on May 28, 1849, where the Sultan agreed not to enter into vassalage with any other power without English approval convinced Spain that definitive action

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<sup>63</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*.

<sup>64</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 193

<sup>65</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 261

<sup>66</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. p. 253

<sup>67</sup> The oar-driven Sulu warship. For an in-depth description, see Warren and Scott. Scott, William Henry. "Boat-building and seamanship in classic Philippine society." *Philippine Studies*, (1982): 335-376.

<sup>68</sup> Warren. *The Sulu Zone*. pp. 191-192

had to be taken. The perceived alternative was to lose control over Sulu and their borders in the southern Philippines completely, as a consequence.<sup>69</sup> The Spanish governor in Zamboanga immediately demanded the withdrawal of the agreement, while the sultan sought to appease him with an offer to raise Spanish flags over all the *cotas* around Tiangge. But the damage had been done. The Spaniards sought to effect the concrete demarcation, in the eyes of the other European powers in the region, of the borders of their Philippine territory. While the English could have had a case to pursue their interests in the 1848 agreement, it was deemed more important to maintain friendly relations with Spain, and its treaty with the sultan was thus forgotten. Within twenty years, Spain had absolute control of the sea in the Philippine archipelago, annihilated Samal naval power, and established a permanent politico-military regime in Mindanao and Sulu by 1878.<sup>70</sup> Sulu trade and maritime mobility, therefore, came more effectively under the control of Spain.

Headmen around the island of Jolo over the last decades of the nineteenth century were increasingly compelled to draw wealth from their immediate vicinity with fewer options to trade overseas. Fish was still plentiful and dried fish was traded regularly in neighbouring ports in Mindanao, Singapore and North to as far as Manila.<sup>71</sup> The Tausug also produced agricultural trade goods such as rice, betel nuts, and forest products such as mangrove bark, which was also traded in nearby ports, as well as sold in bulk to locally-based Chinese merchants, who now had greater freedom of movement internationally than the people of Sulu,<sup>72</sup> but who also charged the cost of rising colonial tariffs back to the Tausug. The breadth of the market for local products was reduced from distant ports at every end of the Southeast Asian world, to those near enough to allow for a quick dash across the sea to avoid colonial patrols. Access to overseas sources of wealth was reduced while at the same time markets for their own products were increasingly limited. Naturally those who were engaged in trade were impacted the most, such as the sultan and market town of Jolo.

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<sup>69</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. pp. 329-332

<sup>70</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. p. 69

<sup>71</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 20.

<sup>72</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor Questions Alam, Milaham and Kandjili, who abducted the Moro Girl Apalla. Jolo, P.I. March 25, 1904." 1904. F8 C55, Scott Papers.

The arrival in the 1880s of a virulent disease affected most hooved animals in the region – rinderpest - brought the number of cattle and *carabao* down in Sulu by as much as ninety percent according to some accounts.<sup>73</sup> While actual figures for the Sultanate are not available, the cattle population on the adjacent island of Basilan went from approximately 20 000 head to only about four hundred head. The Island of Cagayan de Sulu, in the Sulu archipelago, had about three thousand head of cattle in 1904 and a considerable amount of land under cultivation. This was considered as being one of the richest islands in the district. This despite the regional ravages the rinderpest epidemic inflicted, as the cattle were primarily for local use and were rarely transported or mixed with imported animals.<sup>74</sup>

By the early 1880s, Tausug sultans and *datu* had only restricted access to traditional exchanges of manpower and prestige goods. While small scale trading continued, the large scale trade that made Sulu, a commercial hub for hundreds of years for the Tausug was reduced to a trickle. This conceivably had a profound impact on the Sulu sultan's ability to attract and retain men as well as his ability to negotiate terms with colonial powers. Large livestock were possessions that very much came to serve the same function as bronze and porcelain ware. In the pagan parts of the pre-colonial Philippines, Junker demonstrates how pigs were important feast food for events where leaders would have an opportunity to display their prowess, manifested by their possessions.<sup>75</sup> In the Muslim Philippines, pork naturally would be shunned for religious reasons during feasting, in favour of beef. Thus the consumption of cattle became central to feasting in Islamic regions such as Sulu to which many a modern Tausug can attest. The water buffalo was the primary draft animal in the Philippines, as it was (and still is) for most of Southeast Asia. These animals were essential for rice cultivation and they fared well in the vast mangrove swamp areas on the major islands of the Sulu archipelago, such as Jolo, Tawi Tawi, Siasi and Basilan.<sup>76</sup> Livestock became a preferred item for theft, aided by its movability. Horses, cattle and *carabao* offered

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<sup>73</sup> Jamalul Kiram II, H.R.H. "Letter from Sultan of Sulu to Brig. Gen John C. Bates, 27<sup>th</sup> day of Moon of Ramthan, 1317." 1900. F2, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>74</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Letter to Scott from Wood, Jolo, August 12, 1904." 1904. F3, C34, Wood Papers.

<sup>75</sup> Junker. *Raiding, trading, and feasting*. P. 314

<sup>76</sup> Prior to Basilan's occupation by the Spain, the Sultans of Sulu had always considered this island as part of their sultanate.

the easiest and quickest opportunity for thieves, as they could easily be led and did not require additional boats or wagons to transport. A thief could single-handedly steal a highly valuable and prestigious item from a rival and escape quickly.

## Rinderpest

More limited maritime mobility set the tone for political reconfiguration in Sulu by the early 1880s. These factors were exasperated further with the arrival of rinderpest which affected what now had become the key item of movable wealth and exchange – livestock. Rinderpest, or cattle plague, a disease related to measles in humans, began to appear in Southeast Asia the 1880s,<sup>77</sup> eventually leading the sultan to claim that ninety-seven percent of the cattle, horses and *carabao* in Sulu had been wiped out by 1900.<sup>78</sup> A once abundant trade in cattle and *carabao* was practically non-existent by the early twentieth century.<sup>79</sup> The *datu* of Sulu, while owning a fair amount of cattle themselves, unlike other Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao, made no significant commercial return on cattle trade, only on *carabao*.<sup>80</sup> This meant that soon after the disruption of access to maritime trade items by colonial naval power yet another item of conspicuous wealth and influence, essential in cementing alliances, was made rare. The significance of rinderpest's blow to Sulu during the critical 1880s and 1890s has been unexplored and largely underestimated. Cattle plague raised the economic and likely the prestige value of livestock as their numbers dwindled. The local price of beef had become so high by 1903 that the Americans turned to importing cattle from as far as Australia to sustain the supply of beef for their troops.<sup>81</sup> The loss of such great numbers of livestock, especially important draft animals such as the *carabao*, essential in tropical agriculture, had even broader impacts as the supply to rice and other subsistence foodstuff diminished as well, triggering shortages throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century. Indeed Sultan Jamalul Kiram II wrote to the U.S. governor in 1901 asking for relief from the newly imposed customs duties on trade because of the ravages of rinderpest.

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<sup>77</sup> Clive A. Spinage. *Cattle Plague: A History*. (Kluwer Academic Publisher's Group: New York, 2003). P. 493

<sup>78</sup> Kiram. "Letter to Bates, 1900."

<sup>79</sup> J.E. Mahoney. *Report on the Census of the Island of Basilan (Census of 1903)*, Isabela de Basilan, April 11, 1903. Beyer Collection. P. 22

<sup>80</sup> Mahoney. *Report on the Census of the Island of Basilan*. 1903. p. 22

<sup>81</sup> Leonard Wood. "Diary entry, Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1907." 1907. *Leonard Wood Diary*. C3, Wood Papers.

I beg you and the President to be lenient with the Sulu people who, owing to the cattle disease here in the Jolo Archipelago have become very poor. About ninety-seven percent of the cattle have died off. Who can assist us, but you? It is only right that we should come to you, who are now our brothers, and ask you to assist us in our trouble.<sup>82</sup>

Cattle, *carabao* and horses, were left as the key items of wealth and status and often served as economic currency in the last years of the nineteenth century. Despite dominance by Christians and foreigners in the cattle export trade, Muslim Filipinos still owned a considerable number of cattle for their own consumption and for use in local transactions and barter. Their near annihilation by rinderpest further impoverished the Tausug, and the animals that were left, with their inflated value, were increasingly contested over. Before the arrival of cattle plague fresh meat was consumed regularly. After the ravages of rinderpest, the natives shifted mainly to dried fish. By 1899, the once lively trade in cattle and *carabao* that went as far north as Manila, and included nearby ports of Jolo, Parang Parang and Zamboanga was already almost non-existent.<sup>83</sup> With cattle and livestock being amongst the few remaining items of wealth and prestige by the 1890s, practically every conflict that appears in late Spanish and early American reports involved some degree of cattle raiding.

### Colonial justice

Captain John R. White, a constabulary officer in Sulu at the turn of the century, described the bands that stole cattle in terms that echoed cattle rustlers in America's 'Wild West'.

These cattle-stealing gangs operated over the maze of trails that led through the *cogon* bamboo, and brush-covered foot-hills, behind which, when pressed too closely by the Constabulary, the mountain jungles offered them secure hiding-places.<sup>84</sup>

What he fails to mention, however, is that these gangs were almost exclusively connected to a powerful *datu*. White's comment reveals the American's incomplete understanding of the activity, and how they missed the ritual, economic and political aspect of the endeavor. These elements are evident in a series of provocations and retaliations between rival chiefs in Parang in 1903. These cases

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<sup>82</sup> Kiram. "Letter to Bates, 1900."

<sup>83</sup> Mahoney. *Report on the Census of the Island of Basilan. 1903*. P. 22

<sup>84</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. 161

can demonstrate how these thefts were intertwined in a vendetta-like feud discussed in the previous chapter, known as *rido*.<sup>85</sup>

The first report occurs at the end of October, 1903, where two of the sultan's officials, both *panglima*, were involved in stealing animals from each other. This ends seemingly in benign fashion with the return of the items on the order of the district governor, which in this case, was the newly-arrived Major Hugh L. Scott:

October 28, 1903

Panglima Ambutong, of Parang, reported that Panglima Dammang's people had stolen seven horses and one buffalo from the former. Stolen property was returned to Ambutong by order of the District Governor.<sup>86</sup>

Ambutong and Dammang are both from Parang, in western Jolo, and this manifestation of the rivalry between them continues over several incidents. Considering 'Panglima' is the title of a district headman, the case above details one district leader stealing from another. The simple return of items by Dammang does not solve the issue. In Scott's mind however, he had rectified the theft. But to Ambutong, and Dammang, whatever motivated the theft in the first place was left unresolved (or perhaps exacerbated) by the return compelled by Scott, and they were both back at square one. Ambutong indeed retaliates by stealing from one of Dammang's people in Parang a little more than one month later:

December 16, 1903

Asakil, of Parang, reported that four carabaos and two bulls were stolen from him by followers of Panglima Ambutong of Parang. Stolen cattle was returned by order of the District Governor.<sup>87</sup>

Ambutong took retaliation very seriously, as his men expanded their scope of targets in raiding Dammang's livestock.

December 20, 1903

Ibrahim and Hussin reported that 37 goats were stolen from them by followers of Ambutong's men. Goats were returned by order of the District Governor.<sup>88</sup>

Ambutong and Dammang's man, Asakil, finally appeared before Scott after being summoned, in an attempt by the Governor to finally put an end to the issue. Scott,

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<sup>85</sup> Rido is actually a Maguindanaon word, but has recently come to refer to these types of conflicts in Sulu as well.

<sup>86</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

<sup>87</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."

<sup>88</sup> Scott. "Report of Cases of Lawlessness, 1903-1904."



at the beginning of the meeting asked both *datu*: “Why did you not come in here before with those people, why did you not return the stolen cattle? Why did I have to write you again and tell you that I would have to go after you?”<sup>89</sup> To the Governor, this cattle theft was simply opportunism, and the simple solution was to return whatever property was taken to its original owner. Ambutong and Asakil, however attempted to explain in depth how the situation had come about:

Ambutong: My two sons-in-law were not mixed up in that goat-stealing business; they never left my house. – My house and corral was broken into before the fasting month; when I went the house, we found a man; this man said that Asakil had the cattle and Akil and Jelani cousin of Asakil took it.....<sup>90</sup>

Ambutong’s agreement is not limited to the material value of what was taken from him, but hints also at the indignation and insult surrounding the offence. In short, Ambutong was attempting to rectify a social wrong. Indeed, in response to Ambutong’s explanation, Asakil was more to the point:

Asakil: I am no thief, we were enemies....<sup>91</sup>

Asakil was expecting that the knowledge that their two clans were at war would explain to Scott the raiding occurring between them. He also felt that the key difference between stealing for the value of the items, which was dishonourable, and stealing when at war, which was excusable. Scott however, found this information irrelevant and quickly dismisses it.

Governor: Never mind that now, we will find out about that later;<sup>92</sup>

Ambutong, however, continued with his story, revealing that he was, in his capacity as a Panglima in Parang, was involved in investigating a previous theft that may have provided a context for the current dispute between him and Asakil:

Ambutong: I made investigation and found that the cattle was with Asakil. Then I was in the house of Jelani, nobody there. The Sultan told me to try the case about the brother of Arasain, I claimed the sister of Arasain 400 coconuts...

Governor: I think you are leaving the subject.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Official Interpreter. “Asakil and Ambutong and followers report to the Governor for investigation of their mutual claims. Jolo, Jolo, P.I., January 2, 1904.” 1904. F7, C55, Scott Papers. See Appendix F.

<sup>90</sup> Official Interpreter. “Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904.”

<sup>91</sup> Official Interpreter. “Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904.”

<sup>92</sup> Official Interpreter. “Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904.”

<sup>93</sup> Official Interpreter. “Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904.”

Here we see the beginnings of Ambutong's attempt to provide the moral context for his actions. The black and white nature of the case to Scott however was evident in his comment above when Ambutong attempted to explain the series of actions involving others, which gave rise to his own actions, now under scrutiny. To Scott, discussing what others did veered away from the immediate issue – Ambutong's unlawful possession of Asakil's cattle. Ambutong, however, persists, and takes the opportunity to provide as complete a picture of the situation, which seems to have begun with his own attempts to resolve an issue, in his capacity as *panglima*, concerning possession of a valuable barong or large bladed weapon:

Ambutong: 400 coconuts and four slaves and one Snyder rifle and 4 head of cattle and 4 bamboo and one barong with a gold handle. The barong was to be returned to the sister of Arasain. The next morning I went there to try the case, I sent for Arasain and Amik, the uncle of Alian, the husband of [not clear] which sent her husband Ami to get the barong. When Amir went there they killed him; I made them put up ten slaves. After they put up the bail,<sup>94</sup> I told them not to fight and not to steal and not to complain. (Ambutong is confused, seems to have lost track of the story) They made their statement and it was written down. Before it was completed, something happened, I heard that Ibrahim had taken the goats belonging to Arasain, at Dankan, and that Arasain had taken also goats from Ibrahim. Ibrahim had taken 50 goats. When I heard this I told them to return each other's goats, because it was against the Sultan's and my orders to steal from each other. My two sons-in-law were not in that at all. We are enemies with Asakil and have not made up yet. Pula was seen riding a bay mare, he was chased and came to Alian's place; then he took two head of cattle. He was caught and tried. (Pula was reported by Hajerol as being detained forcibly by Alian, Ambutong's man). I don't know about the black horse.<sup>95</sup>

The stenographer's comment in the transcript suggesting that Ambutong had become confused again indicates the American dismissal of the details. While Ambutong seems to be explaining the causes of the series of thefts in question, his tracing of the chain of acts and retaliations seem to bore Scott, and he decides to put an end to it:

Governor: (to Ambutong) : Now you were telling me a whole lot of things, I do not care about, and that have very little to do with what the question was. Now answer me this. You want to fight with me? (Ambutong horrified denies) Why do you permit this stealing to go on after I forbade you to do it? <sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> This is a term that is more relevant to a western judicial system. Perhaps a term closer to its Tausug significance is compensation.

<sup>95</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

<sup>96</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

Scott's unsettling question about Ambutong's desire to fight him seems more akin to a bar room threat than a diplomatic parlay. Nonetheless, it epitomizes the general American attitude towards what to them seemed like a tangle of vendettas too complicated to think about. It was these types of confusing disputes that brought many U.S. officers to conclude that what existed in Sulu was anarchy, and that the simplest way to deal with that anarchy was to impose order that they could understand. Inevitably, this was a simplistic order that reflected an American historical experience with cattle rustling and not one that considered Tausug notions of moral order. Despite this, Ambutong persisted in the pursuit of what he believed was his moral imperative and could not accept what was tantamount to being identified as the criminal when he believed he had been acting in the pursuit of justice. Scott however, would have nothing of it:

Ambutong: - Two Sundays ago I lost again....

Governor: Answer my question.

Ambutong: The cattle are at Asakil's place....

Governor: That is not answering my question. I want you to tell me whether you are going to obey my order.

Ambutong: I don't allow stealing...We are enemies; so as to taking I don't know...

Governor: I am asking you, whether or not you are going to obey me.

Ambutong: He is taking from me....

Governor: Yes or No?

Ambutong: I obey your orders.<sup>97</sup>

Ambutong's reference to the fact that they were enemies implies that there is a question of honour involved, and that honour, in this series of compensatory raids, was a set of attempts to address them. They thus could not be criminal acts, but righteous attempts to rectify wrongs inflicted. Scott, however, merely saw this in terms of justice being served simply by a return of the most recent items taken:

Governor: All right. Now I want you to return those 37 goats, the 4 carabaos, the 2 bulls, and the 2 horses.

Ambutong: Ibrahim took 50 goats...

Governor: That is another case. Will you return that property?

Ambutong: Asakil has my cattle and Ibrahim...

Governor: Will you Yes or No?

Ambutong: If you say so they will be returned.<sup>98</sup>

Scott attempted to balance the responsibility for the dispute as he then turned to Asakil and tried to compel him to be accountable for his part. He recognized this

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<sup>97</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

<sup>98</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

was a feud involving a set of acts that had descended into a situation where thefts were committed on a 'tit for tat' basis:

I see this a plain case of repressals [sic], you are both stealing from each other. I will hold you two headmen responsible now that this business stops, right away.<sup>99</sup>

The Governor, however, was fixated on coercing a stop to the act of raiding, ignoring the issues of honour that may have led to the dispute in the first place. Ambutong and Asakil were not provided a face-saving option to end the dispute. As such Scott was not demonstrating a sense of moral ascendancy, a juridical wisdom that could bring about a satisfactory resolution. To Scott the key issue was a simple return of property and cessation of theft – only the manifestation of what was truly perpetuating the discord between the clans. The meeting concluded with Scott refusing to hear any additional grievances from either side, forcing all present to shake hands. It was clear that the sides did not find satisfaction in his ruling because Asakil and Ambutong continued to cite items that were still owed to them even after they had shaken hands and sworn on the Quran that they would cease the dispute.<sup>100</sup> In fact the oath may have made things worse, as the chiefs, Ambutong in particular, had to channel elsewhere his frustration with the mishandling of justice in his eyes.

The fact that notions of honour and issues of face saving between Ambutong and Dammang were overlooked in Scott's ruling meant that Parang remained a hotbed of cattle raiding. The taking of a rather simplistic approach to these cases only prolonged their occurrence. The example below epitomizes this, as the return of property on Scott's orders, simply resulted in a new set of raids:

Maharajah Anudin complains that Opau's men stole 4 of his carabao about a year ago - Opau agreed to return them. But afterwards 2 more buffalo and 3 horses were stolen from him by Opau's men. The men were Benkungal, asibi, Jaujelli(Jaojoli) and others<sup>101</sup>

In fact the example above seems to indicate that some *datu* started to feel that they were on to the Americans, quickly agreeing to return things they capture in raids when ordered to, only to raid again. Despite the intervention of the Americans,

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<sup>99</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

<sup>100</sup> Official Interpreter. "Asakil and Ambutong report to the Governor, January 2, 1904."

<sup>101</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Handwritten report dated March 7, 1904." 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

therefore, the thefts remained persistent, and in fact escalated. Indeed, it was not long after Scott's ruling in the dispute between Asakil and Ambutong did the situation escalate dangerously, rather than ending. With Ambutong shamed as criminal and coerced to swear on the Quran that he would no longer pursue his grievances against Asakil and Dammang, he became one of the first chiefs in Sulu to retreat into a *cota*, taking justice into his own hands and rejecting the American version outright. To Ambutong, it seems that Scott had revealed himself to be a fraud as he was evidently incapable of correctly detecting right from wrong. This in essence delegitimized to governor to the *datu*, as the moral basis of his authority was revealed to be absent. Thus, in a report from April 30, 1904, Ambutong was said to "...prefer to die and get burned rather than [sic] accept American rule."<sup>102</sup> Indeed, he seemed so disillusioned by with the regime's imperatives that he even threatened to reject the sultan because of them: "He does not want the sultan to go to Manila; if he does go, he would not accept him any more as Sultan. ; he also would not accept the governor."<sup>103</sup> As if on cue, his old enemies quickly sided against him:

When Indanan and Dammang heard this talk and that Ambutong carried his goods into the fort, they said it was a disgrace to let Ambutong talk that way. They want to fight him, because they say that the Governor is the support of all the Moro people, and not only they but also the Sultan is upheld by the Governor. If [Scott] would allow them, they would fight Ambutong.<sup>104</sup>

Despite his efforts, and perhaps because of his rather single-minded approach to the adjudication of dispute between the two *datu*, Scott inadvertently made things worse. It becomes clear at the end of the report what Ambutong's grievance was that compelled him to taking such drastic action. Indeed he is explicit about his objection to Scott's interference with justice: "...Ambutong does not want anybody to interfere with trials in his country – He knows that he cannot resist the Governor it is just strong headedness and stubbornness."<sup>105</sup> This was not a unique concern of Ambutong's either, as the issue was also brought to the fore in an agreement between the Parang and neighboring Lati chiefs to take their own actions against cattle theft. The fourth point in the agreement explicitly asked

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<sup>102</sup> Official Interpreter. "Hadji Butu Reports to the Governor. Jolo, P.I., April 30, 1904." F9, C55, Scott Papers. See Appendix H.

<sup>103</sup> Official Interpreter. "Hadji Butu Reports to the Governor, April 30, 1904."

<sup>104</sup> Official Interpreter. "Hadji Butu Reports to the Governor, April 30, 1904."

<sup>105</sup> Official Interpreter. "Hadji Butu Reports to the Governor, April 30, 1904."

Scott to alter his approach to the adjudication of disputes, in particular his singular focus on the restoration of property to alleged 'original' owners:

As for returning and claiming cattle and horses from each other, we beg our father, the Governor to waive this act as it will give only a great deal of trouble to usall [sic], because our father, the Governor, said that property lost only since he is Governor of Jolo can be claimed, so we all think that many will be cursed (take a false oath) because property lost five years ago will be claimed and sworn to as having been lost since our father's arrival in Jolo.<sup>106</sup>

It was not until a few months later that Ambutong was finally convinced to give up his stand, and was arrested, incarcerated in Jolo by Scott. It is thus evident that the complex of juridical and moral issues surrounding raiding, if left unresolved, or indeed, mismanaged, could become an important prelude to colonial warfare. In this way, American attempts to impose what they thought was justice, indeed produced even greater injustice in Sulu.

### **Escalation to conflict**

The potential to escalate into open violence can be attributed to the way in which cattle raids are connected, as was mentioned above in brief, to Tausug notions of juridical morality. Because wit and intelligence was crucial in the measure of a man's worth to 'outwit' someone can imply having dominance over that person. It was an act of domination that required comparable retaliation or compensation. In effect, to fool someone was to suggest to the victim and his peers that he was of inferior intelligence. The act therefore went far beyond just the violation of an individual's rights over his property. Stealing was merely symptomatic of a personal affront that had an impact a community's cohesion as its leader, had he been the victim, lost face. This could often compel the victim to take action to rectify that mishandled justice. Sulu's district governor in 1907, Col. Edgar Steever, articulated the connection between feuds and cattle theft in a letter to Provincial governor Tasker Bliss, demonstrating a gradual understanding of its significance:

When you read over the criminal events for May [1907] you will observe the relations between the Tandu and Looc [sic] people are very far from being what they ought to be. It appears that a feud has existed between these two wards for a

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<sup>106</sup> Official Interpreter. "Extract of an agreement between the Parang and Lati Chiefs, dated Jolo, May 27, 1904." 1904. F10, C55, Scott Papers. See Appendix I.

very long time and recently the intensity has increased. It has involved cattle stealing and murders.<sup>107</sup>

Because violence to the Tausug, could only be justified in the defense of one's honour, unmotivated attacks were frowned upon. A direct attack on an opponent would be dishonourable and unjustified as was almost never done. If a *datu* were stolen from however, he would not only be justified in retaliating in kind, it would be expected as a defense of his honour. The bigger the item, the more serious the offense. A raid by followers of one *datu* could, however, trigger a process by which both sides could confront each other. Stealing livestock would even take the place of warfare in some cases, as their successful theft would have already inflicted the requisite injury to a rival's material well-being as well as prestige. In other words, the balance of honour between the two rivals could be served. Stealing livestock, particularly cattle, carabao and horses, became a reliable predictor of an oncoming conflict between chiefs, if the dispute were not mediated or resolved. These *rido* could thus persist for generations, with the theft of livestock being a characteristic manifestation.

## Conclusions

In stabilizing alliances and political relationships in an environment where the polity was ephemeral and unstable, much emphasis was placed on prestige goods and their exchange. These goods thus came to represent an inflated value to Tausug *datu*, where their possession and loss was intimately tied to their own notions of honour and prestige. These items of prestige changed over time, according to what was available as a luxury item. At one time, when the China trade was at its height, these involved porcelain and bronze goods, displayed during feasts with allies and potential allies. Over time, as trade patterns changed and focused on slaves, these became the more abundant, readily available item of exchange. By the late nineteenth century, however, European efforts to limit Sulu's maritime reach had restricted access to captives usable as slaves, leaving cattle, which in this case included primarily *carabao* and bovines, as the most viable and moveable item of prestige. While cattle were not always the prize to be won, it becomes easier to understand how such an item can, under the right

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<sup>107</sup> Edgar Z. Steever. "Letter from Col. Edgar Z. Steever, District governor of Sulu to Tasker Bliss, Governor of Moro Province. June 15, 1907." 1907. *Correspondences*. V65, Bliss Papers.

circumstances, become important to the concerns of a society that values mobility and an adventurous, swashbuckling cleverness expressed through the ability to outwit adversaries.

Warfare and rinderpest in the last decades of the nineteenth century inflated the value of cattle. The Americans arrived at a time of political and economic instability in Sulu, and found a situation where *datu* were in a state of frequent contestation, manifested primarily by cattle raids. Americans, however, informed by their own cultural capitalist experience with cattle, saw these raids merely as criminal, opportunistic crimes, and simply sought to halt them, without regard to the underlying issues of honour compensation and morality involved in the disputes that triggered them. In providing this sort of incomplete justice, the Americans would inadvertently undermine the legitimacy of their regime in the eyes of the Tausug.



## Chapter 4: Crisis and continuity

In the Sulu archipelago at the end of the nineteenth century, there were four loci of power on the main island of Jolo that produced leaders that would eventually come together in a long, drawn out conflict lasting well over two decades. These loci came to be loosely associated with the townships of Maimbung, Patikul, Parang, and Luuk. Maimbung, on the south-central coast, became the seat of the reigning Sultanate after the Spanish, led by Admiral Malcampo, occupied and retained Jolo in 1876.<sup>1</sup> *Datu* with previous royal lineage and thus their own claims to the throne developed a powerful base in Patikul, to the east of Tiange. In the 1880s two powerful brothers, Kalbi and the younger Julkarnain, became dominant players on Sulu's political scene, and remained so for the next two decades. The old slave-trading centre of Parang, with the chief Indanan preeminent by 1900, was a third contemporaneous node of power. Finally, a fourth and newer faction in these internal dimensions of power emerged in the populous and agriculturally rich eastern region of Luuk. While these four groupings would often shift alliances between them, they remained, throughout the years around the transition of colonial regimes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the main centres of power. Contestations between these factions, much more than the colonial regimes, drove political developments in Sulu in the twenty-six years between 1881 and 1905. At the centre and a primary cause of intensifying rivalry between these factions was a gradual decline in the ascendancy of the ruling family of Jamalul Kiram II towards the end of the nineteenth century. The succession of a pair of untried juvenile rulers had spurred powerful factions in Sulu in attempts to force alternatives.

Americans often dismissed this factionalism as symptomatic of the lawlessness and criminality of a Sulu still mired in despotic system they equated to that of feudal Europe. The new arrivals were informed by the prevailing nineteenth-century imperialist myths about progress and civilization, and saw their actions as tutelary. The espousing of this analysis meant that Americans assessed the Tausug and their society in the simplified terms of medieval despots exploiting common people. They were there to bring a more sophisticated political system and liberation from

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<sup>1</sup> D. Jose Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Piratería en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo. Tomo 2.* Madrid: Imprenta y Fundación de Manuel Tello, (1888). p. 519

the state of tyranny being imposed upon the Tausug people by their own chiefs. The report of the civil governor in 1904 illuminates the initial impression agents of the U.S. regime found when they first arrived in Sulu, and the rather dire conclusions on what their initial task in governing was to be:

Constant petty wars was the rule; might alone was recognized as right; Private property and human life were the recognized forfeits of war, and slavery, with the power of life and death over the slave was regarded as one of the primeval rights of man. To put an end to this chaos; to establish law and order; to bring any measure of peace and prosperity to the Island, and above all to compel respect for the United States Government and recognition of its sovereignty, would require the active interference of the military, with fighting as the necessary result.<sup>2</sup>

The intricacies of the pre-existing dynamics of power were subsumed beneath such generalized analyses. The colonial responses to the disorder often would fail to consider the key political and social dimensions of these native contestations. This analysis has also framed subsequent histories of Sulu and its interaction with the newly arrived American regime. This is not in the least because Manila, as the colonial and subsequent national capital, has maintained the 'civilizing' role that the U.S. regime took vis-a-vis Sulu. As a result, the internal upheavals driven by a generational political contestation amongst the Tausug has been obscured.

## **Rivalry on Jolo**

### *Patikul*

Two of Sultan Jamalul Alam's most powerful chiefs, Datu Asibi and Datu Pula, remained around Patikul, just east a few kilometres east of Tiange when Spain ousted the court in 1876.<sup>3</sup> Asibi was *Raja Laut*<sup>4</sup> and a relative of the sultan. He had two sons, Datu Kalbi and Datu Julkarnain, who inherited his power after his death. This destined Patikul to sustain its influence over events in the next few decades. In 1884 the Patikul brothers threw their support behind a candidate of their own

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Sulu. "History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, 14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1905." F5, C56, Scott Papers. p. 6

<sup>3</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 121

<sup>4</sup> Commander of the sultan's fleet.

for the sultanate, Datu Aliuddin, when the succession came under question at the death of Badarrudin.<sup>5</sup>

### *Luuk*

The circumstances of the late nineteenth century also allowed a power base alternative to those of the western royal families to emerge in eastern Jolo. Luuk is an area comprising the immediate eastern side of Lake Siit which divides Jolo Island east from west. At the turn of the twentieth century, it hosted the largest population in the Sulu archipelago, as well as the most extensive tracts of cultivated land.<sup>6</sup> The area was seen by the Tausug at the time as being the "...soul of Jolo [Island]."<sup>7</sup> In a folktale of the first conversion to Islam of Jolo, seven brothers from Luuk were the only men of the island who refused the circumcision rites Islamic missionary Tuwan Alawi Balpaki initiated, delaying their Islamization.<sup>8</sup> This reputation for stubbornness persisted into the first decade of American rule. In the nineteenth century, Luuk developed a formidable reputation for being the source of the dreaded *sabilalla*, which the Spanish referred to as *juramentados*. By the late 1870s the Sulu Sultan Jamalul Alam was sending his own warriors into the district in retaliation for the increasing numbers of *sabilallah* who were out of his control and complicating diplomatic efforts with Spain.<sup>9</sup> In April 1881, the Luuk chief Maharaja Abdulla led a rogue attack on the Spanish garrison at Tiange a few days after Alam's death. They were subsequently attacked and punished by the newly ascended Sultan Badarrudin's forces.<sup>10</sup> Two decades later, American frustration was dominated by the recalcitrant chiefs Hassan and Usap, both of whom were leaders from Luuk.

### *Maimbung*

The sultanate's relocation to Maimbung from its centuries-old base in Tiange came as a result of Spanish efforts in the late 1870s. Chased out of Tiange in 1876 by the

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<sup>5</sup> Theodore W. Noyes. "Jolo Jollities: Editorial Correspondence of the Evening Star." *Conditions in the Philippines, Senate Document No. 432*. Washington: General Printing Office, (June 4, 1900). P. 21

<sup>6</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 37

<sup>7</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butu and Abdullah on Various Subjects. On Board U.S.S. "Paragua" May 9, 1904." F10, C55. Scott Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Salahuddin, Muhammad Absari 'Mullung'. (Chanter). "In Tau Nakauna (The First People of Sulu)." In Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 113

<sup>9</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. Pp. 589-590

<sup>10</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 357

militant Governor-General Jose Malcampo, the sultanate sheltered temporarily on the mountain of Bud Dajo, and then to Likup, at the foot of Mt. Tumangtangis.<sup>11</sup> Distant enough from the now Spanish controlled Tiange, Jamalul Alam continued to encourage attacks on colonial troops. He mounted a full-scale attempt to remove Malcampo's troops from his erstwhile capital in February 1877 with two thousand men, was repulsed, and tried again with a thousand men in September of that year. This despite the fact that Malcampo had ended his term as Philippine Governor-General in February and the more conciliatory Col. Carlos Martinez had arrived at the end of September to become the governor of Sulu. Hemorrhaging power and wealth with these successive defeats, Alam attempted to reinvigorate his campaign with the lease of his possessions in Borneo to the British North Borneo Company in January, 1878 for \$5000 Mexican per year.<sup>12</sup> Martinez, however, made peace overtures and Alam received encouragement from his own *datu* to be receptive. Harun Al-Rashid was foremost among these chiefs, who in the process ingratiated himself to Manila.<sup>13</sup> The Treaty of July 1878 saw Sulu relinquish control over foreign relations, although the Sultan maintained the right to unrestricted trade in areas outside of Spanish control.<sup>14</sup> Alam finally settled in Maimbung on the southern coast of Jolo island, collecting duties from the hemp, pearl and pearl shell trade there and from the island of Siasi, which received ships on the way to and from Borneo. This was to be the base of the sultanate in the decades to follow. While the Sultan and his retainers still enjoyed the reverence of Tausug from all over Sulu, the sultanate was without a doubt weaker by Alam's death on April 8, 1881 than it had been for a hundred years.

### *Parang*

Another emergent power on Jolo was Parang, the first large community on the island encountered by vessels arriving from the southwestern Sulu sea and Lahud Datu, in modern day Malaysia. It was second only to Luuk in the quantity and quality of its agricultural produce and population.<sup>15</sup> It was a market town, and according to Saleeby, offered the best emporium for pearls, pearl shells and

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<sup>11</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. p. 519

<sup>12</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 122

<sup>13</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 354

<sup>14</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 354

<sup>15</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 14

varieties of fish.<sup>16</sup> Its growth in the nineteenth century was linked to the slave trade, primarily with Borneo, as observers in the early twentieth century have noted the continued ubiquity of stocks to put people in to sell overseas.<sup>17</sup> By the late nineteenth century, however, this trade had declined significantly due to European encroachment. Parang came to play a major role in the disarray triggered by the successive deaths of Alam in 1881, and Badarrudin in 1884. The prominent Panglima Dammang, who twenty years later was a party to the livestock raiding during U.S. rule, came out in support of Harun al-Rashid, who stepped forward to vie for the sultanate. Harun, due to his previous support of the treaty of 1878, gained the backing of Manila and was brought over from the island of Palawan, northwest of Jolo, first landing his forces in friendly Parang in his bid for the sultanate.<sup>18</sup>

### **The succession of 1881**

The sultanate never recovered from the loss of Tiange. As Alam neared the last years of his life, powerful Tausug chiefs – scattered now in different corners of Jolo Island - began to factionalize around two rivals to inherit his throne. The designated *Raja Muda*, or heir, was Badarrudin the son of Alam's first wife, whom he had repudiated in favour of the younger, energetic and intelligent Pangian Inchy Jamila. The much younger Amirul Kiram was the teenage son of Jamila's and she made great efforts to position him in line for the throne. On April 14, 1881, six days after the death of Alam, Jamila went so far as to send letters to the Spanish Governor, Rafael Gonzalez de Rivera, declaring that Amirul was designated heir by Alam. This did not meet de Rivera's preference, however, and he endorsed the older, albeit nineteen year old, Badarrudin. The *datu*, likewise, unanimously supported the *Raja Muda*, putting the issue to rest, and he ascended the throne of Sulu immediately afterward.<sup>19</sup> The stymieing of Jamila, however, only delayed conflict until Badarrudin's own death three years later.

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<sup>16</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 13

<sup>17</sup> Official Interpreter. "Salip Mandangan and his wife Kaparia are brought before the Governor, September 2, 1904." F1, C56, Scott Papers.

<sup>18</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. p. 697

<sup>19</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 131-132

Alam, despite being the popular grandchild of the beloved Sultan Jamalul Kiram I <sup>20</sup> nonetheless, over the final years of his reign, increasingly lost control over Luuk, coming to a head when the young Badarrudin came to power. After an unsanctioned attack by Luuk forces on Spanish Tiange on 10 April, 1881, Badarrudin was compelled by the Spanish governor to dispatch a punitive force to Luuk within days of becoming sultan.<sup>21</sup> Despite this show of force, a steady flow of *sabilallah* streamed out of Luuk over the next few months, with three attacks on Tiange in August, and eight in September.<sup>22</sup> This exacerbated when Badarrudin left on Hajj to Mecca in the middle of 1882, leaving the Patikul *datu* Aliuddin as his delegate in his absence. In October the Brigadier General Jose Paulin marched to Luuk with eight hundred troops in an attempt to eradicate the source of the attacks on Tiange.<sup>23</sup> This force was augmented by Aliuddin and his men, with Jamila committing contingents from three of her *datu*.<sup>24</sup> The situation was further exacerbated by a cholera epidemic that began the year Badarrudin left on Hajj, after which he returned in January 1883 to an archipelago in tumult. Despite a commitment to appear before the Governor General in Manila, increasing disquiet in Luuk and Parang at the prospect of his further absence prevented him from doing so.<sup>25</sup> The distress of rule weighed heavily on the twenty year-old monarch and he sought solace in opium. Badarrudin's retreat from governance and into self-indulgence wasted much of the prestige he had acquired from having travelled to Mecca as the first sultan of Sulu to do so. While he exhibited cosmopolitan influences and a keenness for new ideas that he acquired in his travels, his immaturity seems to have undermined any confidence gained amongst his *datu*, and he was unable to sustain respect that was predicated on conspicuous ability from rulers.<sup>26</sup> An attempt to build a modern police force with thirty Sikhs commanded by two Egyptian officers failed immediately due to neglect of pay and working conditions, prompting the force to abandon him within a few months of

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<sup>20</sup> Jamalul Kiram I reigned between 1823 and 1842. Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 21

<sup>21</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 357

<sup>22</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. p. 590

<sup>23</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 134

<sup>24</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. p. 591

<sup>25</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 135

<sup>26</sup> Previous studies of chiefdoms in Southeast Asia have argued that vassals expected their rulers to continuously prove their ability to govern through the redistribution of prestige goods, the dispensation of justice and demonstrations of prowess through warfare and wit. See Kiefer (1969), Geertz (1980), Junker (1999), Abinales (2000).

arriving.<sup>27</sup> Such evidence of the lack of ability to rule further gave impetus to the Tausug factions that had already begun to coalesce when Alam was still dying.

The configurations of power in Sulu that predominated during the first decade of the twentieth century under U.S. rule began to emerge during the Spanish regime at the death of Jamalul Alam in 1881 and at the ascension of the teenage Badarrudin. The long reign of Sultan Jamalul Kiram I, who ruled from 1823 to 1842 and that of his son, Pulalun, in power from 1842 to 1862,<sup>28</sup> had established a nearly unmatched level of regard for that family amongst the Tausug for the better part of the nineteenth century. This level of regard caused the family to begin to assume that they had the right to the throne by sheer descent. Badarrudin's travels may have also resulted in his exposure to centralized bureaucracies of Middle Eastern governments. While the simple fact that he was the son of Pulalun still preserved a degree of reverence for him, Alam's displacement from Tiange may have driven questions about his rule that prompted powerful *datu* like Asibi to distance themselves, and minor, more isolated chiefs in Luuk to exert greater independence. The youthfulness of his sons Badarrudin and Amirul, however, made many chiefs wonder whether it was time to put another family on the throne. While Badarrudin, at nineteen, was still given the benefit of the doubt upon his enthronement, his short and ineffectual reign finally undermined his family's moral ascendancy in the eyes of many Tausug. When he died of cholera on February 22, 1884 with only his fourteen year-old half-brother Amirul Kiram as *Raja Muda*, the situation edged over the tipping point.<sup>29</sup>

### **The 1884 war of succession**

While his main weakness, in the eyes of the Tausug *datu* in 1884, seemed to be limited to the fact that he was only fourteen years old, later accounts of Kiram would point to flaws of character that may have already been apparent early on to those chiefs who were closer to him. The thirty-year-old Kiram was described by American observers as being self-indulgent and self-centered.<sup>30</sup> This opinion seemed to have been shared by Tausug chiefs as well. In a list of points sent to

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<sup>27</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 135

<sup>28</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. Pp. 318-343

<sup>29</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 358

<sup>30</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 86

Owen Sweet in 1901 suggesting improvements to the way Sulu is being governed, Datu Kalbi and Datu Julkarnain did not hesitate to take aim directly at Kiram. Save for the first two, all eleven points mention him specifically, denoting a deep mistrust in his ability as a ruler. As a third point, the *datu* bluntly address his financial appetite, urging that: "The Sultan not to take revenues from islands that are ours."<sup>31</sup> In a clear demonstration of how the *datu* distrusted his ability, the seventh point outlines what amounts to a devolution of Kiram's power:

In case there should be any doings on the part of the Sultan in connection with the administration of the country to which we do not agree, then there should be a conference of all the chiefs, at the head being the Tajah Muda. If the result of that conference should be adverse to the Sultan's idea, the Sultan must not be angry with us for restricting his actions.<sup>32</sup>

The most damning point, however, was the tenth, in which Kalbi and Julkarnain seem to lay all the blame for the unrest in Sulu on Kiram: "The Sultan must not create enmity between us and his subjects, as we all obey one ruler."<sup>33</sup> Who that ruler was seems to have been left ambiguous enough to include both Kiram as well as the Americans.

Majul however, sustains that Kiram always possessed the popular support of the *datu* on Jolo, and that challenges from Patikul and Palawan came despite this.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, emphasis on an Asian potentate's self-indulgence, lack of intelligence and vanity was often used to justify imperialist aims, and without a doubt played a role in exaggerating Kiram's image in western eyes. The letter below however, suggests that Kiram was nonetheless finding it difficult to gather support at fourteen, when his confirmation by the *Ruma Bichara*, or council of *datu*, to the sultanate was resisted. Jamila, intervening as his mother, appeals to the Spanish governor on the failure to have her son elected to the sultanate and the apparent danger that the impasse produced:

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<sup>31</sup> War Department. "Appendix C: Reports of operations in the third district, Department of Mindanao and Jolo." *Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Lieut. General Commanding the Army*, Part 5, Washington: Government Printing Office (1901). p. 348

<sup>32</sup> War Department. "Reports of operations in the third district, Department of Mindanao and Jolo." p. 348

<sup>33</sup> War Department. "Reports of operations in the third district, Department of Mindanao and Jolo." p. 348

<sup>34</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*.



In the evening of Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Jumadil, Awwal, year 1298 (1883) in the era of His Royal Highness, Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam, the people of the forests and waters came into a meeting, especially the *datu* up to the appointed ones including Panglima Adak and Ulangaya Digadung and the Chinese Mandarins. And the *datu* like Datu Dakula, Datu Puyu, Datu Muluk, Datu Kamsa, Datu Piyang, Datu Buyung, Datu Hasim, Datu Jamahali and the ordinary people were in chaos. There was no agreement. There was no one to replace the son, the Royal Highness Datu Muhammad Badaruddin as Sultan this time...<sup>35</sup>

With a second sultan dead within three years and Kiram the second successive youthful heir, factions began presenting alternatives for the throne. Regardless of this impasse, Jamila had gathered a group of allied *datu* to proclaim Kiram once initially on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, and a second time before Spanish authorities on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March.<sup>36</sup> Three days later, however, leading chiefs from Parang and Luuk convened in Patikul with Kalbi and Julkarnain to advance the more experienced Datu Aliuddin to the sultanate.<sup>37</sup> Gov. Parrado had attempted to stymie a confrontation by suggesting a regency by Aliuddin over Kiram until the youth gained maturity.<sup>38</sup> Aliuddin, however, was the grandson of Shakirullah, who ruled as sultan from 1821 to 1823 and demonstrated experience as caretaker during Badarrudin's Hajj – a strong resume to press his own claim.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, he predated Kiram's popular ancestor, Jamalul Kiram I, and in a way represented a potential return to a time when his family controlled Sulu and not the descendants of Kiram I. From Maimbung's perspective, Parrado's proposal for an Aliuddin regency usurped Jamila's desire to serve as regent to her own son. These irreconcilable factors polarized the archipelago, with local *datu* forced to choose sides, and a campaign of cattle raids and ambushes ensued.<sup>40</sup> The work of Jamila eventually managed to rally more *datu* to Kiram, weakening Aliuddin to only eight hundred after months of raiding his forces and settlements. Outnumbered by Kiram's forces he was defeated at his *kuta* in Patikul and retired to a nearby island only a year after he had been proclaimed.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile Colonel Juan Arolas arrived as Spanish governor in January, 1886 and he immediately sought to back a pliable monarch on the throne to gain more

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<sup>35</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 267

<sup>36</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 358

<sup>37</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 358

<sup>38</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 137

<sup>39</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 137

<sup>40</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 137

<sup>41</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 138

control over developments in Sulu. Arolas decided to support Harun al-Rashid, who had favoured good relations with Manila since the time of Alam. The new governor proposed that Harun serve as regent for the youthful Kiram, and instructed the two to come to Manila to declare fealty to the Queen of Spain. While Harun, already harbouring good relations with Manila, was amenable, Kiram's faction refused to go to the capital. Jamila once again was being edged out of a role to act as regent for her own son, and the last Sultan to go to Manila, Alimuddin in 1748, was similarly invited on diplomatic auspices only to be betrayed and imprisoned for years.<sup>42</sup> The Tausug had since been anxious to have any of their sultans comply with a request to appear in Manila, and this reluctance continued well past the end of Spanish overlordship. With Kiram refusing to leave Sulu, Harun was consequently proclaimed by Manila as sole sultan by Arolas on 24 September, 1886, giving impetus to a new round of hostilities.<sup>43</sup> This re-ignited the crisis of succession after only months of peace.<sup>44</sup> With Arolas now firmly against them, Kiram's party attempted to turn to the British for support. But colonial borders in the region were already gaining stability due to the protocol of March 7, 1885, where Britain finally recognized Spain's sovereignty over the Sulu archipelago in return for the relinquishing of claims to North Borneo.<sup>45</sup> In October 1886, Harun landed in friendly Parang with an initial escort of two hundred Spanish troops and joined forces with those of local chief Panglima Dammang. These developments also emboldened Aliuddin to return to Patikul where he reunited with Kalbi and Julkarnain to re-start their own campaign for the sultanate.<sup>46</sup>

Characterized by raiding, *kuta* attacks and the destruction of coastal villages, this conflict dragged on in guerilla style for nearly a decade. Small clashes occurred initially around Jolo and Maimbung, but spread throughout the islands of the archipelago as the sides vied to obtain the commitment of those peripheral chiefs. Kiram was first to mount an all-out attack on a faction base, mustering three

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<sup>42</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 19

<sup>43</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 139

<sup>44</sup> Montero y Vidal. *Historia de la Pirateria en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*. p. 697

<sup>45</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P.359

<sup>46</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 140

thousand men to invest Tiange in February 1887.<sup>47</sup> This, however was repulsed by the colonial garrison and he reverted to *sabilallah* and raiding. Harun and Arolas, however, retaliated with a siege of their own on Maimbung two months later on 16 April, with eight hundred and fifty troops attacking at night by land and Harun pinning down Kiram's boats by sea. This effort was successful, with Maimbung's two fortified *kuta* razed to the ground and Kiram evacuating to a nearby mountain with two thousand followers. Arolas then turned to Patikul, occupying it in May, forcing Aliuddin, Kalbi and Julkarnain to accept Harun. They reneged on this, however, and Arolas returned at the end of 1887 to finally chastise this faction, forcing them to flee to nearby islands. This time Aliuddin had had enough, and announced the abandonment of his claim to the sultanate early in 1888.<sup>48</sup> Arolas had less luck with Kiram, however, who now enjoyed the support of the majority of *datu*, and was holding out in the interior of Jolo. Arolas and his ward Harun, therefore, turned to the surrounding smaller islands of the archipelago, and persisted in subjugating peripheral *datu* one by one in an attempt to weaken Kiram and gain a critical mass of support for themselves.<sup>49</sup>

While contests of succession have occurred in Sulu's past, this particular episode was comparatively long, as coastal raids, *kuta* battles and *sabilallah* attacks between these rivals dragged on for another six years. Despite a precarious beginning, however, the defeat of Aliuddin and the growing unpopularity of the pliant Harun al-Rashid meant that more *datu* were beginning to throw their lot in with Kiram, who by sheer tenacity seemed to be outlasting all other contenders. Finally, the departure of Arolas in 1893 and the arrival of Gov. Venancio Hernandez brought about a more conciliatory approach from Manila. Spain shifted support from Harun to Kiram in 1894, who had already achieved the tentative acceptance of other native chiefs.<sup>50</sup> Harun's waning support amongst the Tausug is apparent in the appeal to the Spanish government below:

I wish to inform my brother [the governor] concerning the welfare of the Sulu community for which I was entrusted by the sovereignty of Spain and its security here...Indeed I really found pain from the conduct and activities of the people of

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<sup>47</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 140

<sup>48</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 361-362

<sup>49</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 142-143

<sup>50</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 83

Panoy, the interpreter of the government in Sulu and Jaji, a Counselor who does not perform his responsibilities. What they want is to destroy me and to lower the dignity of my race. They spread rumor among the people that I am a messenger without recognition and not worthy of respect.<sup>51</sup>

Kiram finally became undisputed sultan in 1894, ten years after the death of his brother and predecessor Badarrudin. He changed his name from Amirul to Jamalul in an attempt to invoke the reputation of his illustrious ancestor to stabilize support, becoming Jamalul Kiram II. Harun-al-Rashid returned to the island of Palawan, where he had originally been headman, while Aliuddin quietly lived out the rest of his life in Patikul. Kalbi, Julkarnain and other powerful chiefs such as Dammang of Parang, who had backed rival aspirants to the throne submitted to Kiram, albeit reluctantly, as it became evident only a few years later that the underlying animosities seeded in the 1884 crisis persisted. With this long conflict so recent in the memories of the Tausug *datu* still in power when American rule began, and with the same men and women in charge of the same nodes of power, it is difficult to argue that the outbreak of violence in the early twentieth century was not in any way influenced by it.

The decade long conflict after the death of Badarrudin primarily saw Kiram being repeatedly denied the sultanate to which he saw himself as heir beginning with the death of Jamalul Alam in 1881. In addition to this was the fact that his intelligent and capable mother Jamila was also denied regency over her own son. In the end the Kiram and his mother persisted and won, exhausting all other parties including Spanish Manila. Power without moral ascendancy in Sulu, however, is precarious, and Kiram's position remained insecure well into the next decade. It is clear that Maimbung was aware of this weakness, despite the grudging acknowledgement of its supremacy in 1894, and continued to solicit outside aid in reinforcing its position. The Americans in 1899 would thus present a new option for Kiram to protect his throne.

It is clear that Spanish colonial role in Sulu continued to be dictated by local dynamics of power until the very end of its reign there. Manila was reacting to the internal contestations between powerful local nodes of power on the island of Jolo. Spain in the 1880s and 1890s was in fact at the apex of its power over the Tausug:

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<sup>51</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 227

having taken Tiange in 1876 and control over the sea a few decades earlier - but still could not impose its own choice for sultan. With the configuration of power largely the same in 1899 as it was only a few years before in 1894, it is difficult to see how the American colonial role was to become much different. And indeed it wasn't until well into the twentieth century, regardless of what the new imperialists believed was a divergence in colonial ethos between themselves and Spain. We thus turn to how this political climate on Jolo set the tone for the first half-decade of American rule.

### **New imperialists**

The Tausug treated Spain and Manila primarily as another faction in the contest to rule Sulu. They were an additional source of manpower, military resources and prestige to pursue and realize largely locally driven concerns, such as the competing dynastic claims in last decades of the nineteenth century. Although the tensions between Patikul, Parang, Tiange and Maimbung had abated somewhat by 1899, the new American regime initially offered new opportunities for those forced to accept Kiram in 1894 to rectify their circumstances. The new arrivals were therefore quickly courted by faction leaders such as Kalbi and Julkarnain in efforts to reinforce their positions vis-à-vis Kiram.<sup>52</sup> It was the Maimbung, faction however, that brought the new regime on side via the Bates agreement of 1899. The first years of conflict, therefore were not isolated reactions to the new imperialists, but a broad continuation of the patterns of contestation that had their roots in the succession crises after the death of Jamalul Alam. Maimbung, Luuk, Parang and Patikul competed against each other, with the colonial element in Tiange backing the royal faction. The next section of this paper will examine how conflict under the American regime was by and large a perpetuation of the rivalries between the same nodes of power that emerged in 1884.

The trigger setting off a new round of clashes was an issue concerning the symbolic exchange of items of prestige. It began with a joint venture between Kalbi and Kiram to collect taxes from the island of Siasi that went sour, putting the Patikul and Maimbung *datu* once again at odds. Kalbi paid for the cost of the visit to the island and the stay, but complained to the Americans that he saw none of the

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<sup>52</sup> United States Senate. *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*. P. 43

returns promised and felt betrayed by the Sultan.<sup>53</sup> With tensions already high, the situation finally erupted into open warfare in early 1900 when a tribute of pearls from the island of South Ubian traditionally owed to the sultan was sent to Kalbi instead. This tribute symbolically put into question Kiram's claim to the throne in favour, once again, of a *datu* from Patikul even though Aliuddin had already died in retirement in 1892. The *datu* of Tandubas sided with Kiram, and combined with a detachment of the Sultan's forces, attacked a set of five fortified stone *kuta* defended by twenty-five hundred Ubians. Despite the size of the forces, the bloodshed was limited. The bewildered, albeit still untarnished, new regime needed to play mediator and attempted to broker peace, compelling the belligerent *datu* to submit once again to Kiram. Although it achieved a temporary respite, the peace did not last long as tensions arose again in July 1900. This time Maharajah Indanan of Parang was convinced by Jamila to make a display of arms in support of the Sultan. Indanan however, was blocked from doing so by the men of a rival of his own, Panglima Tahir, who sided with Kalbi and Julkarnain. Parang, therefore, was split between rivals who had fought each other in the succession crisis of 1884.<sup>54</sup>

Tensions spread to the island of Lugus in January, 1902, when local *datu* and grandfather to Kiram, Amilhussin, stole four head of cattle and a colt rifle from a rival Maharajah Sarrapuddin. This in defiance of the Kiram's previous admonishments. Amilhussin ignored the sultan and continued raiding, and Kiram felt compelled to request help from the U.S. governor, William Wallace who ordered Amilhussin to cease his activities. Despite this, Amilhussin's cattle raiding continued and he remained difficult despite his relationship with the sultan.<sup>55</sup>

In Parang in 1901 the penultimate chief, Maharajah Towasil, died and was left without an heir. The area consequently became a battleground of cattle theft as chiefs vied with each other for local supremacy. One faction, led by Julkarnain and Kalbi's ally Maharajah Indanan, attempted to take advantage of the power vacuum

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<sup>53</sup> United States Senate. *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*. P. 43

<sup>54</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 88

<sup>55</sup> Jamalul Kiram II, H.R.H. "Letter from Sultan of Jolo to Governor Maj. C.A. Williams, January 12, 1902." 1902. F2, C55, Scott Papers.

to augment his authority against his rival Panglima Tahir.<sup>56</sup> The Americans initially saw Indanan as a 'bad character' – and this 'badness' came primarily through his prowess in stealing cattle, horses and slaves. In April, 1902 Indanan and Tahir were reportedly at the height of their mutual raiding of each other as Tahir's son, Paradji approached the American governor for help in recovering four horses stolen from his father. Those same horses were spotted shortly afterward in the possession of Sakatie – Indanan's brother.<sup>57</sup> Indanan and Tahir, regardless of Wallace's mediation, sustained the tension and provocation through raids perpetuated by themselves, their allies and subordinates. An exasperated Wallace, in 1903 wrote:

Maharajah Indanan is strong and bad - his people steal cattle horses and slaves – lives six miles south of Jolo [Tiange]. Indanan's people swarmed around three troops of dismounted cavalry commanded by Capt. Eltinge.<sup>58</sup>

The confrontation between Indanan and Elting's detachment of U.S. troops in 1903 certainly did nothing to alleviate the negative impression the Parang chief made on the Americans.<sup>59</sup> Yet Indanan's targets were not merely random victims selected opportunistically. They were indeed members of rival alliance groups. The contestation within Parang between Indanan and Tahir increasingly entangled parties further afield as we have seen in Maimbung and in Patikul. But chiefs in Luuk were also getting drawn in.

## **Luuk**

### *Biroa & Hassan*

American military might displayed itself for the first time in Sulu on account of three men: a minor Parang *datu* named Biroa, and Luuk men Panglima Hassan and his lieutenant and successor, Laksamana Usap. What led to this was a relatively minor incident in Parang that nonetheless stemmed from the strife caused by Towasil's death. In the early morning of June 26, 1903 another of Tahir's sons,

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<sup>56</sup> Official Interpreter. "Report from She Saleh, Arab Trader of Parang. November 17, 1901." F2, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Jamalul Kiram II, H.R.H. "Letter from Kiram to Wallace, April 12, 1902." 1902. F3, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>58</sup> William Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Wood, August 17th, 1903." 1903. F4 C55, Scott papers.

<sup>59</sup> Leonard Wood. "Letter to Wood from District Governor, Moro Province. August 17, 1903." 1903. F4, C55, Scott Papers.

Biroa, killed a man and kidnapped his daughter. Governor Wallace tried to order Indanan to apprehend Biroa for murder the following day in Parang.<sup>60</sup> Despite being the son of his rival, Indanan sent a curt reply, declaring that arresting Biroa was unjustified because the dead man and the kidnapped girl were his slaves.<sup>61</sup> Weighing in on the issue and defending his ally's stance, Julkarnain was said to have commented on Wallace's attempts at arrest: "Why should you arrest Biroa, why should he be tried? He just killed his slave."<sup>62</sup> Kiram's perception of his own responsibility over of the situation was complicated by the fact that he was absent from Sulu at the time of the murder. In the Tausug conceptualization of the nature of their power, which had much to do with proximity and actionable authority, he felt he was not responsible for it. Biroa, seeking to avoid the reach of American justice, retreated with his father to a *kuta* in Parang and there prepared to avoid capture.<sup>63</sup> Wallace's verbal pressure on Kiram and his *datu* to arrest Biroa was ineffectual, as months passed without any action from the Tausug. Upon relieving Wallace at the end of August, Major Hugh L. Scott renewed pressure on the sultan before his own men in much less diplomatic fashion:

The Sultan and ministers were in the Headquarters' [sic] building at Jolo and the Sultan was asked point blank whether or not he intended to obey the orders to get Biroa; he replied ; I don't [sic] know. He was then given 3 minutes by the watch to find out whether he would or not, with the understanding that, if he concluded not to, at the end of that time, he would not be permitted to leave the building. – In a minute and a half he promised obedience...<sup>64</sup>

Although Scott believed this had "...laid a foundation for a loyal and lasting friendship..."<sup>65</sup> other Tausug *datu* would not have agreed. Patikul and Luuk began to posture in defense of Biroa, with the powerful leader Panglima Hassan allegedly declaring from Luuk that: "If a Moro cannot kill his slaves then what can he do?"<sup>66</sup> Given the fact that he wasn't alone in making such statements, as Indanan and

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<sup>60</sup> William Wallace. "Letter to Maharajah Indanan from Wallace, Jolo, June 27th, 1903." 1903. F5, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Indanan, Panglima Maharajah. "Letter from Maharajah Indanan to Wallace, July 2nd, 1903." 1903. F5, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>63</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904." 1904. Folder 11, Container 55, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>64</sup> Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904." Pp. 3-4

<sup>65</sup> Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904." P. 4

<sup>66</sup> Scott. "Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904."



Julkarnain were both known to have commented likewise, it is interesting that Hassan was singled out as Sulu's primary outlaw and rebel as a consequence of the Biroa affair. He has since been portrayed as a stubborn, recalcitrant leader, resistant to American rule. Much of this reputation, however, was built out of a seemingly frequent refusal to appear when sent for by Kiram as well as American authorities, which led to the government's calling for his own forcible arrest. Hassan was however, in terms of wealth and manpower, the most powerful *datu* in Sulu, and it would have served many faction leaders' interests to have the Americans turn against and weaken him. Luuk also had supported Patikul and Aliuddin against Kiram in the 1880s, and it was natural for Maimbung to be anxious about Hassan whom they saw as a potential threat. Even before the conclusion of the Biroa affair, Hassan had become the object of colonial frustration on his own account.

Tensions heightened on October 6, 1903, when Julkarnain and the Parang *datu* Dammang and Indanan, in a revival of their 1884 alliance, accompanied Hassan and two thousand armed men to the outskirts of U.S. held Tiange. After several days of parlaying with Scott in the midst of the American garrison, Hassan was secretly promised an agreement of mutual defense by the other *datu*, should he or any of them be attacked by the Americans.<sup>67</sup> The Patikul and Parang *datu*, in delaying their own actions for Hassan's arrest, while at the same time assuring the Luuk *datu* of support, seemed to be positioning both the Americans and Hassan to act against each other.

With the Parang, Luuk and the Patikul *datu* acting uncooperatively, Kiram confessed to Scott that he himself was powerless to arrest Biroa. This finally compelled Scott into taking matters into his own hands by sending his troops to arrest Biroa, who had fortified himself in his *kuta* on a hill named Bud Piahan near the coast in Parang.<sup>68</sup> After surrounding the hill, Scott was able to force his surrender. Biroa gave himself up peacefully to the Americans on October 22, 1903,

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<sup>67</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>68</sup> *Cota* were earth and stone fortifications designed essentially for the Tausug style of warfare which did not involve prolonged sieges, and normally were not well-stocked with food and water. The Americans therefore, would simply cut all traffic going in and out of a *cota* and effect a surrender after two or three weeks.

and was punished according to Tausug customary law, which called for the payment of a fine.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile emboldened by his successful arrest of Biroa, Scott turned his attention to Hassan, insisting that his Tausug allies organize themselves to finally arrest the Luuk chief and to be “...prompt about it...” otherwise he would have to go out and get the Panglima himself.<sup>70</sup> Indanan, seemingly in contradiction with his secret agreement with Luuk, was the first to offer to arrest Hassan, reasoning that he might be able to do it with less bloodshed than the Americans.<sup>71</sup> Scott indeed would have preferred to rely on the Tausug themselves to make arrests because he, with good reason, felt that using colonial troops would lead to more deaths. Using colonial troops might also induce more *datu* from Luuk to become hostile towards the regime as well.<sup>72</sup> A friendly chief from Luuk named Maharajah Opao seemed to assure Scott that his men would look for Hassan. In response to this, Scott continued to exhibit his impatience with the speed of Tausug action by replying: “They will have to hurry up about it. I want to see something done.” Opao reiterated: “They will try hard. We have to carry arms while looking for Hassan.” To this Scott warned that he might not recognize Opao’s men as friendly, exhibiting the delicateness with which the situation had become: “Better keep away from me then. I might run across you. I think I will go to your country, right to your house. You won’t have to go so far to see me. Now go and set your chiefs to work and make them hunt for Hassan. And when I come around to your place let your people behave quiet, don’t let them congregate and howl and jump. We might have to shoot them. And we don’t like to kill people.”<sup>73</sup>

Despite the bloodless conclusion of the Biroa episode, the momentum of events involving Hassan was now irreversible. In another indication of how the Americans were being drawn into local animosities, Scott was frequently fed intelligence, in

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<sup>69</sup> Scott. “Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904.”

<sup>70</sup> Hugh L. Scott. “Letter from Scott to Wood, February 4, 1904.” 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Hugh L. Scott. “Report from Scott to the Adjutant General, Department of Mindanao, Zamboanga Mindanao, March, 1904.” 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Hugh L. Scott. “Letter from Scott to Wood, February 4, 1904.” 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>73</sup> Official Interpreter. “Synopsis of interviews taken in the field – Indanan and others call upon the governor. February 19, 1904.” 1904. F7, C55, Scott Papers.

what was apparently a rumour war, that Hassan was being sheltered in Tandu, part of Kalbi's territory. In a meeting with Kalbi, the chief struggled to convince Scott that these rumours may have been fed to him by Tandu's enemies. "How is it that so many people tell me the same thing?" Scott asked. Kalbi thus suggested that: "They are our enemies; they want to get us Tandu people into trouble." These enemies, presumably, were affiliated with Tahir of Parang, who, as we have seen, had been in conflict with Kalbi's ally, Indanan. Hassan was later located outside of Kalbi's territory, thereby putting that issue to rest. This episode does however demonstrate the degree to which Americans were being manipulated in the context of Tausug intrigues.<sup>74</sup>

Hassan was certainly considered the most powerful *datu* in Sulu, prompting Wallace to report to Wood that: "...if he were Sultan, he would rule."<sup>75</sup> This could explain why some ambitious chiefs were wary of him, perhaps seeing him as their most serious competitor for power. The sultan certainly felt so, and Indanan must have seen him as a rival chief outside of those of royal blood, such as Kalbi and Julkarnain. As the Hassan crisis unfolded, the emerging major players were those that came to the fore in 1884 – Kalbi and Julkarnain from Patikul, Indanan from Parang, Kiram from Maimbung, and the colonial centre in Tiange. Additionally, the secret agreement of October, 1903 seemed to assure that should Kiram and the U.S. attack one faction, the other would attack and take Tiange while the American troops were away. This may have given Hassan confidence in his taking an ever more uncompromising stand against Kiram and Scott, as felt he was being supported by more *datu* than he actually was. When troops finally did enter his territory, the other *datu*, as may have been part of the plan, did nothing.

Indeed it did turn out that the Americans were the ones to hunt for Hassan, with frequent hesitation on the part of their Tausug allies. Scott read this as aloofness toward American authority, which ultimately came to a showdown between himself and Hassan to determine who ultimately would rule Sulu. He believed that

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<sup>74</sup> Official Interpreter. "Datu Kalbi and Tandu chiefs, inclusive of Orang Kaya Bangsawan Hatai report to the Governor, February 19, 1904." 1904. F7, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>75</sup> Leonard Wood. "Letter to Wood from Wallace, Jolo, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1903." 1903. F4, C55, Scott Papers.

if they failed to defeat Hassan, the chiefs of Luuk would break into open rebellion, followed by other leaders around Sulu.<sup>76</sup>

Coordinated by Scott, a large force of approximately eight hundred troops assembled to attempt the capture. The Tausug from Parang brought two thousand men and three hundred boats, spending four days halfheartedly searching for Hassan as he hid in in swamps near the coasts of Jolo before asking Scott to stop the pursuit because they were tired of searching through the swamps and jungles.<sup>77</sup> *Datu* from other regions, also seemed un-enthusiastic. In the first attempt to surround Hassan on a hill called Bud Lumping, one *datu*, Maharajah Opau and his men reacted sluggishly, allowing the Luuk leader to slip through the dragnet and disappear once again into the countryside. Because of Opau's failure on the action at Bud Lumping, the Tausug made a case for having the colonial troops lead the attack on Pang Pang *cota*, where Hassan was thought to have next retreated.<sup>78</sup>

At Pang Pang, the Americans attempted rouse the Parang Tausug into carrying on with an attack after repeatedly being fired upon. The Parang men, however, refused and remained spectators for the rest of the battle as American troops finally invested the *kuta*.<sup>79</sup> Hassan, with the help of his lieutenant, Laksamana Usap, had built the large stone *kuta* at Pang Pang, widely considered the strongest in Sulu at the time. Simultaneously, another of Hassan's Luuk men, Maharajah Andung, started building his own *cota* after attacking a party of American troops conducting a land survey.<sup>80</sup> This kept the Americans on edge, compelling Scott to explain to one of the recalcitrant chiefs that "Building a cotta [sic] is the same as pointing a gun at me."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>77</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>78</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>79</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>80</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 96

<sup>81</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Sultan accompanied by Hadji Taib, Habib Mura, Maharaja Tahang, Unga present Laksamana Usap to the Governor. Jolo, August 17, 1904." F1, C56, Scott Papers.

Hassan's Tausug enemies, which included Indanan of Parang and Kiram of Maimbung, managed to isolate Luuk, get them "in trouble", and manipulate the U.S. in order to eliminate him as a rival. This was ultimately successful, as Hassan's forces were decimated by well-equipped American troops at Pang Pang. Although Hassan managed to escape the destruction suffered by his men, without a force to fight with, he went into hiding in the mountainous inland on Jolo. Wood and Scott were relentless in pursuit of Hassan and Andung, staying in the field for weeks at a time, ravaging the interior of Jolo. This was quite unlike the Spanish way of war, whose tactics were more tentative, staying close to the coast and retreating to Jolo and Zamboanga shortly after each raid or foray. Julkarnain also fielded a force of eight hundred men to capture one of Hassan's lieutenants, Tallu. The latter temporarily escaped in a boat bound for the neighbouring island of Basilan before a storm forced him to come ashore where he was cornered by Kalbi and beheaded.<sup>82</sup> With strife and fear in the countryside, Maharajah Andung was captured on February 6, 1904, after the destruction of his *kuta*, and Hassan was chased through the jungles of the interior for another month before he was cornered and killed with his followers in a small crater<sup>83</sup> on Bud Bagsak, one of the mountains in central Jolo on March 4, 1904.<sup>84</sup>

#### *Laksamana Usap*

Hassan's death, however, did not conclude the Luuk conflict. With Hassan's violent end, a string of *rido*, or vendettas, embroiled the Americans with a new leader, who had fought alongside the Panglima. Laksamana Usap is an enigmatic figure, as contradictory reports emerged later explaining the reasons for his assumption of Hassan's mantle. A better understanding of his motives, however, can provide insight into the common causes of Tausug action during these colonial conflicts. He was not a principal chief like Hassan, nor did he enjoy the wider support of the *kadatuan*<sup>85</sup> of Luuk that his predecessor had. Usap allegedly did not want to fight the Americans as well, but was fearful of how he would be shamed and punished.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>83</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>84</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Telegram from Scott to Wood, March 5, 1904." 1904. F8, C55. Scott Papers.

<sup>85</sup> Chieftains. Literally, 'the *datu* class' in Tausug.

<sup>86</sup> Official Interpreter. "Habib Mura Was Sent for by the Governor, Reports. Jolo, August 2, 1904." 1904. F1, C56, Scott Papers.

It was also alleged that Usap did not want his *kuta* to come into the possession of the Parang chiefs, indicating the influence of that area's conflicts on Luuk.<sup>87</sup> Usap was also reported to have been fighting because his daughter was killed at one of the *kuta* battles against Hassan.<sup>88</sup> Considering the submission and shame being demanded by the Americans, which often involved humbling oneself before the other *datu* – Usap's peers – it is likely that Usap felt there was no honourable way out of his predicament apart from fighting to the death – as a *sabilallah* in the act of *Parang Sabil* akin to many of those emanating from Luuk in the 1880s. Scott's informers indeed attempted to explain Usap's point of view to him:

[Alak]: Usap says, if I am fought I will defend myself. I have done nothing wrong. He wants to come in but he don't want to be brought in by force.<sup>89</sup>

Suffering in the countryside and growing popular hysteria at the continued violence coincided with Usap's plight, and compelled many to join him, as he was already the focus of American ire.<sup>90</sup> This hysteria produced wild rumours ranging from the imposition of taxes on coconuts and women,<sup>91</sup> to paranoia about Americans poisoning the food and water to cause cholera.<sup>92</sup> These fears seemed reinforced when the colonial regime attempted to impose policies such as the head tax or *cedula* in early 1904. With the rice shortage due to the cholera ravaging the islands since May, 1903, people who had gathered around Usap were largely refugees from the countryside. Usap eventually had about four hundred men and women in his *kuta* by late 1904. These individuals consisted of common people who had come in fear of what to them seemed like a chaotic new order. While a large number of Usap's followers were convinced by various prominent *datu* representing the sultan and the regime to return to their homes, approximately one hundred loyalists remained when American troops finally attacked on January 7, 1905. The *kuta* was taken after severe fight that saw the death of almost everyone in it. Usap was found dead alongside all his men save seven, who finally

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<sup>87</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>88</sup> Official Interpreter. "Jaji, Judge of Anulling Reports to the Governor. August 1, 1904." 1904. F1, C56, Scott Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Official Interpreter. "Salahuddin, alias Alak, of Look, messenger of the governor, reports. Jolo, P.I., August 2, 1904." 1904. F1, C56, Scott Papers.

<sup>90</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. p. 101

<sup>91</sup> Hugh L. Scott. Undated note. F5, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>92</sup> William Wallace. Extract of Telegram from Wallace to the Adjutant General, Department of Mindanao, Zamboanga, P.I. dated January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1903. F1, C56, Scott Papers.

surrendered.<sup>93</sup> Usap's plight, while representing a new direction in the shifting configurations of power in Sulu, is also linked to the chain of actions and reactions that defined the clashes throughout the two decades before it. Patikul's conflict with Kiram, first erupting in 1884, guided the initial alignments in 1903. Kiram's and Indanan's animosity toward Luuk, and their exploitation of circumstances led the exasperated Americans to eliminate what they had been led to believe was the immediate source of instability in Sulu – Hassan and Usap of Luuk.

### **Intrigue against Luuk**

Despite Indanan's apparent animosity against Hassan, their frequent hesitation and reluctance to act at the command of the Americans effectively drew the colonial regime into action. In this sense it seems clear that since Hassan ruled over what was understood to be the most powerful and populous district on the island of Jolo – neither Parang nor the sultan in Maimbung felt they were capable of dealing with him on their own. However, why did Indanan and Kiram want the Americans to act primarily without Tausug help? A clue comes from a statement by Hadji Butu when explaining the situation to Scott a few months later. According to Butu, the Parang chiefs, if they could, would not have attacked the Americans in Luuk because they would not have gotten credit for it. Had it been in Parang, they might have.<sup>94</sup> This is perhaps a manifestation of how the Tausug understood justification for conflict. Had the Americans been in their territory, the offense was against them, and thus they would have had to act. But since Scott and his troops were in Luuk, it was Luuk's obligation to defend themselves. Likewise, whilst Hassan and Luuk were perceived as a threat to Kiram and Indanan, they could not justifiably attack him based on that reason alone. An honourable Tausug leader could only fight to defend himself or his honour.<sup>95</sup> Cattle raiding could be an alternative to war, as well as a provocation towards it, and its prevalence before the Americans may have been aimed at escalating the situation so that Hassan would react in a way that would justify open warfare. In this case, however, it was clearly the Americans who were seeking redress for Hassan's alleged defiance and it was their war to fight. Some involvement by Kiram, Indanan and other *datu* was

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<sup>93</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 102

<sup>94</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>95</sup> Kiefer, *Tausug Armed Conflict*.

given on account of their being American allies, with the pursuit through jungle and a tentative initial attack on the *kuta* having fulfilled this requirement. Compelling Americans to take primary action worked, and they took it. Hadji Butu, in a conversation with Scott a few months later, reveals how Hassan was trapped politically by Indanan. This dialogue suggests Hassan would have been more cooperative than he is often made out to be, had it not been for Indanan's encouragement:

Indanan and Dammang told Hassan: What is the use of getting Biroa? Hassan said: But the Sultan will get angry. – Indanan said: Oh, let him get angry. If he gets angry with you and wants to fight you, he will send for us Parang people, but we won't fight you; if he gets angry with us, he will send for you Look people, but you won't fight us. What is the use then obeying the Sultan. He has only a few Parang people. He cannot hurt anybody. Let us stick together.<sup>96</sup>

Butu continues, indicating that the Sultan, when he was apprised of Indanan's intrigues, blamed the Luuk conflict on him:

They (Parang chiefs) must always cheat somebody. That was what the Sultan told them: Did you help Biroa, as you said you would; God forgive you for your lies. Why did you not help him. You ought to have been arrested with Biroa, for making all that trouble. You could have done it. And you said: We take the Sultan's part. I am pleased after all, that you did not get him, but I am sorry that you made him resist that way. If you had helped him, none of you would be alive now. – Hassan said the Parang people were a lot of cowards. When the Sultan was in Kambing, he told the chiefs: Now Hassan can see for himself; he made fun of the Parang people for not helping Biroa; he did not take my advice not to fight the Americans. There was not one man killed when Biroa was arrested, and here now there are a whole lot of people killed. You chiefs better take an example now and obey the orders of the Governor.<sup>97</sup>

In a 1904 conversation with Scott, Hadji Butu reinforced rumours about a plot to undermine Luuk and its leaders: "All the chiefs that came to you. – They blamed the Parang people for bringing Usap into trouble. Usap had submitted to the Sultan, they said, and the Parang people wanted to fight him yet." Scott in fact acknowledged that he had heard this rumour several times previously: "I have heard that time and time again. What is in this?"<sup>98</sup> It was further alleged that Usap would have surrendered to the sultan had the Parang people accompanying the

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<sup>96</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>97</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."

<sup>98</sup> Official Interpreter. "The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904."



American troops sent out to arrest him were withdrawn. In the end, it was believed that Usap chose not to surrender because he thought the Parang people would capture his *kuta*.<sup>99</sup>

Julkarnain was also revealed to have been spreading an earlier rumour concerning an American expedition to Luuk in January, 1902, which according to him, was for the purpose of destroying Luuk. The sultan, in response, had to make efforts to clarify the issue with the people of Luuk, having sent for Hassan to come to Maimbung. Hassan had later confirmed that he had indeed been given the impression at the time of an aggressive American foray into his territory and may have resulted in the early anxiety and distrust Scott understood as being defiance.<sup>100</sup> Hassan was also at odds with Kiram in what was reportedly a disrespectful fashion. Sulu Governor Hugh L. Scott noted in a 1904 report, that the *panglima* had been known to tell the Sultan directly to “shut up”.<sup>101</sup> Hassan was also notoriously difficult to get in touch with. In a letter to Scott in 1903, Governor of the newly formed Moro Province, Leonard Wood, implied that Hassan had not been receiving messages from the colonial government. In fact it was his frequent non-appearance before American authorities that was to drive the new regime’s frustration at their relative powerlessness in Sulu. On the other hand, as a result of false assurances from other Tausug *datu*, Hassan gained enough confidence to believe that he could successfully defend himself against an unfit sultan and what he saw was his potentially aggressive American ally in Tiange.<sup>102</sup>

Indeed, the conflict with Luuk between 1903 and 1905, is often seen as the beginning of a process of monumental change in Sulu. Michael Hawkins recently exclaimed that this period was: “...the most critical period in the Filipino Muslims’ modern history.”<sup>103</sup> A long look at the Tausug politics, extending from the capture of Tiange by the Spanish in 1876 to the first years of American rule however

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<sup>99</sup> Official Interpreter. “The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904.”

<sup>100</sup> Jamalul Kiram II, H.R.H. “Letter from Kiram to Governor of Jolo. January 12, 1902.” 1902. F2, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>101</sup> Scott. “Report of the Governor of the Sulu District, June 30, 1904.”

<sup>102</sup> Official Interpreter. “The Governor, Hadjis Butus and Abdullah on Various Subjects, May 9, 1904.”

<sup>103</sup> Hawkins. *Making Moros*. P. 5

reveals that, for all its epoch-changing rhetoric, the Americans only stepped into a pre-established role occupied in previous decades by the Spanish. Tausug rivalries, epitomized in this case by the singling out the Luuk chiefs by decades-old factions led by Sultan Kiram II at Maimbung, Maharajah Indanan at Parang, and the brothers Kalbi and Julkarnain in Patikul was the engine that drove events at the beginning of the twentieth century, not the nascent, and still relatively limited American regime.

### **Luuk and the transformation of conflict**

The *panglima* of Luuk are often presented as part of a narrative of resistance, the inevitable nationalists who, unlike other members of the elites, were too proud of independence to accept American impositions. This view makes sense if Hassan and Usap were Moro nationalists. However, that style of thinking, and an awareness of the parameters of a nation-state, made its way into Moro discourse much later and well into the twentieth century. For a nineteenth century Sulu man like Hassan, his politics should be framed within the context of late nineteenth century political strife he had recently lived and fought through. In the absence of this, there can really be no real motive for Hassan to take up arms unless he was put in a situation where he felt he had to. And this was provided when the Americans were compelled to arrest him through the intrigues of Indanan and the Parang chiefs.

Another issue is that Hassan was not actually imposed upon by the regime at the time, and did not become a person of interest for the Americans until he emerged in the historiography as already refusing to appear before the colonial authorities. A popular explanation for how Hassan became a focal point of American military effort was his resistance to the regime's suppression of slavery. Salman suggested that Hassan's conflict with the Americans emanated from their refusal to return his runaway slaves. When the anti-slavery law of 1903 was being enforced, the Panglima's previous issues with this vilified him to the regime.<sup>104</sup> However, according to Constabulary assessments of Sulu, Luuk's wealth was founded on

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<sup>104</sup> Salman. *The embarrassment of slavery*. P. 102

being an agricultural and demographic base. And when slave trading was at its apex in the middle of the nineteenth century, Luuk did not figure as importantly as places like Parang, which on the other hand, sided with the Americans.<sup>105</sup> Although one could argue that agriculture was labour intensive and may have required the use of large numbers of slaves, in fact Luuk's rise came at a time when the availability of new slaves declined as a result of colonial suppression of raiding and cross-border trade. While slaves were still circulated, it was unlikely that Hassan felt he possessed few economic alternatives when that industry was already in the course of being eradicated. As we have seen above, Hassan did not enjoy an amicable relationship with the chiefs in Parang, and was generally seen by elites as an obstacle for the consolidation of power in Sulu. It therefore may be possible that leaders including Kiram and Indanan saw American prosecution of the Biroa issue as an opportunity to finally undermine Luuk, strengthening their position in the lingering shifts of power resulting from the crisis of succession several years prior.

## Conclusions

This look at the internal history of Sulu that straddled, rather than was bifurcated by the transition in colonial regimes, also reveals the true epoch-making contest within Sulu society at the time that affected a fundamental aspect of native politics – the question of just and moral rule over stable, dynastic rule. Sulu's sultan needed to be demonstrably just and morally wise. The succession of two juvenile leaders in the persons of Badaruddin in 1881 and Kiram in 1884 seemed to represent a shift to dynastic considerations –these two candidates having achieved little more in their young lives beyond being descendants of the much beloved Jamalul Kiram I. But the Tausug were divided about this shift, with many powerful *datu* still willing to choose volatility and contestation to ensure the ascension of an experienced and morally just leader, over stability and continuity at the cost of having morally immature juveniles rule. This contest remained unresolved when Spain made way for the United States in 1899, and its lingering re-manifestations dragged the new colonial power into its battles. The American regime initially had to mediate when Patikul and Maimbung leaders were at odds over the taxation of

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<sup>105</sup> Official Interpreter. "Salip Mandangan and his wife Kaparia are brought before the Governor, September 2, 1904."

an island community, and once again when a tribute of pearls traditionally owed to the sultan were sent to Patikul, reigniting memories of recent claims to the throne. Biroa's killing of his slave in the volatile district of Parang however, ultimately drew the American regime into using the force of arms, as its anxiety over being disobeyed in requests to arrest the culprit, Biroa, was channeled by the allies Indanan, Kalbi and Julkarnain toward the destruction their mutual rival, the powerful Hassan of Luuk.

Perhaps Parang and Patikul thought that the clash of their rivals in Luuk and Maimbung, backed by the United States in Tiange, would result in a weakening of the two sides, providing an opportunity to accrue power at their expense. Or they might have thought that it was the sultanate in Maimbung that was going to suffer a defeat they had long sought since the 1880s. Or perhaps they simply wanted to re-direct American frustration and military power against a non-ally and traditional rival and away from themselves. It is, however, evident that some intrigue occurred that conspired to exacerbate the animosity between Luuk, the sultan and the American colonial regime, and that the animosities were ones along the lines established decades earlier in the crisis of succession in the 1880s. I argue, therefore, that the root of these conflicts ultimately stem from the lingering dissatisfaction by Parang and Patikul with Kiram and his family's occupation of the sultanate. The ultimate succession of young rulers and the spurning of their own more capable and mature candidates may have clashed with their leaders' notions of capable and moral government. This led to frequent efforts by the two factions to either displace or disrupt the stability of the sultanate's rule in Maimbung and those of its allies in Tiange. While the American regime would eventually become a focal point of dissatisfaction in its own right, the first half-decade of its rule consisted in essence of reactions to native political currents established over twenty years earlier.

## Chapter 5: Arrest, popular unrest and Bud Dajo

Rising eight hundred metres above the shoreline of the island of Jolo, Bud Dajo is an extinct volcano ten kilometres southeast of the U.S. colonial base at Tiange. The initial gentle slope up the crater suddenly steepens to a sixty-degree slope one hundred and fifty metres from the summit, with the final fifteen metres seemingly vertical. There were only three trails cut up the sides to enter the crater, with the rest of the slopes covered with climbing vines, roots and tree trunks that hang from the cliff. Thirty metres below the rim lies the crater, about one hundred and fifty metres in diameter. The crater floor of ancient volcanic ash is extremely fertile with a generous supply of fresh water. This provided an ideal space to shelter indefinitely and be self-sustaining.<sup>1</sup>

The March, 1906 killing of six hundred Tausug on Bud Dajo has been epitomized in much scholarly and popular discourse as the ultimate clash between the American imperial endeavour and native resistance to colonial overrule. Historians have considered it from a number of perspectives, such as the culmination of frustration against the greater assertiveness of the colonial regime in policies such as taxation, anti-slavery, the relegation of local legal practices,<sup>2</sup> as well as the result of Leonard Wood's eagerness to prove his combat credentials, which were being questioned in Washington at that time.<sup>3</sup> Samuel K. Tan, who is perhaps the most prolific author of Sulu history, directly attributes the outbreak of violence to policies that rode roughshod over Tausug cultural sensitivities:

A large percentage of disturbances during the American period were prompted by vigorous enforcement of government policies which affected Muslim customs and practices. These policies included disarmament, taxation, compulsory military training, compulsory education, the anti-slavery law, and the court system.<sup>4</sup>

While it certainly is accurate to say that culturally myopic policy making on the part of the Americans created dissatisfaction amongst the people of Sulu, it

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<sup>1</sup> Jack McCallum. *Leonard Wood: Rough Rider, Surgeon, Architect of American Imperialism*. (New York, New York University Press: 2006) p. 227

<sup>2</sup> Charles Byler. "Pacifying the Moros: American military government in the Southern Philippines, 1899-1913." *Military Review* 85.3 (2005). P. 43; Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 384.

<sup>3</sup> Jack C. Lane. *Armed Progressive: General Leonard Wood*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, (1978). P. 126

<sup>4</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*. P. 53

represents only a part of the story, and one that continues to privilege the American narrative. It does not fully question the U.S. regime's attempts to 'improve' Sulu, because these policies seemed to focus on key humanitarian improvements such as the abolishment of slavery, taxation needed to fund infrastructure development and eventually restricting the proliferation of weapons in the archipelago. A more locally centred re-examination of the period reveals that a major typhoon as well as the ravages of drought and cholera need to be more closely considered as factors that drove many to desperation, setting up conditions for hysteria, violence and a susceptibility to populist leaders.<sup>5</sup> Tan had touched upon the cultural disconnection between colonial rulers and subjects in his analysis stating that the Tausug had become aware of the '...discriminatory tendency in American policies.'<sup>6</sup> But beyond a supposedly inevitable resistance to the heavy-handed implementation of Leonard Wood's and the new Moro Province administration's policies, an understanding of the internal politics of Sulu and how the American regime fit into this context leading to a new turn in violence can provide fresh insight. Bud Dajo was a battle that represented a phase of increased popular participation escalating from the pattern of what had, only a year before, culminated with the Luuk conflicts with Hassan and Usap.

Fundamental in understanding this new phase is the shift in perception by ordinary Tausug of the new order in Tiange. The way that previous recalcitrant leaders Hassan and Usap from the elite were pursued and what seemed to the Tausug as inconsistency in the administration of justice helped trigger a response strategy that drove many to movement and mobility. This mobility that ultimately led to relocation to mountaintops and places thought to be outside the reach of American authority, in turn, contributed to the American anxiety about the security of their rule and what they understood to be submission and obedience. The result of this disconnection in cultural cues was a renewed impetus to the

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<sup>5</sup> On October 26, the strongest typhoon that had hit Sulu in sixty years caused great damage to houses trees and crops. There were about twenty dead on Jolo Island and about eleven dead on the island of Siasi. According to contemporary reports, this catastrophe combined with drought over the previous months and resulted in a severe lack of food throughout the archipelago. See Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 107

<sup>6</sup> Tan, Samuel K. *Sulu under American military rule, 1899-1913*. M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines, (1968). P. 86

contestation between old dynastic rule, which Americans and their affiliation with Kiram came to represent, and longings for a morally ascendant regime that was increasingly acted upon by commoners and their demagogues.

### **Undermining *datu* authority**

Central to the first decade of United States rule in Sulu was a contradictory approach in dealing with the *kadatuan*. Ostensibly, at the outset of their regime, Americans assured their new wards that they would respect the *datu* and rule through them. But behind this was a disdain for the native style of rule and the dimensions of authority and legitimacy. There was thus an effort to ‘teach’ the Tausug chiefs how to govern ‘properly’. Uncooperative Tausug were shamed before their own peers, publicly removed of power or demoted, making them appear powerless before their followers. This image of the impotence of the *datu* had a distinct impact on the dynamics of Tausug society which Americans did not foresee. The old order was essentially based on the moral personality of the members of the *kadatuan*. When their legitimacy and ‘prowess’ was undermined, this created a social vacuum in addition to a political one. In 1906, Datu Julkarnain complained to Wood that he was losing his prestige over his own people: “In former days I used to have control over the people, but now I do not have control over many of them.”<sup>7</sup> Significantly there was concern amongst the *datu* in the way in which they were being undermined in the exercise of their juridical authority – the most important way in which they could demonstrate their power to their followers. Julkarnain continued:

The people do not respect and fear the chiefs as they used to do, and even before they have been tried by a chief, if the chief calls them up for trial, they appeal before the chief has a chance to try them.<sup>8</sup>

But Wood seemed to perceive that his notion of being “right” was universal. For him, it was a simple matter of reinforcing what he himself understood as being right, and overturning what he himself thought of as being wrong:

Under the new rule, the chiefs will have a right to try their people, but they cannot go and try their people for all sorts of offences. The law prescribes certain

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<sup>7</sup> Official Interpreter. “Conversation with Moros on U.S.C.T. “Sabah” at Jolo, Jolo, P.I, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906.” 1906. *Wood Diary*, C3, Wood Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Official Interpreter. “Conversation on U.S.C.T. “Sabah”, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906.”

offences, and a punishment for these offences. They can try their people, and if they are right the law will sustain them.<sup>9</sup>

Naturally these new rules were American ones and could often be unfamiliar to the Tausug. In fact, it was apparent that the colonial government had much disdain for the *adat* as Wood had earlier commented in his diary that they were indeed of 'little worth'.<sup>10</sup> Indanan tried to explain to Wood how important the personalized authority of the chief was with regard to the stability of Sulu society:

If I am a headman and try a man, and sentence him, and the governor says, "Well Indinan [sic], you have not done right", this man will go home, and the people will not fear me anymore.<sup>11</sup>

Indanan continued by pointing out what he thought was the potentially chaotic impact of this: "The people now do not have the same fear for the chiefs that they used to have."<sup>12</sup> Wood's reply to this was just as condescending and simplistic as his reply to Julkarnain, exposing his inability, or unwillingness, to appreciate the intricacies of Tausug society:

Well, that is why you must be sure that you are right. If Colonel Scott does wrong, and a soldier appeals to me, I will have to turn him, Col. Scott, down. It is not the man who rules, but the principle; whatever is right is going to stand, whether it hits the richest or the poorest man in the island.<sup>13</sup>

There was no way that Tausug chiefs could have simply learned American legal thinking over the course of the period expected, and it seemed inevitable that what Indanan feared would become a widespread reality. When Wood argued that "If we (Moros and Americans) both try to do what is right, and get along together, everything will be all right", Hadji Butu tried to explain that the Moros were unfamiliar with the American legal system and thinking.<sup>14</sup> Wood however, assured the *datu* that eventually all the Tausug will know the law, as if exposure to it would be akin to the revelation of a self-evident truth:

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<sup>9</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>10</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>11</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>12</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>13</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>14</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."



It is only a matter of time when they will know it, if the big chiefs will go to the governor, never mind what two or three think, but always do what the council decides, there will be no more trouble in Jolo.<sup>15</sup>

This exchange epitomizes the disconnection between the American imperialists' understanding of their own society and the Tausug understanding of power. It also articulates the changes in the situation in Sulu over the previous months since the death of Usap. To the Americans, power, government and law were impersonal, and stood on their own. For the Tausug, as we have seen, it was much more personalized, tied to the inherent moral character of the implementer. While Wood seemed to understand, to a certain degree, that this is how the Tausug understood power, which is why he was countering with an emphasis on objectivity, his imperialist chauvinism drove him to dismiss it, and naïvely assume that the mere demonstration of a 'rational' way his society had uncovered can convince the Tausug to abandon their previous ideals.

The problem for the regime however, was that ordinary Tausug did not automatically turn to Americans and the American system once the *datu* were discredited. A comment to Scott by Datu Pangiran of Ubian Island two years earlier in March, 1904 better described how Tausug leaders interpreted the situation where *datu* authority was weakening: "The people of certain islands were supposed to be our followers. Now everyone wants to get big and rule himself."<sup>16</sup> In fact, this undermining of the *datu* did not help establish the legitimacy of the Americans' own regime as not all administrators, including Wood, were able to win the respect and moral stature required in a position of authority. As we have seen, the demonstration of power, such as that exercised by one's soldiers, needed as well to be coupled with the demonstration of juridical equanimity. With the brushing aside by Wood and, on a lesser scale, Scott, of many of the notions of justice espoused by the Tausug, they were doing damage to the aura of morality their Tausug followers were expecting of them. Thus, over the years since the end of the Luuk conflict, the necessary moral quality desired in leadership by the Tausug was eroded in the Americans. It was this disconnection that would eventually result in ambiguity of authority and a perception of the disfunctionality

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<sup>15</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

<sup>16</sup> Official Interpreter. "Datu Pangiran of Tubigdayan, Ubian Island calls on the Governor. Jolo, P.I., March 26, 1904." F8, C55, Scott Papers.

of the American regime in Sulu. This led to a fresh round of instability, insecurity, and hence fear and hysteria as populists exploited rumours.

The Tausug *kadatuan* began to realize that despite early promises of minimum disruption to local ways made during the Bates agreement of 1899, the regime in Tiange would make concerted attempts to make changes in the patterns and practices of Tausug society. It became clear that the Americans initially focused on altering the way that power was expressed and exercised. The meting out of justice, the everyday manifestation of political authority for the Tausug, was transitioning into the impersonal, faceless colonial system that the natives had difficulty appreciating as legitimate. The power and justice exercised by the Americans seemed, to many, unsubtle and offensive to local notions of moral authority and governance. Additionally, there was what seemed to be baffling juridical rulings by governors and their representatives and the seeming over-punishment of Tausug individuals doing what was previously not against the *adat*, or customary law.

### **The credibility gap**

While the native elites were either exhausted by decades of conflict or were gradually being undermined by the inroads of the colonial government, the Americans themselves were frequently unsuccessful in offering themselves up as the new rulers of Sulu. Datu Indanan again explains his understanding of what was happening to Leonard Wood in 1906:

Before the Americans came, the Sultan and the Datus were the rulers of the country, the people used to follow them, but after the Americans came the people had the governor. But these people would not follow the governor, they would not follow the Sultan, they would not follow anybody, so it was necessary that they should be killed.<sup>17</sup>

This quote epitomizes the result of the awkward shifts of power to the population of Sulu. The regime, in the person of the governor (usually either Scott or Wood) was expected to replace Kiram, respect for whom had eroded over the decades of contestation and intrigue. For reasons we are now exploring in this chapter, many what Indanan implies as being ordinary people, also lost confidence in the

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<sup>17</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

governor, and in essence sought to decouple themselves from any of the existing nodes of power.

Some Americans did have a better understanding of what it took to obtain authority in Tausug society and, as we have seen, attempted to incorporate themselves into the native conceptualization of leadership by engaging in their idioms of legitimacy, such as through personalized political relations and juridical activity in local communities. The local knowledge of regional officers like Hugh Scott and Owen Sweet would, however, frequently clashed with and were superceded by those imperialists much more distant from the Muslim Filipinos themselves like Wood in Zamboanga, William H. Taft in Manila and indeed Theodore Roosevelt in Washington. Robert Fulton described the contrast as one that has its roots in differing priorities between Wood and Scott:

Wood viewed himself first and foremost, as a military commander, secondarily, a Governor. He believed his highest obligation to be the unalloyed authority of the U.S. government to make decisions as it (and he) saw fit...Scott had arrived at almost the opposite viewpoint...In Scott's mind, the Moros of Sulu, whether Tausug, Samal, or even the lowly Badjao were his constituency. He had not "gone native", as some of Wood's staff suspected, but believed that the U.S. could only achieve its original mission of peaceful transformation and maintain its authority by demonstrating it was a just, fair and concerned sovereign.<sup>18</sup>

This contrast in approach to the locals between Scott and Wood is epitomized in a letter by Scott to Wood written in late 1905 when Wood as provincial governor found it difficult to understand the lack of cooperation they were getting from the Tausug in apprehending Pala:

You write "that if the Moros are any way our friends I cannot see why the arrest of a man of this sort should cause a serious disturbance in the island if it doesn't simply indicate that our authority there is still open to question." - Pala has many relatives and connections in Talipao, the whole island has been uneasy about the change in currency and now about the cedula - Many see great evils in both these.<sup>19</sup>

Wood's reactions evident in the quote - where his understanding of motives were the only ones that counted - was perhaps characteristic of his tendencies toward militarism and authoritarianism and explains why he often believed the solution

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<sup>18</sup> Robert A. Fulton. *Moroland, 1899-1906: America's First Attempt to Transform an Islamic Society*. Bend: Tumalo Creek Press, (2007). Pp. 240-241

<sup>19</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Letter to General Wood. December 4, 1905." 1905. *General Correspondence*. F3, C36, Wood Papers.

such challenges was to use his troops. Gowing indeed referred to his approach as that of a 'mailed fist'.<sup>20</sup> While Scott seemed to appreciate the fact that troubles in Sulu were the result of a culmination of factors, Wood wanted to reduce them to simple, key causes he could control – and he often concluded that the trouble emanated from lone individuals whose capture by the colonial regime would prevent others from doing likewise. With such inconsistency in styles of governance in the regime's administrators, Tausug could only, for example, associate Scott's good authority with Scott himself, and not with the colonial government as a whole. Additionally, the remoteness and climate of Sulu deterred many officers from seeking posts in that district, and as a result the regime struggled with frequent turnover and attrition in personnel. This would essentially entail for the locals, the re-building of a relationship with the entire regime resulting in a degree of anxiety and insecurity at what they thought was in essence the coming of an unknown new ruler. It is perhaps no small coincidence that confrontations, such as those at Bud Dajo in 1906 and at Bud Bagsak in 1913, occurred when there was a transition in senior personnel – in 1906 Governor of Sulu Hugh Scott had left just before the outbreak of violence, and in 1913, the violence at Bud Bagsak occurred during a six month period where Sulu saw three different governors.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the struggle to gain credibility for all of their own personnel, American Tausug appointees also found it difficult to simply assume the power linked to the authority the colonial government handed to them. As Americans sought replacements for uncooperative, disgraced or dead local leaders, they would appoint new ones based primarily on questions of loyalty and reliability toward the American cause, and not necessarily based on their local acceptability. They assumed that the colonially appointed representative would automatically possess the 'legal' authority and prestige on that alone. Unfortunately however, this was not the case. In early 1904, Haramain, the newly appointed *Panglima* of Pata Island, found it difficult to gain the acceptance of all the local *datu* in his new district. Haramain found it necessary to appeal several times to the colonial government for support against two sub-chiefs and their followers. Eventually, as

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<sup>20</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 449

<sup>21</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 121

a result of their attitudes, the two minor leaders, Tungulan – a religious teacher - and Amil would become fugitives from colonial troops.<sup>22</sup> What we see therefore, between the ordeal against Usap and the confrontation at Bud Dajo, was a shift from the *kadatuan's* conflicts on dynastic matters to one where more non-elites felt they were compelled to taking it upon themselves to find just rulers in their communities. By 1905, the lesser chiefs and fugitive commoners therefore took the mantle as champions of just rule in Sulu from the *kadatuan*. Informal partnership were thus formed between charismatic outlaws and populist leaders who rode a wave of fear and hysteria.

### **Offence and Punishment**

The imposition of the *cedula*, or head tax, did play a role in driving up grassroots tension. The Tausug had rarely ever been taxed before, and there was much commentary about it being against Islam. A 1915 constabulary report described how in 1903, during the governorship of Colonel William Wallace, "...serious trouble broke out in Jolo on account of the Cedula Law, which was bitterly resented by a number of influential chiefs and particularly by the people of Lu-uk"<sup>23</sup>, attributing most of the disruption of the next three years to this, finally culminating in Bud Dajo in 1906. The rhetoric surrounding the escalation of events, while inflammatory, also points to fear at what seemed to the Tausug as the unpredictability and inconsistency of the American regime. Local leaders in other parts of Moro Province being harassed by Wood's troops equally expressed their bewilderment at American actions. Past fugitives had frequently insisted that they could not understand what they had done nothing wrong – Biroa and Usap among them. Scott's report to Wood in as late as December, 1905, relayed assurances that the people on Bud Dajo wanted no trouble and that they were 'good people':

They have all along declared that they did not want to make any trouble, were good people, and only desired to cultivate and in fact had committed no damage heretofore.<sup>24</sup>

The insistence on innocence such as that above was often dismissed by Americans as predictable attempts by outlaws and rebels to conceal guilt. They are often also

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<sup>22</sup> Official Interpreter. "Aboard "Tablas" March 18, 1904." 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. p. 95

<sup>24</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Letter to General Wood. December 4, 1905." *General Correspondence*. F3, C36, Wood Papers.

treated as such by historians. However, in context of the gap in understanding of power and authority between the colonial regime and the people in Sulu, the frequency that Tausug recalcitrants expressed their innocence of wrongdoing may well point to true bewilderment at their criminalization. The Americans seemed to have over-stepped, or at least miss-stepped in their juridical role as stranger kings. It is indeed through their methods of arrest and the punishing of disagreeable native behaviour that the Americans did the most damage to the popular image of their rule in Sulu.

Ordinary Tausug started to see examples of what seemed to them a bewildering exercise of power by local American officers. Prominent in this exercise of power, particularly when Wood was governor, was the demonstration throughout the countryside of the American way of making war – which differed from the more restrained form to which the Tausug had been accustomed. As we have touched upon in an earlier chapter, the importance of population in Southeast Asian societies meant that warfare often involved the careful preservation of life as opposed to focusing on its elimination should it be uncooperative. The end result of Hassan and Usap's resistance, which began as dissent in flight but escalated to armed confrontation and then massacre, had shocked the Tausug. And indeed Datu Julkarnain relayed what he told the people on Bud Dajo to Leonard Wood in the dialogue below:

The people on the hill would not come down, they would not surrender, because they were very proud, they did not want to be treated the way Hati's people were treated, have their guns taken away, and this is why they did not behave the way Hati did.<sup>25</sup>

What the Tausug also found surprising was the effort Americans put into pursuing fugitives. The example of the bewilderment at the vehemence of the pursuit of Biroa after he had killed his slave was discussed in a previous chapter. When Hassan became the target after Biroa, the Parang chiefs insisted on capturing him themselves, partially because of a grudge they had against Hassan and Luuk, and partially because they felt that an American hunt would only turn bloody:

They [the Parang chiefs] requested permission to try and arrest him, alleging that if they should do so he could be captured with less bloodshed than if the

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<sup>25</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

Americans should do it. Permission was at once accorded and warning given that no delay would be tolerated.<sup>26</sup>

A few years later, Kiram attempted to explain to Wood how bloody manhunts and massacres such as that at Bud Dajo were unprecedented in Sulu, and that the American style of war was different and unsuited to dealing with security issues:

There are very few people in Jolo and if a fight like that occurs many times there will be no more people left in Jolo; if there is any trouble in future to let the Moros do the fighting instead of the Americans, but in this case the Moros could not do it.<sup>27</sup>

While the statement above was said after the events at Bud Dajo, it helps illustrate the impression the American mode of total war had made on the Tausug. In fact, in his last meeting with Wood before the American vacated his post as Moro Province governor in 1906, the Sultan attempted to reiterate his conviction that the Americans should not do the law enforcing in Sulu:

It will be a very good idea, if there is any more trouble among the Moros, to let the chiefs and headmen get together and have a conference, and put it down themselves.<sup>28</sup>

Because the tone of these interviews in 1906 were amicable enough, replete with agreement and acknowledgement of Wood's efforts, it seems that the major *datu* of the archipelago had largely agreed with Wood's approach. Herman Hagedorn, Wood's biographer had used these parlays as proof of Tausug support for the general and that Sulu's elite was largely in support.<sup>29</sup> The Tausug, however, were not inclined to articulate grievances to an outgoing commander, and in this context it is significant that reiterations of leaving the Americans out of the process of arresting recalcitrant individuals were so frequent. It is nonetheless clear that the way colonial law was enforced and the method of hunting down fugitives under American rule was generally a new and traumatic experience for Tausug society as a whole and contributed to the anxiety and tension of the period.

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<sup>26</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

<sup>27</sup> Official Interpreter. "Interview with the Sultan of Sulu, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906." 1906. *Wood Diary*, Container 3, Wood Papers.

<sup>28</sup> Official Interpreter. "Interview with the Sultan of Sulu, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906." 1906. *Wood Diary*, Container 3, Wood Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Hermann Hagadorn. *Leonard Wood: A Biography*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, (1931).

## Arrest and incarceration

Much of the credibility of the American regime was undermined in the use of arrest and incarceration in punishing behaviour as benign, in the Tausug eyes, as not showing up for a meeting. Capture and imprisonment was a shameful and extremely serious punishment, whilst dallying was a very light infraction. American calls for the arrest of a chief, such as Hassan or Usap, who didn't appear before a colonial administrator when asked to, seemed to be an overextension of their authority in Tausug eyes, and represented a serious point of friction that produced bloody results. The capture, arrest and imprisonment of delinquent and uncooperative Tausug, as mentioned earlier were an unfamiliar method of imposing state-sanctioned punishment in Sulu. Sanctions against offensive acts in the Tausug *adat* were often limited to the imposition of fines. Capturing, restricting mobility and enclosures were most familiar when concerned with the ownership of livestock or, in human form, slaves. Indeed, of the seven articles in the code of laws recorded by Jamalul Alam in the nineteenth century, and the ten articles of the code during Kiram's reign, any sanction resembling the forced restriction of an individual's freedom of movement usually involved crimes of abduction. Abduction was never justified in these codes, and always favoured the return of a free individual to his or her previous status:

Whoever shall abduct the child of a free man and be found out, shall be fined twenty rolls or peices [sic] (Gajahilaw) of calico (siddip) or its value. The abductor shall return the child.<sup>30</sup>

Only in the cases involving slaves is any freedom of movement restricted, ordinarily in the form of compensation to a victim if the perpetrator cannot return the abductee to the family or the previous owner:

...if the actual abductor or abductors do not return the person or persons abducted, he or she shall be taken in payment thereof.<sup>31</sup>

If the ultimate aim of the abduction was marriage, the new situation could be upheld, if compensation were given to the family of the victim.<sup>32</sup> More serious

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, Lt. Edwin L. *Report on Sulu Moros*. Sept. 23, 1908. Web. Downloaded on November 12, 2012. <<http://archive.org/details/ReportOnSuluMoros>> p. 18

<sup>31</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. p. 18-28

<sup>32</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. p. 21



sanctions, however, were reserved for adultery. Yet despite the gravity with which these crimes were considered, the primary punishment was still a fine:

If adultery is committed with a panglima's wife, the man shall be fined fifty *gajahilaw*, which cannot be exchanged for anything except gold, silver, brass drums or *lantaka*.<sup>33</sup> If unable to pay, the man himself shall become the property of the panglima.<sup>34</sup>

As the status of the woman's husband declined, so did the amount of the fine. The fine for adultery with a maharajah's wife, for example, went down to forty *gajahilaw*. If the adulterer were a slave and the victim a freewoman however, the perpetrator could then become the slave of the victim's husband. If the woman were a slave, the perpetrator would become the slave of the woman's owner. The gravest crime of all was incest, and for this the perpetrators would be killed at sea since their blood split on land would be considered contaminating.<sup>35</sup>

Murder was a lesser crime to adultery, and did not lead to enslavement. The sanctioning for the killing of an individual was often left to be negotiated between the families of the perpetrator and victim, and would normally involve a payment of blood money. In cases where blood money wasn't paid, *rido* would result. If adjudicated by an official of the sultanate, the perpetrator pays a fine to the official in addition to the blood money he or she must pay to the victim's family. The list of Moro laws recorded in a report by Adolf Gunther in 1902, includes the official sanctions for murder and example of which is the following:

Whoever commits murder, shall pay 50 gadji helaus indemnity to the nearest of kin of the murdered...for attempt of murder the indemnity shall be 25 gadji helaus...<sup>36</sup>

The emphasis on fines for serious infractions committed by free men and the restriction of movement reserved for slaves committing crimes provided the context within which the Tausug understood American attempts to capture and incarcerate them. While Americans saw arrest and imprisonment as a matter of course in punishing criminals, the only parallel the Tausug had in their criminal

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<sup>33</sup> A native cannon made of bronze.

<sup>34</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. p. 18-28

<sup>35</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. p. 32

<sup>36</sup> Adolf Gunther. "Moro Laws" *Moro Paper No. 16: Correspondence, Papers and Reports Relating to the Sulu Moros*. Jolo and Manila 1901-1903. In Otley Beyer. *Moro Ethnography Volume III*. Manila, 1918. P. 35

code involved punishments reserved for slaves. When applied to situations where it involved the incarceration of a *datu* for the killing of mere a slave this was outrageously unjust in Tausug eyes. This perceived imbalance in the administration of justice did much to undermine the American regime's credibility.

## Delays

Whilst acts of arrest and incarceration by the U.S. regime represented a source of outrage for many Tausug, what was greatly frustrating from the perspective of the Americans was the frequent dallying and reluctance they experienced when requiring action from the Tausug. Justice in Tausug society was exercised on an individual basis – pursuing compensation for a grievance was typically the responsibility of the aggrieved. When the Americans mounted a Sulu-wide manhunt for Biroa and Hassan, they found it difficult to motivate local leaders to participate because of this lack of individual grievance felt by most of them against the recalcitrants. This is revealed in a report about the battles with Luuk in March, 1904:

Constant effort had been made during three months to cause the Moros to arrest these men themselves but the Moros had no grievance against them – they had never cooperated with the government authorities and did not see why they should do anything for the Americans against their own people.<sup>37</sup>

While passivity during the Luuk conflict greatly frustrated the colonial administrators, such district-wide manhunts by the state were rare occurrences. This build up in American irritation toward this passivity however, came from everyday delays and excuses given, sometimes, to avoid perceived mistreatment by the Americans. This was particularly significant when Tausug chiefs would not come when summoned to explain something Americans found offensive. This in turn was interpreted by Americans as attitudes ranging from either disrespect to defiance, fuelling early anxiety over the stability of their own regime. An early example includes the regular cancellations by Kiram of meetings with John Bates during negotiations over the first treaty between Sulu and the United States. Bates not infrequently, expressed his frustration with these delays as he was, in contrast to the Tausug people he was negotiating with, given deadlines as to the completion

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<sup>37</sup> Scott. "Report from Scott to the Adjutant General March, 1904."

of the treaty.<sup>38</sup> As Kiram went through the rituals of consulting with the *Ruma Bichara*, his council of advisors and prominent *datu*, Bates quickly became impatient with the consequent delays, as is evident in the exchange below:

Hadji Usman. He [the sultan] lets you know that the cause for not answering the letter sooner is because the Sultan would not like his men to say he did everything on his own hook.

General. I am very glad to have such polite messages this morning, and we would like to stay longer, but have not got the time, because this vessel has to go back. I am glad the Sultan is consulting with his *datos*, but I would like him to hurry it up as much as he can.

Secretary. He says you should also remember that this agreement is future of Sultan and also for future welfare of Sultan himself and his people. It is not a small, but a very great thing with them; therefore they want to go slowly with it and consider everything.

General. I do not begrudge them any reasonable time, but I do not want to waste time.<sup>39</sup>

‘Wasting’ time, was a foreign notion to the Tausug. Since time is not quantified, there is no sense that it takes different amounts of it to do the same task, depending on if you hurry or do it deliberately. Tensions over this were evident in U.S. dealings with the Sultan as well as Sulu’s *datu*, reinforcing perceptions of disobedience, which compelled American commanders to punish, which in turn seemed to the Tausug as intolerant and unjust.

Delays in appearing before colonial officials, and the use of excuses relating to health were frequent in correspondence with the Tausug. A more comprehensive survey of Tausug customs several years later revealed practices involving travel put great emphasis on timing and appropriateness that Americans were not aware of. Weather at times, as well as the chance encounter with certain animals could drastically change the auspiciousness of a journey, to the point that it could drive the traveller to turn back and return home.<sup>40</sup> In several cases the excuses would often involve unfitness to travel due to health concerns. Americans frequently doubted these excuses, and saw them either as examples of native indolence in the best cases, and rebellion in the worst ones. But the tone of correspondence from the Americans would generally become more impatient and insistent, to the point

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<sup>38</sup> United States Senate. *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*. P. 45

<sup>39</sup> United States Senate. *Treaty with the Sultan of Sulu*. P. 45

<sup>40</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. p. 41

where ultimatums would be made. In the dialogue below with Kiram, Scott is already at a point of near-exasperation with Hassan:

Scott: You better tell Hassan when you see him on Sunday, to come to me.

Sultan: I am not sure whether he will stop at Maibun (Maimbung) or go right through. It has been a very bad custom in this country that the chiefs come or stay away as they like.

Scott: That will be changed now.

Sultan: I am lenient with my people. If I am not, I would have no subjects left. If I am angry with them, they leave me. Even Colonel Wallace (previous district gov.) has seen that he could do more with kindness.<sup>41</sup>

Scott, in fact, would frequently demand reasons for Hassan's delays, and warned that the Luuk chief was: "...doing something very dangerous by not coming when he is being sent for."<sup>42</sup> While he does identify it as a bad habit, perhaps in deference to the American aversion to delays, Kiram above attempts to advise Scott about leniency with regard to time. These warnings, however, would often be dismissed, and these delays would promptly be interpreted as disobedience. In the anxiety about their still tentative power in Sulu, Americans were increasingly inclined to compel compliance to these summons with force.

From the Tausug point of view, it is easy to understand if it seemed that the imperialists' behaviour was becoming more bewildering and unpredictable. They saw reprimands and punishments being inflicted randomly and severely with the regime seemingly capable of anything, however perfidious. The visit by the Sultan to Manila in 1903 alone triggered near hysteria as it was feared that he would arbitrarily be imprisoned and never allowed to return to Sulu. The sultan's brother Datu Attik was convinced the monarch would be incarcerated and made it known he felt that way, escalating the mood of tension and excitement. The Sultan, however, did return, leaving Attik consequently fearful of punishment by the Americans.<sup>43</sup> Taken in context, however, this episode meant that there was a growing general feeling that someone could be pursued and embarrassed for doing something he or she didn't know was wrong in the first place. This perception of

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<sup>41</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation between the District Governor, Major Scott and the Sultan of Jolo at the governor's office. September 30, 1903." 1903. F6, C55, Scott Papers. See Appendix E.

<sup>42</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation between Scott and the Sultan, September 30, 1903."

<sup>43</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation between Scott and the Sultan, September 30, 1903."

American arbitrariness undermined the regime's legitimacy and fuelled fears of random violence by them.

### **Rumours rhetoric and rebellion**

Americans increasingly, therefore, found themselves having to work through their informants to counteract the spiralling rumours about their actions. In the eyes of the Tausug, Americans were indeed capable of anything, unrestrained by regular moral considerations. This helped lend credibility to the wildest of rumours being circulated: from the intent to tax women and coconuts,<sup>44</sup> to the story that it was the Americans who created the cholera epidemic. What emerged in response by 1905 was a new set of recalcitrant leaders who were markedly different from the elites that led factions in the previous conflicts. They were petty religious leaders and 'prophets' exploiting the currency of anxiety and hysteria against the American regime.

In the years prior to the American arrival there had already been four religious 'prophets' in Sulu who had emerged during times of strife. The first one, known as Namla, was eventually arrested by the Spanish government and imprisoned in Manila. The sultan managed to banish the second one, named Aha from Basilan, before he was succeeded by a woman named Balila. Balila was herself captured and drowned before being followed by a man named Jamluddin who became prominent during the reign of Pulalun in the late nineteenth century. Jamluddin became notorious for an alleged ability to turn his animals into logs although he also possessed impressive business acumen in the cattle trade.<sup>45</sup>

With hysteria growing after Laksamana Usap's rebellion, there was the re-emergence of religious figures, of which two became prominent: Salip Masdali, an Arab, and a Tausug teacher named Tungulan. Masdali gained prominence by allegedly selling Usap 'invincibility' through charms he embedded into that leader's *kuta*. Despite the eventual death of Usap, Masdali continued to gain a following amongst popular radical figures such as Pala and Sahirun who were to lead the

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<sup>44</sup> Undated note, October? 1904. F5, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Official Interpreter. "Salip Sakib, "the oldest man of Jolo", on early history of Jolo, February 3, 1904." F7, C55, Scott Papers.

masses of people to Bud Dajo in late 1905. Tungulan was popularly known as the 'King of the Crocodiles' on Pata Island, Tungulan, where he and an acolyte named Amil, led the rejection of the American appointed Panglima Haramain in 1904.<sup>46</sup> This caused Pata Island, just off the southern coast of Jolo, to remain a place of contentious authority for the regime until Tungulan's demise at the hands of U.S. troops at Bud Talipao a year later.<sup>47</sup>

These religious demagogues knew how to articulate the general insecurity into terms that the average Tausug could grasp and act upon. They played up the Christian, and hence, immoral nature of the U.S. regime, despite assurances by Americans that Islam would not be interfered with under their rule. This in turn bewildered the Americans, as they thought that, from their own understanding of religion, the Tausug were already being accorded the freedom to worship as they wished. Scott perhaps epitomizes the frustration amongst Americans in a passage below written to Leonard Wood:

You will say "of course that is absurd, no one thinks of interfering with their religion!" But if they think so it is just the same to them as if it really is so.<sup>48</sup>

Scott, however understood that it was not always a matter of what the Americans' original intention was but how it would be understood by the people of Sulu themselves. Unfortunately there were too many in Sulu, Manila and Washington who were more like Wood than Scott. Gowing explains the disconnection between colonial ruler and native, pointing out that many policies, despite the imperialists' thinking that they were secular ones, came across to the Tausug as evidently Christian, or at least, non-Islamic.<sup>49</sup> This was the first time that discourse began to emerge about Americans being morally unfit to rule.

The increasing confirmation of the suspicion that Islamic traditions would be interfered with thus triggered a transformation in attitudes toward Americans. It gradually became clear that U.S. colonial administration would not feature nativized rulers, but Christian ones, despite promises to the contrary. To the

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<sup>46</sup> Official Interpreter. "Aboard "Tablas", March 18, 1904. F8, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>47</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 106

<sup>48</sup> Scott. "Letter to General Wood. December 4, 1905." *General Correspondence*. F3, C36, Wood Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 452

Tausug this meant that as Christians, they would seek to subvert Islam in Sulu. An historical *kissa* or epic of Sulu's history articulates the popular perception of the Americans at around the time of Bud Dajo:

*Anduq in Muslim kunuq ku sin tagnaq yattu  
Anduq isab dakulaq Sug Jolo  
Bang in pagparinta nia ma uway tantu  
in Muslim laqung tagnaq Islam umatu.  
Amura in Milikan ba Milikan kunuq  
Miari na pa Sug tuan nang lummuq.  
...minsan sin Milikan dayang ini giyuaq  
diq da isab sila kunuq dayang mabugaq.  
minsan kita magsabal bat diq da bunuqun  
asal da pa Tuhan kita sumangdul saja kita ha biahayaqun*

Oh! The Muslims at that time.  
Oh! Jolo was a big place (to hide),  
if their government is not good.  
The Muslims then, were willing to fight.  
Americans are Americans, they said  
They came to besmirch us.  
...even when the Americans went [to Bud Dajo] (to fight them),  
my dear they were not afraid.  
“Even if we hold our patience in order not to be attacked anyway this time  
we leave it to God's will.”<sup>50</sup>

It is clear from this oral interpretation of the events that the justification to fight the Americans was based on misrule by the Americans, and not the *prima facie* offensiveness of foreigner rule. As discussed in the third chapter, foreignness did not automatically signify one's illegitimacy to rule in Sulu. The notion that the regime 'besmirched' the Tausug, reinforces the role of honour and shame in triggering native animosity against the new regime. This disenchantment was articulated increasingly in religious terms.

The picture we have therefore, is that of a complex series of compounding situations. The inconsistent imperial support of the regime's *datu* in their own communities, the mistreatment and shaming of some via arrest and incarceration resulting in damage to the credibility of regime all in an environment of continued internal rivalry and strife lingering from the last decades of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>50</sup> Kiraq, Jaidi (chanter). "Masa Liabayan (Dain ha Kastilaq pa biahayaqun); From Spanish Time to Present Time". August 21, 1998. Module III. *Philippine Oral Epics*, University Archives System, Ateneo De Manila University. (1998). Web. Accessed 12 February, 2013. <<http://epics.ateneo.edu/epics>>

Finally there was the natural situation, where cholera, rinderpest and a great typhoon seemed to represent the rejection of the status quo by God himself. Indeed, this explanation was offered by Masdali and Tungalan, and the living conditions the Tausug were being forced to endure over the previous years seemed to lend credibility to their preachings.

While their rhetoric agitated their audiences, the prophets themselves were not men of action. It took the emergence of men of action in this period of heightened anxiety to provide the impetus toward violent confrontation with the colonial regime. What Sulu produced in increasingly greater abundance in the ambiguity and chaos of a forced transition from *datu* to colonial rule, were desperados and outlaws. It was the attempted avoidance of arrest by these fugitives that provided the prophets with heroes, as their plights were imbued with moral and religious significance.

### **Fugitives, Religious Leaders and Bud Dajo**

The popular elevation of fugitive figures was fortuitous and connected primarily to the timing of their acts. The religious rhetoric of Masdali and Tungalan gained popular traction by presenting the plights of these escapees as examples of American injustice and what the regime was capable of doing to the rest of Sulu. The first of these new catalysts for confrontation was Pala, originally from Talipao, east of Tiange on the northern coast of Jolo island. He had crossed the Sulu Sea to Tausug communities in Lahud Datu in Sabah, British North Borneo. According to British reports in January 1905, Pala had 'run amuck'<sup>51</sup>, killing several people before fleeing the authorities.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Pala evaded British capture and returned to Jolo Island in reprieve. However, realizing that the Americans intended to cooperate with the British and arrest him, he sought refuge in a *kuta* on Mount Talipao in central Jolo. His actions, initially self-serving and apolitical, would be recast by religious demagogues and ultimately led to the most infamous episode in the early years of American rule in Sulu – the 1906 massacre at Bud Dajo.

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<sup>51</sup> Derived from the Malay 'amok' or suicide attacker. The Philippine equivalent was the Juramentado. There is however, some doubt that Pala was indeed an amok, as amok usually are committed to die in their act. His flight to Sulu contradicts this.

<sup>52</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 104



Pala became a rallying point for dissatisfaction and confusion with the Americans when his ordeal coincided with the imposition of the *cedula* law on January 1, 1905. Many who rejected the new law gathered around him on Bud Talipao.<sup>53</sup> While he was one of many at this time who sought escape from colonial authorities for various violations, the excitement of the international manhunt supplied Masdali and his fellow religious figures such as Adam a compelling story, leading other fugitives to converge at various strongholds around Jolo as well.<sup>54</sup> Hence the makeup of Pala's group was decidedly different from that of Usap's group from just a year earlier. Usap's men were members of his family and other loyal followers from Luuk inherited from the dead Hassan. The people converging on points such as Bud Talipao in 1905 were no longer of a particular faction, but of varied backgrounds from all over Jolo Island. After only a few months, with this group of desperadoes gaining critical mass on Bud Talipao, an additional group of fugitives began to converge on Bud Dajo, a dormant volcano a few kilometres outside of Tiange. Bud Dajo could accommodate more people and offered better natural fortifications and fertile soil in and around its crater for raising crops, and soon began to overshadow Pala and his party on Talipao. Leading the politicizing discourse around this situation was a re-emerged Salip Masdali joined by junior religious teachers Adam and Panglima Imlan. The others in the rich mix of characters included Tungulan, the 'King of the Crocodiles' as well as local folk hero Sahirun and a minor chief from Luuk named Puka Utick.<sup>55</sup>

Americans observed the convergence of people on Talipao and Bud Dajo with a high degree of anxiety. Used to dealing primarily with Kiram and the *kadatuan*, the groups on the two mountains were made up of people whom they had not truly dealt with before, described to them by the *datu* as 'bad people.'<sup>56</sup> While Scott and Wood had reason to worry about what this meant in terms of the legitimacy of the American regime, concerns over the Bud Dajo and Talipao groups as being violent hotbeds of rebellion were perhaps over played. The Tausug strategy of flight from strife and disaster may have been the true tactic in the cases of Buds Talipao and Dajo, and not, as the Americans interpreted it, an attempt to overthrow their

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<sup>53</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 104

<sup>54</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 106

<sup>55</sup> Livingston. *Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*. P. 106

<sup>56</sup> Official Interpreter. "Conversation on U.S.C.T. "Sabah", April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906."

government. In fact it was much an attempt to *avoid* and *escape* the colonial government, as opposed to clashing with it. There did not seem to be much discourse and rhetoric advocating for an attack on or removal of the regime, and much more about defending themselves and acting for their own survival. Much of the inflammatory statements made by the prophets talked about fighting 'to the death' *if* they were attacked. The *kissa* below is an indication of how the rhetoric has been passed down orally in Sulu:

*Hi Sahirun amu tuan dayang magpaguaq,  
Dain ha niat kunuq sin tagnaq,  
Minsan sin Milikan dayang ini giyuaq  
diq da isab sila kunuq dayang mabugaq.  
hi Sairun ini ha Bud Dahuq,  
amuna isab in isug nakalanduq  
nagdara sinapang ba iban pa iruq,  
Diq marapat laqung ku tuan hi Sahirun,  
Siandalan in timbak iban pagkaqun  
...Hi Sahirun amu in bantuq  
Ha Bud Dahuq sia na nakatutug,  
Bang bukun hi Adam ba nakalamud,  
Diq da in Bud Dahuq ba dayang madaquq.  
...Hi Sahirun amu tuan in uway simpil  
...biyunuq sin Christian iban kapil  
Diq sia makapikil bang magsurindil  
mabayaq pa sia tuqud maparang sabil  
...diq minsan makapikil bat magsairulla  
...diq minsan ipasukud tuan dayang in lupaq  
...Hi Sahirun amu ai ganarul  
In pikilan pa Tuhan nia piabuntul  
Naghinang sia sin sabab amu in tarasul  
Minsan kunuq in baran, diq da mhansul  
Diq da in anak apuq mayaq magisku.  
...hi Sahirun miatay raying uway saliq  
uway miatay bunuq ba miatay hapdiq.*

Sahirun was the one who exposed, my dear,  
The intention of the people before,  
Even when the Americans went there (to fight them)  
They were not afraid.  
Sahirun was in Bud Dahuq,  
He was (considered) the bravest  
He brought a gun and a dog,  
Sahirun was invincible,  
He resisted gunfire and abstained from eating food  
...Sahirun is known  
He stayed in Bud Dahuq  
If Adam did not join the enemy,

Bud Dahuq would not have been taken.  
...Sahirun was a person without fear  
...he was attacked by Christians and infidels  
he never thought of surrendering  
his wish was to die for a good cause.  
...he did not think of getting a residence certificate,  
...he did not like his land to be surveyed,  
...Sahirun was invincible,  
he straighten his belief in God,  
he made a saying:  
"Even if my body is pulverized,  
My children will not go to [American] school."  
...Sahirun died unequalled, my Dear,  
he was not killed by his enemies but he died of hunger...<sup>57</sup>

The newly formed Moro Constabulary, supported by a few companies of colonial troops led eventually to the killing of Pala and Peruka Utick on Mount Talipao on May 13, 1905. Pala's sons and others with him in Borneo ran away with their guns, but were captured and brought to the Americans by an increasingly friendly Indanan. This left the Bud Dajo Tausug, led by Salip Masdali, Tungulan and Imlan, to persist on their own. Eventually, however, through the efforts of prominent Tausug such as Kalbi and Julkarnain, several figures, including Salip Masdali, would descend from Bud Dajo and return to their original homes. But a core group, led by Imlan, Adam and Tungulan remained and started planting crops in and around the mountain. This planting may have been another indication that the impulse being exercised by the Tausug on Bud Dajo was one of flight and the founding of a new community they thought was outside the reach of the bewildering and inconsistent American colonial order.

The Tausug lingered on Bud Dajo for the first few months of 1906, since they had originally requested to be allowed to remain until they could harvest the crops they had planted. While some like Adam, left, others, remained. The American discomfort with their presence on the mountain continued as it seemed to be a sore example of the limits of their authority in the archipelago. Reeve, one of the officers under Scott, reported that the Mount Dajo Moros were less of a real threat to local populations than they were as an example of how the Moros could defy American authority. "The greatest danger [he reported] was not so much from the

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<sup>57</sup> Kiraq. "From Spanish Time to Present Time."

depredations or raids that the people on Dajo would make, but from the attitude of the entire Moro People.”<sup>58</sup>

While the justification for this anxiety had been anchored on alleged raids on local villages including the rumoured destruction of a nearby American target range, colonial officials struggled to provide concrete evidence that the Bud Dajo Tausug had actually committed the attacks. To justify the use of troops to forcefully remove the natives on that mountain, reports by the imperialists relied primarily on what the defiant presence on the mountain could symbolize and the disruption it could *potentially* trigger throughout Sulu and Moro province. Hadji Butu, despite being one of the regime’s closest allies, expressed doubt at the alleged depredations committed:

The Dajo people said that they themselves would not steal, but it was reported that they did do so...people from Look [Luuk] and other parts of the country would commit depredations, and steal, and it would be laid on the Dajo people, and that is what they said when they were told to come down from the mountain.<sup>59</sup>

Ultimately, Hugh Scott’s departure for the United States to assume a post at West Point hastened the American assault on the mountain stronghold. While Scott’s influence with the local *datu*, especially Julkarnain, Kalbi, Indanan and Hadji Butu had resulted in previous defections from Bud Dajo, his departure left the inexperienced Captain James H. Reeves in temporary charge of Sulu.<sup>60</sup> It did not take long for him the resort to military action, which he characterized as the: “...cleaning up of Daho...”<sup>61</sup> Within a few days of Scott’s absence, Reeves quickly concluded that the civil authorities (ie: the local Tausug leaders) had failed to enforce the state’s laws: “I went forward with the civil side of the case so far as to make it a clear case wherein the civil authorities have failed, and we can legally call upon the Military to step in and take charge.”<sup>62</sup> The constabulary and the army was thus dispatched to ‘arrest’ the individuals left on Bud Dajo, or to kill them if they resisted.

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<sup>58</sup> McCallum. *Leonard Wood*. p. 227

<sup>59</sup> Official Interpreter. “Conversation on U.S.C.T. “Sabah”, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1906.”

<sup>60</sup> James H. Reeves. “Copy of report of acting District Governor, Sulu District, Jolo, March 1, 1906.” 1906. F1 C37 Wood Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Reeves. “Copy of report of acting District Governor, Sulu District, Jolo, March 1, 1906.”

<sup>62</sup> Reeves. “Copy of report of acting District Governor, Sulu District, Jolo, March 1, 1906.”

Approximately two hundred colonial troops combined from the locally garrisoned sixth infantry and fifty constabulary troops from Mindanao began to converge in Sulu on March 3rd.<sup>63</sup> On the morning of the 5th the trails leading up to the mountain were closed by the soldiers.<sup>64</sup> On March 7th, 1906, Bud Dajo was surrounded and subsequently bombarded from a distance by naval artillery, before a three-pronged attack was initiated to take the crater itself, where the occupants were sheltering.<sup>65</sup> Colonel Joseph W. Duncan, in direct charge of the expedition, moved his troops up the sides of the crater along the three main access routes. For two days, the soldiers and constabulary moved slowly upwards, picking each defender off with rifle fire before capturing each position with bayonets. Artillery was dragged up the slopes with ropes and gunners were commanded to shell the crater as soon as they could set up and take aim.<sup>66</sup> American losses in this stage of the operation numbered eighteen men killed and fifty-two wounded. The crater rim was defended by only a few Moros with rifles, spears knives and stones and was easily overrun by the American troops. Field and Gatling guns were aimed downward at the crater floor and the resulting barrage of shells and bullets produced six hundred dead – everyone there. Governor Wood, who had come to Jolo for the operation, censored all telegrams from Tiange to Manila that described the slaughter.<sup>67</sup> Upon his return to Zamboanga, Wood received a telegram from President Roosevelt praising his achievement at Bud Dajo, which by now had already gained the reputation of being the most fortified position American troops had yet assaulted in the Philippines.

I congratulate you and the officers and men of your command upon the brilliant feat of arms wherein you and they so well upheld the honor of the American flag.<sup>68</sup>

Within a few days, reports emerged that only several weapons were actually found at Bud Dajo, and that a large number of the bodies were those of women and children. The violent assault by the troops jarred even contemporary observers, as

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<sup>63</sup> Joseph W. Duncan. "List appendices accompanying Colonel Duncan's report of engagement with Moro enemy Bud-Dajo, Island of Jolo, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 1906. March 12, 1906." 1906. F8, C217. Wood Papers. P. 2

<sup>64</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. 300

<sup>65</sup> Joseph W. Duncan. "Report of Engagement with the Moro Enemy on Bud-Dajo, Island of Jolo, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, 1906." 1906. F6 C217, Wood Papers. pp. 26-27

<sup>66</sup> McCallum. *Leonard Wood*. p. 227

<sup>67</sup> McCallum. *Leonard Wood*. p. 229

<sup>68</sup> McCallum. *Leonard Wood*. p. 229

a political furore ensued in Washington, with demands for an explanation from Wood for the 'wanton slaughter'. Detailed reports of the deaths, however were already proliferating, and the president's initial congratulations was followed on March 12 by a message from Secretary of War William Howard Taft:

It is charged that there was wanton slaughter Moros, men, women, and children in the fight Mount Dajo; wish you would send me at once all the particulars with respect to this matter, stating exact facts.<sup>69</sup>

Wood's response was a typically imperialist one replete with easy go-to reasons citing the 'fanaticism' and the savage, irrational actions of the occupants of the mountain. The prevalence of *sabilallah* from the onset of the American occupation in Sulu lent much credence to this claim. On March 13, Wood wired his reasons for the prosecution and outcome of the battle to Secretary Taft:

In answer to the Secretary of War's request for information March 12, I was present throughout practically entire action, and inspected top of crater after action was finished. Am convinced that no man, woman or child was wantonly killed. A considerable number of women and children were killed in the fight – number unknown – for the reason that they were actually in the works when assaulted, and were unavoidably killed in the fierce hand to hand fighting which took place in the narrow enclosed spaces. Moro women wore trousers, and were dressed, armed much like the men, and charged with them. The children in many cases used by the men as shields while charging troops. These incidents are much to be regretted, but it must be understood that the Moros one and all were fighting not only as enemies, but religious fanatics, believing Paradise to be their immediate reward if killed in action with Christians. They apparently desired that none be saved. Some of our men, one a hospital steward, were cut up while giving assistance to wounded Moros by the wounded and by those feigning death for the purpose of getting this vengeance. I personally ordered every assistance given wounded Moros, and that food and water should be sent them and medical attendance. In addition, friendly Moros were at once directed to proceed to mountain for this purpose. I do not believe that in this or in any other fight any American soldier wantonly killed a Moro woman or child, or that he ever did it except unavoidably in close action. Action was most desperate and was impossible for men fighting literally for their lives in close quarters to distinguish who would be injured by fire. In all actions against Moros we have begged Moros again and again to fight as men and keep women and children out of it. I assume entire responsibility for action of the troops in every particular, and if any evidence develops in any way bearing out the charges will act at once.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> William Howard Taft. "Cablegram to Wood on March 12, 1906." *Attack on Mount Dajo*. United States Senate Document no. 289. 59<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 1906. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., (1906). p. 3

<sup>70</sup> Leonard Wood. "Extract from Cablegram received at the War Department, March 13, 1906, 9.53 a.m." *Attack on Mount Dajo*. United States Senate Document no. 289. 59<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 1906. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., (1906). pp. 3-4

Despite initial doubts about Wood's tactics and the exploitation of the incident by opposition politicians critical of Wood's rapid promotion at the hands of his close friend President Theodore Roosevelt, the 'fanatics' explanation seemed acceptable enough to effectively silence critics. This explanation did fit comfortably within the American imperialist self-narrative and mission in the Philippines. However, it is clear that the individuals on Dajo were not *sabilallah*, nor were they combatants intent on ousting the American regime. From their perspective, they may have merely been interested in staying at a location where they perceived the regime was absent. The presence of individuals on the top of Bud Dajo as well as on Bud Talipao, was part of a pattern of reaction to disaster that involved relocation and re-establishment of a native community. The rhetoric, the evidence of planting and harvesting, the only marginal number of weapons found in the crater after the attack, and the very limited amount of evidence of actual raiding and disruption are powerful indicators that they were not in fact a direct security threat. The Dajo Tausug were more of an indication of how colonialism and state rule was settling within the perceptions of the Tausug population based on their experience with the Americans – that of a regime without the moral ascendancy to rule.

### **Obstinacy in rationality**

These uprisings against the colonial regime that had, in many Tausug eyes, begun to lose its moral ascendancy, nonetheless failed to force a re-assessment of colonial policy and a reconsideration of Tausug notions of legitimate authority and that authority's moral ascendancy. On the contrary, the imperialists merely concluded that only a few members of Tausug society – the more compliant ones – were 'intelligent' enough to appreciate the gifts of modernity. An excerpt from a letter to a certain Major Slocum from a Captain Oscar Charles is revealing in some of the more extreme ways some imperialists processed the situation amongst Muslim Filipinos:

...The change of currency and the cedula have created unrest; the Moros say they would rather die than pay poll-tax which is against their religion. It seems a shame to have to kill any more Moros, but I suppose civilization has to be shot into them. One would think the severe lesson just administered [sic] would be lasting but these people are savages and treacherous and won't stay civilized after a good beating. In the states the feeling is that once licked means no further trouble but it is not so with these devils. (The Colonel would not use this term, he dubs them gentle Christians). Monday the headmen came in for a conference on starting the cedula

tax; this will give us an index of the real feelings of the Jolo Moros. The Colonel needs a rest and change, he has worked hard and incessantly since his arrival here; I can't do anything with him. Wait until Mrs. Scott drops in on him.<sup>71</sup>

Indeed, imperialists, in their own minds, were never wrong when it came to civilization and rational government, and their low opinion of the Tausug meant that any local notion of legitimacy and justice would be considered of little value. This was a central aspect of America's civilizing ethos that manifested often in situations where they ruled over alien and 'less civilized' peoples. Paul Atwood explains that the assumption was that all tribal and more primitive peoples needed civilizing, and that the Anglo-Saxons were the best suited to doing it. "Should native peoples (or today under American occupation) reject the American enlightening mission, the ultimate sanction was and always has been deadly violence."<sup>72</sup> As the benefits of American civilization were self-evident and obviously superior to that which natives possessed, to imperialists, the rejection of that 'gift' from America was tantamount to ungratefulness. It did not make sense and could only be explained as being the fact that those ungrateful natives were merely too ignorant. Wood himself, for example, dismissed Tausug concerns as "evils" that merely needed correction.<sup>73</sup> This was in essence the manifestation of the imperialists' conviction of their own rationality and the Tausug's own inherent irrationality.

The result however, was that 'reasonable' Tausug would be incorporated into roles within the regime – hybridized and established as go-betweens that connected the colonial state with the locality in Sulu. The 'hard headed' ones – ignorant and primitive individuals more likely coming from the localities, would increasingly be ignored in the hopes that they will eventually follow the example of those who were incorporated. The building of the colonial state would thus continue apace, but increasingly, with less emphasis on the popular participation of the majority of the people of Sulu.

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<sup>71</sup> Oscar J. Charles. "Letter from Capt. Oscar J. Charles to Maj. H.J. Slocum, January 21, 1905." 1905. F2 C56, Scott papers.

<sup>72</sup> Paul L. Atwood. *War and Empire: The American Way of Life*. New York: Pluto Press, 2010. P. 18

<sup>73</sup> Leonard Wood. "Personal Letter from Wood to Scott, January 13, 1904." 1904. Scott Papers, F7, C55.



## Conclusions

The Bud Dajo massacre of 1906 resulted from convergence of aggravating factors that exerted a continued pressure on Sulu society. Natural factors such as the cholera and rinderpest epidemics and a deadly typhoon created strife and anxiety amongst common people, which in turn led to an increase in desperate, transient individuals in rural Sulu. American credibility, however, was undermined by their implementation of that key aspect of regime legitimacy for the Tausug, justice when they sought to arrest and incarcerate Tausug freemen and *datu* for relatively light infractions. Likewise, still anxious at the tentativeness of their regime, Tausug delays and reluctance were swiftly interpreted by Americans as examples of defiance, compelling them to seek to demonstrate their power even more explicitly. This situation was exploited by religious demagogues who used American missteps in attempting to manage the situation as examples of the regime's injustice and moral illegitimacy. The emergence of desperados like Pala provided the catalyst – heroes religious figures like Salip Masdali could use as a popular rallying point, and for the Americans, the convergence of natives around these figures in strongholds on Jolo was evidence that the Tausug were going to rebel against their regime. The armed confrontation this produced on Bud Dajo in March, 1906 became the most notorious between the Tausug and Americans, leading to hundreds of dead Tausug and dozens of casualties amongst the colonial troops.

But it was the bewildering and inconsistent justice in the colonial sphere that truly set the stage for the outbreak of violence at Bud Dajo. With state justice frequently running counter to Tausug notions of equanimity and honourable settlement, many people in Sulu sought to return to the mediation to their *datu*. The American regime, however, had been systematically undermining *datu*, often replacing established ones with ones friendly to the regime, without regard to their personal standing in the local community. This meant that while the colonial state being built by the Americans was becoming more alien and distant, local, traditional justice was also becoming less reliable. But if justice could not be achieved along local native lines, there was a disaster response strategy rooted in the mobile nature of Tausug society. This in essence sought to re-establish a community by finding an alternative source of justice – a charismatic individual unconnected with

the *kadatuan* and the colonial regime, both of whom were losing credibility. Fugitives and outlaws therefore, could become heroes of Tausug society, as they were in pursuit of justice that could not be provided by a distant state, and by a dysfunctional local system. This articulation of the new order resonates to this day. This articulation of fugitives and outlaws as being more than mere miscreants, serving as symbols of resistance to an unjust regime, helped fuel the construction of the prototypical Tausug rebel of the twentieth century. Americans however, did not conclude that their self-inflicted illegitimacy was the problem because it ran counter to their perception of their own civilization's inherent and self-evident superiority. Rejection by the natives could only be explained by the native's ignorance. In response to the tumult of the first decade of American colonial rule in Sulu, the regime would in essence retreat from the locality, and build around the 'ignorant' Tausug in the assumption that the obvious benefits of western modernity would be irresistible.

## Chapter 6: The limits of the colonial state

With the demise of Moro Province in 1913, there was a change in approach by the colonial regime with regard to the local communities in the Sulu archipelago. While the policies of the new civilian-led Department of Mindanao and Sulu, articulated by its new civilian governor Frank Carpenter as a 'policy of attraction', were more humane, they still suffered from the same false assumptions about American civilization suffered by the previous, military government of Moro Province.<sup>1</sup> The assumption remained that the inherent superiority of American modernity would inevitably entice the Tausug into entering the colonial fold. The key to this was to bring them out of ignorance and material want, since it was the lack of education and capitalistic impulse that kept ordinary Tausug from appreciating the appeal of modernity. Modernity thus was built in enclaves – primarily in Tiange, which the Americans referred to as Jolo town. Schools, businesses and infrastructure were invested in this locale and other isolated ports in the archipelago.

As the American regime in Tiange lost its credibility through its missteps in navigating the native political system, the Tausug perpetuated an escape from the colonial state that was more subtle but ultimately more effective and enduring than fighting on mountain *kuta*. The majority of Tausug simply did not participate in the American colonial state in Sulu with a 'modern' legal framework and infrastructure. Inhabitants of town and villages outside of Tiange persisted in their pre-colonial communities with its *datu*-oriented political and social trappings long after the arrival of United States' forces, and beyond its departure. The perception that individual Americans were '*datu*' and even 'sultans' in the native framework allowed the Tausug to sustain their native forms of governance *alongside* that of the colonial state. Whilst the colonial state developed with and for non-Moro participants, the Tausug themselves remained in the sphere of their own local system of governance, linked tentatively to, but primarily apart from the colonial state. In essence, the Tausug of the early twentieth century lived in a parallel-state and a society within a state.

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<sup>1</sup> Sixto Y. Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, (1923). P. 46

Indeed what sustained the gulf between the colonial and native systems was the early and persistent perception by the Tausug that, regardless of the respect they may have had for individual American governors, the colonial state, as an abstract concept, remained both nebulous, unpredictable and as a consequence, untrustworthy. Additionally, with the Americans based primarily in Tiange, which for a generation had already been colonial territory under Spain, there was a physical precedent set for perceiving colonialism as apart from everyday Tausug life. The colonial world was confined behind the walls of Tiange, to be engaged when meeting with its agents – Americans, foreign businessmen, military officials – but escaped when returning to the countryside. Because the Americans physically built their state almost to the exclusion of the majority of Tausug, it remained alien, while native forms of governance remained accessible, familiar and by popular measure, effective.

### **Between the colonial and the local: the hybrid mirage**

Muslim Filipino politicians who had become incorporated in the regime have often been touted as representative of how Sulu had become transformed by the establishment of the American colonial state.<sup>2</sup> The governors of Moro Province and the Department of Mindanao and Sulu produced a generation of Tausug who would become members of the colonial elite. These were the new types of political leader – hybrid politicians who represented a marriage of native identity and colonial modernity. Sixto Orosa, a Christian-Filipino doctor brought to Sulu by the American regime, was the first to celebrate these ‘modern’ politicians, as they were encouraged and supported (and created) by the colonial regime. Orosa himself did much to build the colonial health system in that region, and to gain the trust of many from the Tausug elite.<sup>3</sup> In 1921, in his book on the changes brought about by a colonized Sulu, he showcases model individuals for the regime. This included Datu Tahil, son of Patikul chief Julkarnain, involved in a revolt at Bud Bagsak in 1913, who would become what seemed to be a model transitional figure, becoming a congressman in the colonial state years later.<sup>4</sup> There was Sheik Mustapha, who went from being the Wazir or Prime Minister for Sultan Harun during the

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<sup>2</sup> Abinales. *Making Mindanao*. P. 60

<sup>3</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. Pp. 99-100

<sup>4</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. P. 48

succession crisis of the 1880s, to the supervising teacher for the Department of Mindanao and Sulu under Frank Carpenter.<sup>5</sup>

Dayang Dayang Piandao, adopted by her uncle Kiram II, assumed responsibility for the management of the sultan's estate upon the death of the monarch's mother, Inchy Jamila in 1901. Being a relatively strong-willed, successful financial manager who, in Orosa's assessment, helped the sultan for the better, she was seen as a progressive woman in imperialists' eyes. This is made more significant to imperialists by the fact that she was cloistered within the home, as many elite Tausug women were at the time, until she was twenty eight years old when her stepmother died. Although it was in fact a centuries-established practice for Tausug women to gain much control over the finances of the family – powers and privileges she actually inherited from her step mother, the 'cunning' Inchy Jamila – Piandao nonetheless was seen as an example of what western influences could achieve. Her embrace of "...what is good of others' customs..."<sup>6</sup> despite the fact that this characteristic of the cosmopolitan and mobile precolonial Tausug, made her a symbol of liberality and progress. She was eventually appointed, in 1921, to serve as the colonial regime's agent to encourage Tausug to send their children to American schools.<sup>7</sup>

Tarhata Kiram, another niece turned daughter of Kiram's, was initially held up by imperialists to represent what the new generation of young Tausug would become under the new American order. Born under American rule in 1906, the princess was educated by American teachers in the new colonial schools before she was selected by Governor Frank Carpenter to be sent to the United States to study at the University of Illinois, becoming the first Muslim princess to be educated in the United States.<sup>8</sup> No other family, however, represents the overlap between the sultanic system to the colonial one better than that of Haji Butu, Kiram II's *Maharajah Adinda*, or prime advisor "...of the highest class..."<sup>9</sup> throughout the early

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<sup>5</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. P. 55

<sup>6</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. P. 101-103

<sup>7</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. P. 101-103

<sup>8</sup> Hedjazi and Hedjazi. *The Rise and Fall of the Sulu Islamic Empire*. P. 150

<sup>9</sup> Smith. *Report on the Sulu Moros*. P. 5

part of the American period in Sulu. Orosa saves his highest offers his highest praise for Butu:

Linking all that is good in Sulu traditions with the newer spirit of progress and cooperation, stands the able representative of the people, Hadji Butu.<sup>10</sup>

The intelligent and pragmatic Hadji Butu Abdul Bagi emerged from a family of *Maharajah Adinda* for sultans, dating from the very first, Raja Baginda, the founder of the Sulu sultanate.<sup>11</sup> He served and accompanied Sultan Badarrudin to Mecca in 1882, and when that sultan died, served Harun during the crisis for succession against Kiram. A skillful diplomat and practitioner of realpolitik, Butu remained influential even when Harun fell out of favour with the Spanish, eventually finding a place in Kiram II's council, whom he was serving at the arrival of the Americans.<sup>12</sup> He was an effective and indispensable advisor to Sulu's district governors becoming an important player during the tumultuous first decade of American rule. Butu served in colonial capacities as assistant to various governors, from Wood to Pershing in the Moro Province period, to Carpenter in the Department of Mindanao and Sulu period. Finally on October 13, 1916, Hadji Butu was appointed to the Philippine Senate, representing Sulu and Mindanao.<sup>13</sup> Butu would become the patriarch of the Rasul clan, which would go on to produce several prominent politicians for the Philippine nation state in the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup> Hadji Gulam Rasul, Butu's son, became the Captain of National Guard and followed in his father's footsteps as a national politician.<sup>15</sup> Butu was in fact the first Muslim Filipino to become a Philippine senator. When his grandson, Abraham A. Rasul, who became Philippine ambassador to Saudi Arabia married Santanina Centi Tillah, the honour of having the first female Muslim senator also fell to his family, as Santanina Rasul, became a senator in 1987.

These individuals and their families who had been exposed to, integrated and involved in the workings of the colonial and eventually the Philippine nation state, however, were but a small minority. Beyond this narrow elite, the changes

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<sup>10</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 93

<sup>11</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 93

<sup>12</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 94

<sup>13</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 97

<sup>14</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 49

<sup>15</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 49

brought about by American colonialism barely touched the majority of Tausug. Even amongst these privileged individuals there was inconsistent success in producing the modern, Americanized Muslim Filipino. The son of Julkarnain, Datu Tahil, incorporated into the regime, and appointed a member of provincial board in the mid 1920s, expected eventually to become Governor of Sulu. In 1927, when he was passed over in favour of a rival, he retreated into a *kuta* and held out for weeks in the way that his predecessors had a generation before at Buds Dajo and Talipao.<sup>16</sup> Tarhata Kiram, born into the regime in 1904 and educated in the United States, returned not as the advocate of American modernity, as her mentors had hoped, but immersed herself in her Tausug identity. She re-adopted 'traditional' Tausug attire and became key in the foundational articulation of twentieth century Tausug nationalism. Because of her radical leanings, Tarhata was not given a government post upon her return from the United States, so she instead eloped with Datu Tahil, and participated in his revolt against the government in 1927.<sup>17</sup> Although she seemed to exhibit 'traditional' leanings, Tarhata still became an advocate of modernity and modernization in Sulu, albeit in an emerging nationalist articulation. She was involved in resistance against the Japanese during the Second World War, and worked to promote mechanized farming during the 1950s.<sup>18</sup>

But again, the reality experienced by these few Tausug was not that of the majority of the people of Sulu. Most of the native inhabitants of the archipelago did not participate in the American colonial state throughout its existence. Part of the reason for this was the reliance of the Americans on 'role-modeling' to bring about behaviour changes they felt represented the civilizational improvement of the Tausug. While the intention was to begin with prominent individuals who in turn would influence those on the social ladder that followed them, what resulted instead was that these Tausug 'role models' became a sort third political class *in between* the local and the national. They in the end were not the harbingers of Americanization the imperialists had hoped they would become. Indeed, Abinales points out how in similar fashion Muslim Filipino politicians in Cotabato did not actually serve as representative examples of their changing local communities, but

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<sup>16</sup> Hedjazi and Hedjazi. *The Rise and Fall of the Sulu Islamic Empire*. p. 150

<sup>17</sup> Hedjazi and Hedjazi. *The Rise and Fall of the Sulu Islamic Empire*. p. 150

<sup>18</sup> Hedjazi and Hedjazi. *The Rise and Fall of the Sulu Islamic Empire*. p. 150

became a third type of individual within their society –a bridge between the locality and Manila.<sup>19</sup> As in the case of Tahil and Tarhata, these individuals became adept navigators of the gulf between what was fast becoming two concurrent realities in the Muslim Philippines.

### **Two realities: the Tausug and colonial states**

What helped secure the emergence and continued existence in the twentieth century of these two separate realities begins with the colonial anxiety about security. With the Tausug political ethos embracing state volatility in return for morally-imbued authority, imperialists who emphasized order above all else quickly turned to the security apparatus of their regime. The early concentration of the regime's efforts on security meant that a large number of Tausug would typically be under the suspicion of the colonial state. The governance they did have a stake in and hence trusted remained with the pre-colonial, *datu* system in its local manifestation.

Because their attention was elsewhere, the Americans early on allowed the continued use of local forms of dispute mediation and adjudication by native officials, even mimicking these local forms themselves as nativized rulers. While this, as we have seen, was an effective contingency in establishing their authority early on, what it inadvertently achieved was to reinforce the functioning of *datu* system within but apart from the colonial one. This perpetuated its local legitimacy amongst the Tausug and conversely, the notion that the colonial state was not one they had a stake in. On the other hand, individual Americans could enter the native system, as we have seen, and rule, but only if they demonstrated local notions of legitimacy and moral authority. But what these imperialists assumed when they acquired this influence – that their local pre-eminence meant the acceptance of the colonial state acquiescence to American notions of legitimacy and justice - was in fact misinformed. These American administrators were participating in and perpetuating the native state they were, ironically, attempting to supplant and not the colonial state that they were attempting to build. When they undermined that native system, they also undermined their own legitimacy. And since the 'transformed' and Americanized members of the elite fell into a third

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<sup>19</sup> Abinales. *Making Mindanao*. P. 187



category between the colonial and the local, full and equal participation in the colonial state was largely restricted to non-Tausug. It was not, therefore just the perpetuation of the native system that created the parallel existence of these two realities, but also the fact that the Tausug never gained an effective stake in the colonial, and subsequently, the nation state. Their political and administrative energies were corralled into an agenda largely determined by outsiders – first the Americans, and subsequently, Filipinos from Manila. It was in the increasingly unofficial, locally perpetuated *datu* system that retained much of its pre-colonial character in which the Tausug had full involvement.

### **Moro Province**

The gulf between the colonial state and the local *datu* system began in earnest when the Philippine Commission decided to place Sulu and other Muslim Filipino regions under a formalized military rule in 1903. The decision to create this separate administrative entity from the rest of the civilian-run Philippines came after the Philippine Commission concluded that it would take more effort to transform the Muslim population than it would the Christian ones to the north of the archipelago.<sup>20</sup> Dean C. Worcester, a zoologist from the University of Michigan who spent four years in the Philippines during the Spanish period, was appointed to the Philippine Commission and served as secretary of the interior from 1901 to 1913. With regard to all of the Philippines' non-Christian tribes, his policy, which was to exert a considerable influence in the policy toward Muslim Filipino for two decades, was to emphasize what historian Ralph Thomas summarized as 'separate development' and 'paternalistic direction.' Later his input was critical in the creation of the Bureau of Non-Christian tribes.<sup>21</sup> Worcester's approach aligned relatively well with that of Leonard Wood's vision for the Philippines. Wood had little faith in the ability of the Tausug and other Muslim Filipinos (and Christian Filipinos as well, in fact) to govern effectively on their own. Worcester and Wood's influence prevailed over the formative period of the U.S. colonial state in Muslim areas, to the effect that these subject populations were never provided an

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Parker Willis. *Our Philippine Problem: A Study of American Colonial Policy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, (1905). P. 88

<sup>21</sup> Ralph Benjamin Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino: The Integration of Philippine Muslims, 1917-1946*. University of Pennsylvania, PhD Thesis, (1971). P.9

opportunity to acquire a true sense of having a stake in the colonial and subsequent nation state.<sup>22</sup>

With its capital in Zamboanga on the island of Mindanao, in 1903 various Muslim linguistic groups in the Southern Philippines, which included the Tausug, were therefore amalgamated into what would be called Moro Province. To the Americans, these linguistic groups, which included the Tausug, Samal and Badjao of Sulu, were of a different religion, and consequently were less civilized evidenced by their regions being plagued with internecine rivalries, cattle raids, kidnapping and violent conflict.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the governance of the Moro Province was in the hands of the military meant that there was the likelihood that force would be a viable, and arguably favoured method used in reinforcing the American understanding of modernity amongst 'primitive' peoples. Despite what turned out to be the bloody results of this, after a few years the assessment of the imperialists at the time and later authors such as Gowing and Abinales concluded that Moro Province, by the measures of economic development and internal stability, was a success. This was considered especially true during the time of Moro Province's last governor, Gen. John Pershing, before he was superseded by the civilian Frank Carpenter under the auspices of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu in 1914.<sup>24</sup> Indeed it seemed that with its firm hand, the military had brought about impressive developmental results for Sulu.

Moro Province, however, was not actually intended to be a permanent government. It was a temporary framework by which the Moros could be 'educated, uplifted and civilized' into the general life of the Philippines.<sup>25</sup> The eventual dissolution of Moro Province in late 1913 – ten years after its foundation - came because, it was believed, Pershing and his predecessors Tasker Bliss and Leonard Wood were so successful at 'civilizing' the Moro and thus Moro Province was 'no longer needed'. Indeed much discourse at the time emphasized this message.<sup>26</sup> The measures of success for colonialism in Sulu focused in broad terms

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 16

<sup>23</sup> Willis. *Our Philippine Problem*. P. 88

<sup>24</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 579

<sup>25</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 642

<sup>26</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 579

on pacification, tax collection and the economy, public works, and political education.<sup>27</sup> While the actual participation of the Tausug in these successes was limited, as we shall see below, the imperialists were aware of this and deemed it acceptable under the assumption that the exposure to a superior, rational civilization would inevitably attract and transform the Tausug into modern, Americanized citizens.

### **Colonial economy**

Muslim Filipinos such as the Tausug, in the second decade of the twentieth century thus continued to experience two different orders – the formal and distant colonial one and their own which lingered unofficially. As we have discussed in a previous chapter the participants in Sulu's native economy – the Tausug, Samal and Badjao – were, by the early twentieth century, already crippled by a hundred years of increased restrictions on their traditional inter-coastal trading networks and decades of disease and warfare. The new economic conditions brought about by the colonial regime, however, did not reconstruct this lost trade, but displaced it with the extension of American industrial capital into the archipelago via Manila.<sup>28</sup> Moro Province's successes therefore, were carried out without the Moro population.

The most taunted of these successes was export growth. This certainly increased, particularly when peace had been established.<sup>29</sup> Scott reported on the efforts to develop exports, and the rapid and impressive results they produced, primarily because of the heightened degree of security now provided by the regime:

Every effort is being made to stimulate the export of hemp and copra with gratifying results; there is a monthly increase reported and it is confidentially predicted that the exports this year will be more than double that of the year before. Also the imports are increasing rapidly. This is largely caused by the fact that a man can now enjoy the fruits of his labor because he is protected by the Government from the rapacity of his chiefs and others and has.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Maximo Manguiat Kalaw. *Self-government in the Philippines*. New York: Century Company, (1919). Pp. 122-125; Abinales. *Making Mindanao*. Pp. 18-23; Abinales, Patricio N., and Donna J. Amoroso. *State and Society in the Philippines*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005. P. 119

<sup>28</sup> Hawkins. *Making Moros*. P. 75

<sup>29</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 602

<sup>30</sup> Scott, Hugh L. "Governor's Report to the Secretary of Moro Province, September 3, 1904." F1, C56, Scott papers.

While the ordinary hemp and copra farmer, for example, benefitted from an expansion in export opportunities, he was not necessarily transformed into a modern citizen of the colonial state. More importantly, he was not the *primary* beneficiary of the new economic conditions. The new arrangement of steamer-based, long-distance trade, with the United States, Manila, Hong Kong and Australia relied on colonial industries where Tausug were at a disadvantage. Much of Sulu's export growth and consequent prosperity under the colonial regime centered on the establishment of plantations growing cash crops. It provided the greatest and most immediate area of opportunity for growth since pacification could open up large tracts of land to cultivation. Cultivated land in 1910, amounted to 280 552 hectares, compared to over 9 million hectares was untilled (data for Moro province). While some local Muslim families participated in this expansion, most of these plantations were owned by non-Moros. In 1910, there were 97 major plantation of 100 hectares or more, 61 of which were owned by Americans, followed by 19 belonging to Europeans, five by Chinese and a total of 12 owned by Filipinos, which included both Christian and Moro owners.<sup>31</sup> By 1912, the rapid expansion of plantations meant that their total number was 159, where 66 were owned by Americans, 27 by Europeans, 27 by Chinese and 39 by Filipinos, which again included Christian and Muslim Filipinos.<sup>32</sup> While the greatest increase, percentage wise, was in the amount of plantations owned by Filipinos, the main beneficiaries of this expansion, by a considerable margin, were non-Filipinos. If we were to consider that the total number of Filipino plantations included both Christian and Muslims, the number of Moros benefitting from the building up of their regions under the colonial state was truly minimal.

Another attempt to bring colonial modernity to Sulu would exacerbate the cleavage between the state and its native peoples. Land registration, supposedly intended to help the Tausug, actually disadvantaged them.<sup>33</sup> Prior to the arrival of the Americans, the Tausug practiced a mobile, shifting agriculture, where crops would be planted in an area recently scorched, before moving on to another

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<sup>31</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 603

<sup>32</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 604.

<sup>33</sup> Muktar A. Mohammad Tahir. *Lupah Kamaasan: A Study of the Tausug System of Landownership and Cultivation*. MA Thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines, (1990). P. 3

location when fertility declined after a few years.<sup>34</sup> This movability meant that land ownership was nebulous and centered on the notions of having rights to use that land through local residence, as well as clan or family membership. Local *datu* claimed sovereignty within generally defined borders over which they and their followers had immediate sway, and made efforts to make specific delimitations only over areas of particular value.<sup>35</sup> Hoping to break the hold the *datu* class had over ordinary Tausug, the colonial regime introduced land registration to give commoners absolute title to their own land, as well as opportunities to homestead on previously government-controlled land.<sup>36</sup> This was part of the effort to undermine the *datu* power that, to the Americans, represented the 'feudal' nature of Sulu society. The emphasis of the policy was on permanence, to counter the impermanence of the past. Permanent land holdings, more permanent houses, farms that permanently produced hemp, coconut, and other local crops would ensure that the farmers received were fed better. To this end, Christian Filipino and American settlers were held up as the ideals after which Tausug and other Moros were to reform themselves.<sup>37</sup> These were not individual settlers however, but "...corporate plantations and homesteads..."<sup>38</sup> While some Tausug were chosen to be exemplars of development, as we have seen above, the Americans generally leaned toward Christian American and Filipino economic elites to lead the way in terms of native development and 'integration'.<sup>39</sup>

Yet most Tausug saw no reason to register or seek title for a parcel of land. Many *datu* themselves believed in the strength of their own traditional claims and did not believe colonial government recognition of these claims was necessary. For those *datu* who did manage through the confusing process and paperwork of registration, they claimed theirs and their followers' land, concentrating vast tracts of territory in their names. Christian Filipinos began to claim unregistered territory, to which a Muslim Filipino family might have felt they already had rights. The Tausug as well as other Muslim Filipinos in other regions began to resent this growing encroachment on land, sometimes manifesting these frustrations by

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<sup>34</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. p. 5-6

<sup>35</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 63

<sup>36</sup> Tahlil. *Lupah Kamaasan*. P. 3

<sup>37</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 543

<sup>38</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*. P. 104.

<sup>39</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*. P. 104.

resisting government land survey parties.<sup>40</sup> Some have argued that the rise of Moro nationalists in the late twentieth century was the end result of this dispute over rights to land in Mindanao and Sulu.<sup>41</sup>

There were earnest attempts to rectify limitations to the participation of Muslim Filipinos in a market economy. The Moro Exchanges were the brainchild of Zamboanga's District Governor, Capt. John P. Finley. These permanent markets replaced the temporary ones used traditionally by the Tausug, which would coalesce only on market days.<sup>42</sup> Despite these efforts, the Tausug did not find the types of economic opportunities that were supposed to be on offer for them. The Moro Exchanges came to be dominated by foreigners, such as Chinese and Christian Filipino businessmen, who profited from them the most. In fact, the Moro Exchanges were eventually abolished because they proved to be too susceptible to exploitation by other more literate groups, to the disadvantage of illiterate Moros.<sup>43</sup> By 1910, new schemes started to replace the failed exchanges, but the Tausug remained on the fringe of the colonial state's economic expansion in the south.<sup>44</sup>

Economically, therefore, a new foreign and Christian Filipino business elite, separate and apart from the natives of Sulu, was coalescing around colonial enclaves like Tiange. While this caused some concern, the imperialists were still products of their late nineteenth century capitalist society, and had confidence in the eventual benefits of what they saw was the development of a 'free market', and the tutelary value of example and eventual integration into the western system they thought would spread by its sheer attractiveness.

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 65

<sup>41</sup> Tan. *The Muslim armed struggle in the Philippines*. P. 157

<sup>42</sup> John Finley. "Letter from Dist. Gov. John Finley to Gov. John Pershing, February 10, 1910, Zamboanga, P.I." 1910. Container 279, Pershing Papers, Library of Congress. pp. 1-2

<sup>43</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 616

<sup>44</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 615

## Education

What the imperialists believed was at the vanguard of their tutelage of the next generation of Tausug – American-style schools – were of comparable failure. Throughout the Moro Province period, and in fact, long after civilian government had succeeded it, the state still struggled to bring Tausug children to the new colonial schools.<sup>45</sup> The majority of pupils attending them remained the children of the newly arrived Christian Filipinos sent to Sulu as administrators as part of the regime's process of 'Filipinization.' This is despite the fact that education was, from the onset, an area of emphasis for the Americans. The Military Governor of Jolo, Major C.A. Williams, in as early as 1901, requested Kiram to provide for Wahab, a schoolteacher. This included a building for a schoolhouse, as well as a home for one of the first western-style teachers and his family to come to Jolo. The arrangements, ideally, (and more economically, as the author points out) were to be within the schoolhouse itself. Williams went on to explain the importance of colonial education for young Moro scholars, epitomizing how the U.S. colonial mission was embodied in the building of western-style schools:

...for the prosperous future of the Moro people depends very much on their not allowing other people to excel them in knowledge of the great world and its business and social affairs. This knowledge can be obtained by learning to read and write as well as by travel and association.<sup>46</sup>

Here Williams articulates the widely held belief among imperialists that American education and the simple exposure to 'modernity' embodied in the people they associated with through the education system would 'improve' Muslim Filipinos. Williams moreover expressed the hope that the Sultan would explain the importance of this education to his people, exemplifying as well the reliance of the regime on the 'conversion' of members of the elite.<sup>47</sup>

This misplaced faith in the inherent attractiveness of colonial modernity inevitably resulted in disappointment. Williams' successor, Col. William Wallace, like his predecessor, expressed concern to the Sultan about low attendance at the newly

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<sup>45</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 586

<sup>46</sup> C.A. Williams. "Letter to Sultan of Jolo from Major C.A. Williams. October 8, 1901." 1901. F2, C55, Scott papers.

<sup>47</sup> Williams. "Letter to Sultan of Jolo from Major C.A. Williams. October 8, 1901."

established American school in Tiange. He had discovered that only eight or nine boys were attending, and not even regularly. The teacher Williams had requested arrangements for, Sheik Abdul Wahab, was according to Wallace, being paid liberally by the U.S. to teach the children, and was hardly being utilized.<sup>48</sup> In the same letter, Wallace tried to explain to Kiram why it was essential that the Tausug be educated in American knowledge:

The sultan knows how very ignorant and in need of education his people are. There are few people in the world to-day who do not surpass the Moros in knowledge. To teach the boys the American language is, alone, a great benefit to them; this language is understood in all parts of the world, wherever they may happen to go, and if they can read the American language they are able to inform themselves and acquire knowledge of the world, which every intelligent being should have.<sup>49</sup>

Wallace then requested that the Sultan issue an order to his people compelling them to send their boys to the school. This however, had minimal effect. The next district governor for Sulu contended with the same problem. A few years later, as data on school enrolments indicated that attendees were mostly Christian Filipinos, it became a frequent area of frustration for the Americans. A comment from Governor Hugh Scott's report in 1905 illustrates the growing urgency with which Sulu's governors sought to build the infrastructure in which to educate the Tausug. It also reveals the growing bewilderment at why people would turn down the opportunity to gain such inherently beneficial western knowledge:

Two schools are now in operation in Jolo, one for boys and one for girls, also a school in Siassi and one in Bongao. Many more schools for the teaching of English are needed throughout the archipelago, if any effect is to be made in the way of educating the Moros. They are needed most especially in Maibun. Parang, Look, Taglibi all on Jolo Island.<sup>50</sup>

A year later, however, Scott expressed disappointment at what little gain had been made in convincing local families to sending their children to the schools:

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<sup>48</sup> William Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Kiram. March 18, 1902." 1902. F4, C55, Scott Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Wallace. "Letter from Wallace to Kiram. March 18, 1902."

<sup>50</sup> Hugh L. Scott. "Governor's Report to the Secretary of Moro Province, September 3, 1904." 1904. F1, C56, Scott papers.



The great portion of the scholars in the Jolo schools are Filipinos and Chinese, and so far as I now see but little result is being gained in the way of education of the Moros.<sup>51</sup>

Ten years later, in 1914, the newly appointed Department of Mindanao and Sulu governor Frank Carpenter still considered lack of attendance at schools a significant shortcoming of the colonial government. He requested that funding for schools be sourced from outside the department for the first time, instead of relying on revenues from within it, as was the case during the Moro Province period. Things were no different in 1917, when Carpenter requested another increase in funding from the Philippine Legislature to support primary and secondary education in Mindanao and Sulu. This request was granted, and the funds were used to open additional free primary schools as well as the hiring of additional native teachers. Despite government training of Muslim teachers, Christian teachers were frequently deemed more qualified and they primarily were the ones to teach in the schools in Muslim provinces.<sup>52</sup>

In 1904, schools in Moro Province enrolled just over 2000 students out of a Muslim Filipino population of half a million. By the end of military rule in 1913, enrollment in these had grown to just over 7568 students. These numbers, however, represent all enrollments, including foreign and Christian Filipino students. The granulated 1913 number includes 5111 Christian Filipino students, and only 1825 Moro students, 525 Pagan, 79 Chinese and Japanese, 24 American and 4 Spanish. Muslim Filipino children represented less than half of the school attendees – a minority in a region in which they were still the majority.<sup>53</sup> With the additional funding allocated in 1917, attendance had grown to 16 114 in 1918.<sup>54</sup> But growth was not a consistent result, as the following decade saw a five-year decline in attendance in non-Christian schools. A 1927 report attributed this primarily to the: “...disinclination on the part of the non-Christian parents, especially the Moros, to send their children voluntarily to school...”<sup>55</sup> Funding was

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<sup>51</sup> Hugh L. Scott. “District Governor of Sulu, report of July 6, 1905.” 1905. F4, C56, Scott Papers. P. 9

<sup>52</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 170

<sup>53</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 586

<sup>54</sup> Kalaw. *Self-government in the Philippines*. P. 114

<sup>55</sup> Eugene A. Gilmore. “Report of the Governor General, February 29, 1928.” House Document No. 325. *Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands 1927*. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1928). P. 2

identified as the constant issue, as governments over Mindanao and Sulu frequently struggled with the lack thereof to pursue what they believed was the necessary degree of expansion of schools.

The limited number of schools was not, however, the primary reason for the unpopularity of schools amongst Muslim Filipinos. The imperialists' assumption that the simple availability of western education and belief in the appeals of modernity would automatically attract native attendees proved to be misplaced. The curriculum made learning English a top priority,<sup>56</sup> but also included subjects such as personal hygiene, mathematics, home economics and agricultural methods.<sup>57</sup> This was hardly a curriculum that led to political, social or economic empowerment, and later authors such as Gowing criticized the schools for placing too much focus on what essentially amounted to acting and dressing like Americans, with little emphasis on teaching the '...science of self-government.'<sup>58</sup> It makes one wonder, as well, whether a subject focused on personal hygiene was less about empowering Muslim Filipinos than about making them less offensive in appearance to Americans. The impracticality of the schools for the Tausug led to their reluctance to send their children to them throughout American rule.

Despite the long line of governors in Sulu who were all unable to attract Tausug families to their schools, Americans remained reluctant to re-examine their educational approach because it meant a reconsideration of the tutelary ethos of their empire. Faith in the appeal of American modernity had to remain unassailable, therefore, the problem, for the imperialists, had to lie in Tausug attitudes. The reconsideration of the curriculum to appeal more to Tausug values was beyond question. John Pershing, the last governor of the Moro Province was a staunch advocate of the separation of church and state and was vehemently opposed to the teaching of Islam in schools. As with other imperialists, he believed in the role of the schools in the social evolution of the Tausug and the teaching of American mores and customs were an essential part of their 'improvement':

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<sup>56</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 555

<sup>57</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 170

<sup>58</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 595

It has been seriously suggested that Islamic preceptors be brought into the Province to teach Mohammedanism through the medium of the public schools. That such a radical departure from the theory of independence of the public school system should be proposed is almost beyond belief...The provincial government could not consistently approve an plan for the propagation of Mohammedanism through the prostitution of the public schools.<sup>59</sup>

To the Tausug, this inevitably meant the rejection of their Muslim-based identity. Gowing explains that it was this that prompted the broader Moro discomfort with colonial schools.<sup>60</sup> In fact in 1920, there was a Tausug petition to the Director of the Bureau of Education to excuse boys from attending colonial schools during the planting or harvest season, as well as during times when the boys could be used in other ways in which local families thought more useful and productive.<sup>61</sup> For the Tausug, even at their most benign the schools were an imposition on what they felt was their ordinary life pattern. In a sense having their children attend the schools was a concession, or a favour to the Americans because it made the new overlords happy. The schools were far from being the irresistible windows to the wider rational world that they Americans thought they were.

In fact for some ordinary Tausug, schools could even be part of the unpredictable, intimidating and arbitrary colonial state. Efforts at their most benign, continued to focus on building more schools, training more teachers, and promoting them through newspapers the Tausug did not read.<sup>62</sup> Frustration at the lack of impact these efforts to 'sell' western education had on the Tausug, at its worst, led to efforts to 'force' modern knowledge upon them, as the incident involving a local religious teacher named Hatib Sihaban demonstrates. In 1920, the opening of a school at Sapa Malaum on Pata Island, off the southern coast of Jolo, caused such despair that local inhabitants felt compelled to 'protecting' their children from being forced into them. They rallied around Hatib Sihaban, who himself was rumoured to have had a personal grievance against an officer of the Constabulary.<sup>63</sup> Regardless of Sihaban's own motives, fear of having their children 'stolen' for the colonial schools was very real. When a native policeman from the

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<sup>59</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 594

<sup>60</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 594

<sup>61</sup> Thomas, *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 53

<sup>62</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. P. 588-593

<sup>63</sup> Ole Waloe. Letter to C.E. Nathorst from O. Waloe. January 21, 1921. F6, C217, Wood Papers.

force sent to contend with the group was captured, he was viciously killed and hacked to pieces. When explaining the act to the authorities, Sihaban's people exhibited their own desperate fear of losing their children to the authorities:

We asked them why they killed Policeman Hadjilani and they answered us, because Hadjilani was coming with the soldiers to catch their children in order to be put in school...<sup>64</sup>

With about thirty men and women and an equal number of children, Sihaban built a *kuta* around his house and few neighbouring ones. After the usual ritual of 'negotiating' for the surrender of the occupants, the Constabulary soldiers proceeded to kill the occupants, resulting in the death of all fourteen of the men, eleven of the women, and eight children. All of these deaths were allegedly in response to their 'attacking' the constabulary forces. In the aftermath, however, only spears and knives were found in the enclosure, and not a single firearm. A letter written in 1921 from the Chief of Constabulary reveals the wider extent to which the resort to force of this type was being taken in the Muslim regions of the Philippines:

It is thought that the Constabulary of your district have interested themselves unnecessarily in the enforcement of public school attendance. This has brought about a lot of trouble and the killing of innocent, ignorant Moros who, according to their religion, act in good faith whatever their shortcomings may be. Lanao and Sulu have especially been the scenes of these seemingly unwarranted killings. If persuasion and explanation showing the Moros the advantages of a school education do not bring about the desired result, surely force will not do so.<sup>65</sup>

The Chief of Constabulary above reveals the magnitude of the struggle to convince the Tausug of the relevance of colonial education. Indeed more than twenty years after their first arrival in Sulu, they were still at the stage of merely trying to establish the school system in communities around the archipelago. This gateway to their colonial, 'modern' world thus being so unappealing and even at times repellant, the Americans failed once again to bridge the gap to the local, and to the Tausug's more meaningful non-colonial world, resulting in the continued cleavage between the two.

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<sup>64</sup> Pastor C. Soriano. "Hatib Sibahan's band, killing of. Report from Commanding Officer, Asturias Barracks, Jolo to Adjutant, Philippine Constabulary, Manila. Jolo, December 10, 1920." F6, C217, Wood Papers. P. 3

<sup>65</sup> C.E. Nathorst. "Enforcement of school attendance." Letter from Chief of Constabulary to Ole Waloe, Commanding Officer, District of Mindanao and Sulu, September 8, 1921." F6, C217. Wood Papers.

## Health and hygiene

Hospitals and 'modern' medicine were touted as important benefits of U.S. colonial rule that often accompanied discourse about the benefits of scientific knowledge. Haji Butu was described by Orosa as the first prominent Tausug to have become a believer in western medicine, after being treated successfully by a Filipino Christian doctor (presumably Orosa himself). Butu subsequently sought to convince more of his people to trust in American medicine and Christian doctors, thus ensuring that the first hospital in Sulu at Tiange survived.<sup>66</sup>

Health and sanitation was part of the 'scientific' value of American rule, although was often informed by racialized perceptions of clean and dirty, civilization and primitiveness. Focused primarily on hygiene, American efforts sought to 'strengthen' the Filipino race, '...refashioning Filipino bodies and social life...' as part of the civilizing process.<sup>67</sup> Natives were often seen as filthy and thus had to be 'cleaned'; cleanliness being a quick and immediate outcome of civilizing influences. A good portion of the curriculum in Sulu colonial schools involved lessons on 'modern' hygiene.<sup>68</sup>

The notion of the unhygienic native made its way into analyses of the causes of disease in the Philippines. Two sets of diseases frequently brought about by unsanitary conditions, received different analyses considering that one primarily ailed Americans and the other natives. Since diarrhea and dysentery plagued Europeans and Americans more than locals, the cause of this was attributed to the climate which:

...interferes with the process of digestion, and unless one be particularly prudent with regard to food, the time and place of taking, etc., he is sure, sooner or later, to have an attack on stomach trouble.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Orosa. *The Sulu archipelago and its people*. p. 99-100

<sup>67</sup> Anderson, Warwick. *Colonial pathologies: American tropical medicine, race, and hygiene in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, (2006). P. 1

<sup>68</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 170

<sup>69</sup> War Department. *Annual Report: Report of the Philippine Commission*, Volume 1. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1900). P. 161

Natives however, were responsible for what troubled them. Beriberi, a sickness brought about by malnutrition, prevalent in 1900 among the Filipinos, was attributed to culture - their unsanitary living conditions and general uncleanness:

It has been believed that [Beriberi] has to do with unfavorable hygienic conditions, particularly with conditions of squalor, and conditions under which the food is improper in kind and insufficient in amount...Among the natives it is undoubtedly a very serious disease. It is apparently constantly present...but it is apparently a disease Europeans need fear very little if conditions of hygiene are favorable.<sup>70</sup>

The 1900 Report of the Philippine Commission commented that the Samal of Sulu were: "...by nature dirty, proud, inconstant, very parsimonious in giving and disposed to talk and fritter away time."<sup>71</sup> Vic Hurley, who had interviewed U.S. veterans of Sulu for a book on the Moros steeped in colonial notions described the popular early twentieth century American image of the Moro as being: "...a slightly grimy individual with a bad reputation."<sup>72</sup> Pershing himself believed that the Moros were naturally dirty and needed to be forced to be clean and hence 'civilized'. Little did he know that Islam emphasized cleanliness and he wouldn't have had to force them.<sup>73</sup>

The regime set up medical dispensaries distributing modern medicine such as quinine for malaria. They also distributed information on the 'proper' care of newborn infants.<sup>74</sup> Under these misguided premises, policies that actually were supposed to impact the Tausug in their everyday lives were, unpopular at worst, redundant at best. Moro Province's second governor, Tasker Bliss, certainly saw the cleaning of the Moros and their country as affecting the size of its population:

With the complete stoppage of intertribal wars, with the introduction of sanitary ideas, with the building of better houses, the wearing of better clothes, the eating of better food, which will come as security and prosperity increase, there will be a great increase in the number of inhabitants. This has been the history of every country in the East which the white man has successfully governed and it will be the history of Mindanao.<sup>75</sup>

When Muslim Filipinos were not receptive to some of these ideas, as with the schools, it was not, for the imperialists, the content of the policy or the mode of

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<sup>70</sup> War Department. *Report of the Philippine Commission*. P. 160

<sup>71</sup> War Department. *Report of the Philippine Commission*. P. 375

<sup>72</sup> Hurley. *Swish of the Kris*. In Author's note, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 598.

<sup>74</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 596-597.

<sup>75</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 544-545

delivery that were seen as the problem, but the Moros themselves. Their backwardness made them resistant to the gift of modernity, which all too often, had to be introduced via force, as indicated here by Pershing:

The Moro does not take naturally to cleanliness, but it must be thrust upon him. Recourse to arrest and imprisonment is often necessary to enforce sanitary rules among the uncivilized population. It is a very urgent measure and will be vigorously pushed forward even though it does not at first meet with full approval of the natives.<sup>76</sup>

The implementation of health and sanitation once again fell to the military, who enforced the regime's policy with a heavy hand. The troops in Sulu conducted invasive house-to-house inspections to "...secure cleanliness..."<sup>77</sup> Based on the results of these, the 1901 Report of the Philippine Commission claimed that: "The health conditions on Jolo are better than ever before" as a testament to the effectiveness of being firm with the Moros.<sup>78</sup> While producing immediate results to impress audiences in Manila and Washington, the long term impact was to help cement a one-dimensional, coercion-based image of the state apparatus to the people of Sulu. Indeed, despite the impact of health education and policy on the minds of the elites, the isolation of hospitals in Sulu from most of its inhabitants ensured that these were of limited impact on their everyday lives. The way that health policy did interact with them was through the arm of the military, further reducing the image of the state, in the eyes of ordinary Tausug, to its security and coercive elements.

### **Infrastructure**

The physical evidence of the colonial state in Sulu in the form of infrastructure would frequently suffer setbacks, weakening the claim that the American colonial impact went far beyond the walls of Tiange. Whilst Tiange saw some initial investment in the building and maintenance of marketplaces, the modernizing of port facilities etc., infrastructure of direct benefit to the Tausug, was slow to develop. Road building, for example, was extremely limited in the rest of the archipelago outside of colonial enclaves. Even as late as the 1920s did Sulu still suffer from a shortage of quality roads. As late as in 1927, Sulu Governor Carl M.

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<sup>76</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 597-598

<sup>77</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 86

<sup>78</sup> War Dept. "Interview with Sweet, March 28, 1901." P. 86

Moore was making a case for the development of schools and roads. Appearing in his annual report for 1927, his plea seems to suggest that these two aspects of colonial rule – roads and schools – were still works in progress, a quarter century after they were first advocated by Williams and Scott at the start of the Moro Province era:

Roads and Schools constitute the two greatest civilizing influences. A persistent and consistent drive at these two things will, in time, so change the minds and ideas of the people that of their own initiative they will solve all other problems. All human progress is a history of ideas that have moved and controlled the acts of men. When we have created that state of mind, largely thru [sic] the influence of roads and schools, that stands for law and order and good government, all other problems will take care of themselves.<sup>79</sup>

In earlier years under Pershing many Muslim Filipinos throughout Moro Province were required to volunteer annually to build roads through their districts.<sup>80</sup>

Because of this pressure as well as the reliance of colonial troops and constabulary on the use of roads, they came to be associated with military repression, their building thus connected to overt efforts by the colonial government to gain control over people in the interior. This merely incited individuals such as Datu Sabtal who, as a result of that policy in 1913, retreated with a handful of his men into a *kuta* on Bud Talipao in defiance of having to pay this road tax. This then required the forcible removal of Sabtal from the *kuta*, and his exposure to the state institution he, as a Tausug, had become most familiar with – the military and police forces.<sup>81</sup>

The American regime for many ordinary Tausug thus remained spatially defined and limited in large part to Tiange, extending in thin lines via a small network of military roads. It was a state a Tausug could encounter physically and then leave, in much the same way he or she could the Spanish enclaves and the earlier zones of control of Sulu's sultans and *datu*. Claims by the imperialists that they had established a more comprehensive presence are undermined when the extent to which the infrastructure of the state was experienced by the native population. Just as the economy, education, health and hygiene was built in Sulu out of their reach,

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<sup>79</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 170

<sup>80</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 582

<sup>81</sup> Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 583



so too were the buildings and roads of the colonial state not for the natives of that archipelago.

### **The security apparatus, colonial demi-rule and the Tausug parallel-state**

A major preoccupation throughout the years of American rule became that of ensuring the effectiveness of the security apparatus as the regime attempted to maintain control of the lingering volatility of internal Tausug politics. While the first thirteen years of American rule was by the military, gradually, as a civilian government eventually took over, the development of a regional police force became a priority. The Moro constabulary was an American-led native force created in June 1904 by General Wood and Colonel Harbord.<sup>82</sup> Despite being based in Cotabato, in a region inhabited by Maguindanao Moros, the force was used throughout Moro Province, including Sulu. In fact it was the primary force used in most of the unrest in Sulu for the next twenty years.<sup>83</sup> Modeled on the Philippine Constabulary in the Christian provinces, by 1906 it had become a key participant in punitive expeditions, being a large contingent of the forces that suppressed the Tausug on Bud Dajo. The constabulary nonetheless remained the institution that had the greatest interaction with the Tausug, as anxiety about security ensured visible patrols and presence was maintained throughout most of the American colonial period. The impact of the regime's emphasis on the Constabulary lingered throughout the twentieth century. Kiefer, in the 1960s observed the long-term results of this approach to governing Sulu:

Apart from the sporadic health and immunization services, land survey and title registration the average rural Tausug has contact with the Philippine government primarily through the Constabulary and the skeleton Philippine legal institutions which are overlaid upon the traditional legal system.<sup>84</sup>

The constabulary was, for most people in Sulu, the most visible and active agent of the state. Such state of affairs in the 1960s was a pattern set at the very beginning of American colonial rule. In fact John R. White, Senior Inspector the Moro Constabulary in 1904, asserted in 1928 that:

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<sup>82</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. ix

<sup>83</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. ix

<sup>84</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 15-16

For fifteen years there was no department of the Insular Government more influential and efficient than the Constabulary. With the change of ideals and policies that came in with the Harrison administration of the Philippines, it was almost the only bureau that preserved the traditions of his predecessor and carried on with the impetus of earlier days.<sup>85</sup>

As we have seen in the previous examples in this chapter, the security arm of the state, here represented by the Moro Constabulary, was all too often the fallback option in the implementation of colonial policy. In becoming the go-to solution in difficult interactions with the Tausug at the turn of the twentieth century, the Americans inadvertently went about setting a relationship between the Philippine state and its southwestern periphery that would last for more than one hundred years. Initially believed to require 600 troops to maintain,<sup>86</sup> the American soldiers that arrived in Tiange on May 19, 1899 numbered 19 officers and 733 enlisted men.<sup>87</sup> By the time the constabulary was established to replace the troops, the numbers throughout American rule varied between 1500 and 2000 men.<sup>88</sup> In establishing this situation, however, the Americans did not replace or fully transform the Tausug political system – they built around it, imposing only a skeletal framework of the colonial state in the form of a security apparatus, characterizing what can be described as colonial demi-rule. The native state, centering on the *datu* political system, continued to serve its civic functions in terms of justice and governance as what was in essence a para-state in an *informal* and almost unseen capacity. The colonial state served its functions more comprehensively for Americans, other foreigners and the Christian Filipinos primarily based in Tiange. Despite this pervasive reality, however, there did were some examples, however, of administrators who attempted to bridge the gap between colonial state and the persistent Tausug parallel-state.

### **Justice and legitimacy**

Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby, a physician of Syrian origins, came to the Philippines with the United States army as a military doctor in 1900.<sup>89</sup> His fluency in Arabic

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<sup>85</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. ix

<sup>86</sup> Elwell. S. Otis. "Message from Maj. Gen. E.S. Otis to Adm. George Dewey, May 14, 1899." *Annual Report of the War Department: Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army*. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1899). P. 132

<sup>87</sup> Otis. "Message from Maj. Gen. E.S. Otis to Adm. George Dewey, May 14, 1899." P. 132

<sup>88</sup> White. *Bullets and Bolos*. P. ix

<sup>89</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P.11

facilitated his acquisition of the Tausug language. He was appointed to the position of Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes and Agent for Moro Affairs before becoming the first superintendent of Schools in Moro Province, where he also served as a member of the Legislative Council in Zamboanga.<sup>90</sup> Saleeby's language abilities allowed him to study native written records in Sulu and to interact more effectively with Muslim leaders. This gained him much respect and appreciation from the Tausug. Of the American policymakers, he went the furthest in arguing for the incorporation of Muslim social and political customs in the governing of Moro regions, including Sulu. He felt *datu* needed to be given responsibility within the framework of their own traditions, and that these native structures should be incorporated into the colonial system.<sup>91</sup> Not many administrators applied Saleeby's ideas on the governance of Muslim Filipinos. In this way, the Americans overall, failed to give the Tausug enough of a stake in governance, and a sense of ownership over the state being built around them.

An institution meaningful in reinforcing and demonstrating moral rule for the Tausug – local adjudication – was only rarely appreciated as such by American administrators. The Tausug were more often the subject of punishment - upon whom colonial justice was to be imposed - than the source for an understanding of local juridical morality in Sulu. A rare example of how the American regime exerted a higher degree of effort in making the colonial state meaningful to the Tausug via the juridical process was during James R. Fugate's administration. Having lived in Sulu for years serving as school superintendent before his assumption of the district governorship of Sulu in 1928, he gained a sympathetic appreciation of local understandings of governance, and perceptions of the state.<sup>92</sup> Fugate sought to extend the actual influence of the colonial state amongst the natives of Sulu as a more sustainable way of addressing the issues of security that had plagued American rule there. His most significant innovation was to bring colonial officials to the localities to adjudicate disputes in an echo of pre-colonial practice, instead of having the disputants come to the governor in Tiange - the approach employed by previous U.S. governors.<sup>93</sup> This increased the regard for the

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<sup>90</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P.11

<sup>91</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P.11

<sup>92</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 168

<sup>93</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P. 171

governor and his office, as well establishing greater interaction and an actual relationship with the state. He effectively made American justice immediately accessible through a mode of delivery that was thoroughly Tausug in nature. Fugate's approach prospered in an environment fostered by the Philippines' Governor-General at the time, Dwight F. Davis who during his term in the Philippines supported and argued for a more indirect form of rule in Muslim regions. This opened the door to locally relevant innovations like Fugate's, recognizing the problem of the state's lack of relevance in societies at its fringes like Sulu. Davis articulated this in his annual report for 1931:

There are two basic theories of the government of backward people. One called the direct method under which the governing power lays down directions to the minutest detail and the subject people obey or are punished. By the indirect method the forms of tribal government, to which the people have been long accustomed, are recognized as far as possible and the natural leaders of the people are given recognition. Here we are trying to encourage the more backward people to participate more fully in their local affairs and have had excellent success.<sup>94</sup>

Davis and Fugate both understood the value of making the state apparatus meaningful to their subject peoples, and that the mere use of example was not enough to socially engineer the political culture of a society alien to that of the U.S. States were in essence reified by the degree of participation in them, and if Muslim Filipinos participated in their traditional *datu* based practices, these in essence were more real to them than the colonial state. Legitimizing the local practices of governance of the Tausug would likewise legitimize the state to the locality. This approach to governance may have mitigated the eventual ambivalence with which the state was regarded by Muslim Filipino societies, and might have bridged the cleavage between the locality in Sulu and the metropolis. This incorporation of native norms, however, was only short lived. Davis' and in particular, Fugate's administration represents a momentary lapse - the closest the American regime came to true hybridity in Sulu where native and colonial systems came together as a single apparatus, legitimate to both colonizer and subject. Fugate's successors largely undid his innovations and returned Sulu to what resulted in a reinforcing of the administrative binary of a formal and official colonial state and an unofficial Tausug state operating under its radar.

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<sup>94</sup> War Department. *Annual Report: Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands [for 1931]*. Washington: Government Printing Office, (1932). Pp. 72-73

This also led to the contradiction, noted often in the historiography, where the Americans were both loved and distrusted. The fine detail of this phenomenon is that a collection of different individual Americans were very well regarded, whilst the state itself was always seen with suspicion and ambivalence. This is revealed the wording of in a letter written in 1921 to the Wood-Forbes Mission welcoming Leonard Wood back to Muslim Filipino areas as Governor-General of the Philippines.

...we are all very happy that our Father, the General, came to visit us. What was agreed from the beginning is that the Americans are here in Sulu not to grab territory but to fatten the thin, to teach the ignorant, so that the poor will become wise and rich. What we have agreed with our Father, the American, is for [ourselves] to be concerned [with] the religious leaders and *datus*...From our Father, the American, we should listen, we should be concerned of our racial brothers, the Christians.<sup>95</sup>

America, to the prominent *datu* who wrote this letter, was still primarily embodied in General Wood. There is hardly a reference to the American colonial state. As individuals, they provided benefits to individual *datu*, promotion, prestige by association, which in turn legitimized these *datu* in their own communities, within the native moral framework. The processes of the western institutions of the state, however, were distant and unfamiliar. This was in essence due to the continued framework for legitimacy of the native system of political power and justice. Despite the efforts of Fugate, local Tausug *agama* courts persisted practically unchanged until the 1960s. As Kiefer observed during his field research between 1966 and 1968, the state had not displaced native justice in Sulu despite six decades of attempted existence.

In large measure the Philippine courts are manipulated and used for essentially native purposes. A warrant of arrest is regarded as a means to harass an enemy, and rural Tausug typically attempt to obtain warrants of arrest against their enemies, largely through the political use of the Philippine legal process.<sup>96</sup>

The state's courts had become not a tool for justice, but instead joined an array of political weapons to be used against one's opponents. Existing alongside their own system, which is perceived as being more legitimate, the state's courts became a weapon of coercion in the way that they were used against them during American rule:

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<sup>95</sup> Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. p. 263

<sup>96</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 16

Bribery is rampant in the lower levels of the court system, and rural Tausug have very low regard for it. They are emotionally more committed to their own legal system, and in those cases where Philippine judges arrange for the settlement of a conflict they are only able to do so by abandoning their formally defined role in Philippine law and acting along more traditional lines.<sup>97</sup>

This quote by Kiefer is telling because it reveals how agents of the state had to adopt native Tausug process in order to legitimately and effectively carry out their duties. It is apparent therefore, that the functions of the state, particularly in the important aspect of justice, could only be carried out locally through the Tausug's own system. In essence American colonial rule had resulted in this – a situation where two conceptualizations of a polity existed in the same space. Likewise, Kiefer's observation reveals that the Tausug had never come to understand the state the Americans were building in their archipelago under the terms the imperialists wanted. Despite the decades of effort, exhortations about its rationality and the thousands of lives it cost, the Americans failed to make the state they created in Sulu make sense and be meaningful to the people of Sulu themselves.

Because the Tausug consequently turned to the native system for effective justice and mediation, the role that remained for the colonial state in terms of justice was a reputation for being useful primarily for incarceration and arrest, just as it had during the first years of American rule:

The formal court system was seen as a Manila-imposed institution good for locking some people away but with no relevance for dispute settlement.<sup>98</sup>

The notion that the state did not possess the capacity to provide justice instilled in the Tausug a partial and skewed perception of the state that differed from that intended by the imperialists. Its visible function was as a security apparatus, limited to the process of arresting and imprisoning for its own sake, disconnected with notions of justice and morality.

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<sup>97</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 16

<sup>98</sup> Gerard Rixhon. "Tausug and Consican Clan Feuding." In Wilfredo Magno Torres III Ed. *Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*. Makati City: Asia Foundation, (2007). P. 312

## Conclusions

The building of the colonial state in Sulu was a success by the measure that it was created and established relatively quickly. On the question of who participated in this state, however, these were changes happened *around* the Tausug, involving them in a very limited sense. While there were successes in the re-creation of elements of American civilization, the avowed imperialist aims of ‘improving’ and ‘civilizing’ the Moros, even if we were to limit this measure in terms of having them become a participants in the emerging colonial state, fell short. To Peter Gowing this resulted from the fact that the American regime did not ‘teach’ Moros business skills and participation in effective government.<sup>99</sup> Ultimately the beneficiaries of the formative Moro Province period in Sulu were overwhelmingly non-Moros. Having relied on the role model approach embodied in Carpenter’s ‘policy of attraction’, the colonial state increasingly distanced itself from the Tausug locality, which itself persisted in its own social and political processes to eventually exist in what was essentially a condition of a parallel-state. Americans defined participation in development in alien terms to the Moros – outside their cultural framework – private ownership of land, homesteading, cattle ranchers – what they knew in America is what they were looking to build in Sulu. For the natives of that archipelago, the ability to maintain peace, resolve their own conflicts justly, to articulate themselves in art and literature did not find expression through the framework of the colonial state, but through pre-existing Tausug political and social practices.

An ambivalence toward the colonial and, subsequently, Philippine state, therefore, began shortly after the setting up of the American order, but truly came into evidence after the first fifteen years of the regime. Upon the abolition of the separate Department of Mindanao and Sulu in 1920, which was intended to demonstrate that Muslims and other non-Christians could work within a united Philippine state increasingly prepared for total independence from the U.S., Thomas argues that Muslim *datu*: “...resented a government in which they participated only in a formal and limited way.” In fact Thomas makes reference to

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<sup>99</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 595.

how everyday Muslim Filipinos in Lanao in the 1970s referred to the heir of the colonial state – the national government in Manila - as a “gobirno a sarwang tao’ or the ‘government of another people.’<sup>100</sup> It’s interaction with local people remained unpredictable and never made the connection with the moral governance that the Tausug had themselves been seeking to establish amongst themselves late in the nineteenth century. It expressed in its edicts, such as the *cedula*, disarmament, road building, an arbitrary will, which was obeyed not because it represented good government but only because it was coerced by its most visible arm, the security apparatus embodied in the army and the constabulary. This image of illegitimacy and lack of moral ascendancy of the state seeded the impulse in Tausug political discourse to do what, to an island Southeast Asian society, was always preferable to immoral rule, volatility and contestation for its replacement.

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<sup>100</sup> Thomas. *Muslim but Filipino*. P.14



## Conclusions

On July 4, 1946, American colonial rule in the Philippines came to an end. The half century of that regime is often considered formative in the creation of the modern Philippine state. Indeed there are few authors who would discount the role the United States played in the making of modern Philippine politics and society. Where there is more divergence is in the understanding of the ways in which the impact was made. In the case of Sulu, my contention is that it has been overestimated, and this overestimation has led to a century-long misunderstanding of the historical background to the ambivalence in Sulu towards the colonial and subsequently the Philippine state. This ambivalence is rooted in effects caused by the mutual utilization by the native and colonial regimes of each other's political processes. Colonial empires such as the United States usurped native political systems in order to establish their own power. While this created what has been presented over the decades as colonial rule, its long term effects on the postcolonial world was to produce the ambivalence of the borderlands, as it was in these regions where presence of the modern state was felt the least, and the continuity of the precolonial one was most enduring.

The way the colonial and hence the national state evolved in Sulu was indeed different from the way it evolved in other parts of the Philippines, owing to the nature of the rituals of political power and legitimacy that had perpetuated within the framework of the formal state. In a real sense, this informal collection of precolonial practices, which, I contend are cohesive enough to owe reference to it as a parallel -state, shared governance over Sulu with the official, nation state. In fact the face of everyday governance for most Tausug remained their own parallel-state, whilst the nation state remained in a seemingly arbitrary, alien and superficial light. This was evident to anthropologist Gerard Rixhon, as he related his first experience of Sulu in in the early 1950s in a recently published book:

When I arrived in November 1953, seven years after Philippine independence, I encountered a bewildering array of political opinions. On one side were teachers, government officials, and merchants who accepted being part of the Philippines and professed loyalty to the Philippine government. On the other side were the majority of rural Tausug people who paid little attention to government affairs and were simply trying to survive and avoid trouble with the authorities. Manila,

physically far and socially distant, represented another nation from which they expected little assistance.<sup>1</sup>

The understanding of the state during Rixhon's visit remained personalized and along the lines of the sultanate of a half-century before. While their titles may have changed, the role of the *datu* was still central to the way the community functioned politically. In 1969, Rixhon met a local headman named Tuwan Iklali Jainal, who represented the type of man the Americans were attempting to undermine two generations before:

Tuwan Iklali Jainal was the highly respected headman of the Luas district close to the center of the town of Parang, Sulu. There he was known for his fair handling of local disputes, for his religious piety and for his and his wife's generous hospitality to all in need (anthropologists included).<sup>2</sup>

A decade later, another anthropologist, Thomas Kiefer, provided a broader perspective of how the role of the *datu* was still an important legitimizing part of the political landscape in 1960s Sulu in his dissertation at Indiana University. Kiefer observed that the title of *datu* was still in use in Sulu, primarily in the Patikul and Maimbung regions of Jolo, and was still key in garnering enough popular prestige in order to act within the framework of one's authority:<sup>3</sup>

Rather than view the title of *datuq* as a very special political position, as Majul has done, I prefer to view it as a title of legitimacy for a quasi-hereditary office of headmanship operating mainly in the Patikul and Maimbung regions, but not differing substantially in political effect from the appointed titles of headmanship prevalent in other regions.<sup>4</sup>

Most importantly, Kiefer found that the notion of the 'law', or *saraq*, reflecting the amalgam of Tausug moral attitudes, still dictated everyday behaviour and was exercised by a set of customarily legitimized figures. These figures who had the legitimacy to apply the *saraq* resided in 1) individuals who had secular titles that they achieved, 2) individuals who possessed secular titles acquired via kinship, 3) religious titles they had achieved, and 4) religious titles that were acquired via kinship. These are legitimizing factors that are not always connected to the modern Philippine state. In fact it is only in the first one listed which the institutions of the state, presumably established by the Americans, can be factored.

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<sup>1</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 7

<sup>2</sup> Rixhon. *Voices from Sulu*. P. 161

<sup>3</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 39

<sup>4</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 39

Indeed the organization of these figures was in reference to the personalized framework of the pre-colonial *datu* system:

Every Tausug should be subject to “law” [*saraq*] and this fact means that he should be subject to one or more persons who have the capacity to act as “the law” [*saraq*] by virtue of their title...But it is thought that every person should be subject to at least one other person who will act as “the law” with reference to him.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of the nation state, embodied in its local agents who possessed local government positions, was treated by the Tausug in much the same way that the Spanish and American colonial states were. By virtue of the positions they possessed in the national system, these individuals acquired prestige, but were expected to act within the local framework of *saraq*. As with the Tausug of the early 1900s, these state agents were the mediators between Manila and the locality in Sulu, representing the interests of the state, but exercising them in Sulu along local lines. Kiefer described how this process of nativizing state offices, occurring during the colonial period, continued into the late 1960s:

Recently the concept of *saraq* in the native sense has been expanded to include several officials in the Philippine government hierarchy, who are usually local Tausug: the barrio captain (*capitan bariyu*), municipal counselor (*cunseyal*), and mayor (*mayul*). However there is some ambiguity [*sic*] in the minds of most people whether these officials represent *saraq agama* (religious law of the Tausug) or *saraq upis* (“law of the office” – government law).<sup>6</sup>

With a unique set of laws exercised by a unique set of officials legitimized along Tausug lines, it is difficult not to describe what existed in Sulu in the 1960s as a para-state, separate but subsumed within the nation state fulfilling some of the local functions along an alternative framework of legitimacy. It is clear that the reality of governance for everyday Tausug remained, at least until the 1960s, with the native system, elements of which endured half a century of American colonial ‘influence’ and almost a decade of Philippine governance from Manila. Despite the use of new titles that evoked the nation state superficially, the function of the *datu* in essence remained largely similar in 1960s Sulu as with those of the late nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Even the *datu*’s or in Kiefer’s parlance, the headman’s, area of responsibility functioned along native lines, with his personal prestige and authority being the primary definer of his jurisdiction, not the delimitations of

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<sup>5</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 36

<sup>6</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 37

<sup>7</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 40

districts in the nation state. As such a headman's territory depended on the people who chose to regard him as their headman:

Each headman will be surrounded by a series of zones of decreasing power which will usually overlap the zones of power of adjacent headmen. There is a zone of primary authority, usually identical with the headman's home community, where all cases which call for adjudication will usually originate with the headman himself. There is a zone of secondary authority, which people will bring cases which could not be locally adjudicated – the headman is a first level appellate judge....These three zones also correspond to decreasing power to engage in a variety of non-legal acts (organize mosques and appoint officials, organize markets, collect tribute, and others). The major question to ask in appraising the power of the headman is "How many people can he summon, from how far, and for what purposes?" At the time it is first given a title should reflect the headman's power in this sense.<sup>8</sup>

This description evokes parallels with the experiential nature of power understood by Hadji Butu and Kiram II six decades prior, where they competed for influence over their people with Kalbi, Julkarnain, Indanan and Hassan. The area of influence of these *datu* was not delimited by territory but by the loyalty they evoked from individuals, wherever they may have resided in Sulu. Where interaction with them and their authority became less frequent and meaningful, due primarily to distance and the proximity of another powerful chief, their everyday influence became weaker and overlapped with those of another adjacent *datu*.

Likewise, always distant from the influence of Manila, the local forms of governance and legitimacy persisted well into the twenty first century. The outbreak of nationalist conflict spurred by the Moro National Liberation Front a few years after Kiefer's departure further weakened the connection to Manila, and reinforced the view of the nation state as being limited to its security apparatus. Indeed, as Moro nationalist sentiment spread to other regions, local juridical practices implemented by traditional headmen and *datu* continued to survive. Evidence of lingering *datu* traditions, well into the twenty first century in areas once under American military rule include cases from from Maguindanao:

Today although the power and influence of the sultanate is significantly reduced, in some places the *datu* is still influential and effective in resolving disputes...There

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<sup>8</sup> Kiefer. *Tausug Armed Conflict*. P. 40

are no formal procedures to be followed. The discussions are mainly to reach just resolution of the dispute.<sup>9</sup>

The chapter on Sulu from the same 2007 Asian Foundation study from which the above quote was taken likewise featured examples where juridical rituals exhibited characteristics that echoed those of the sultanate. Indeed these processes remain the preferred ones as opposed to those of the state, which reinforces the suspicion, evident in the earlier observation by Rixhon, with which it is held. The currency that precolonial processes of mediation sustain means they are essential in maintaining the peace the region – a fundamental function of governance usurped from the nation state:

Settlement of clan conflicts among the different ethnic groups covered by this study most often than not made use of mediation. This strategy is culturally accepted and found to be very effective. It is even recommended by municipal clerks of court and the military. By presenting to the concerned parties the different implications and consequences of pursuing a case in court, people are encouraged to settle amicably.<sup>10</sup>

It seems as if local officials have been surrendering to more ‘traditional’ notions of legitimacy that still have much currency in the localities in which they operate. At the very least, this is tacit acknowledgment of the existence and continued value of forms of governance that have a precolonial root. While these practices exist side by side with the processes of the formal state, the local population’s superficial exposure to the latter means a stronger and deeper connection with such native practices of governance. Torres provides further evidence of local preference for the processes of the para-state over those of the state in the Sulu of today:

There are, however, those who choose to resolve their conflict using the judicial approach. A formal body or institutionalized authority (the court) intervenes. The judge determines who is right and who is wrong. The parties have to hire lawyers. The outcome produces a winner, and a loser.

Amicable settlement, on the other hand, is done outside the courtroom. Its aim is not to determine which party is wrong or right but to settle conflict in a manner acceptable to the contending parties. The result is a “win-win” situation. This is the task of the mediator.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Torres. *Rido*. P. 63

<sup>10</sup> Torres. *Rido*. P. 113

<sup>11</sup> Torres. *Rido*. P. 113

The functioning of a Council of Elders also suggests that the practical power of figures whose legitimacy to compel action from the population is grounded in precolonial notions, despite their modern titles:

The community's council of elders may also serve as mediators. The council, which is organized whenever necessary, is composed of religious leaders, imams, barangay officials, elderly and other respected individuals. In the municipality of Sumisip in Basilan, an ordinance refers all cases of clan conflict to the council of elders. At the barangay level, it is the barangay captain that assumes the role of mediator.<sup>12</sup>

This format was described to the Philippine Commission in March 1901 by Major Jasper N. Morrison. He explained how a *panglima*, whose normal duty was to try cases, often had: "...the old men of the community to sit with them, and they say the reason is that the old men have lived long enough to learn what the law is and know what should be done..."<sup>13</sup> Taken together with Torres' description of a council of elders, there is at the very least continuity in the legitimacy of the use of that body in mediation, if not in its actual practice. Indeed the interaction with the locality of the state's officials is often under the terms of this informal para-state. As Torres' study reveals, the treatment of agents of the state as *datu* continues well into the twenty first century:

Local chief executives at various levels (mayors, board members, governors) are effective mediators. They are sought out especially when the parties involved are big and affluent clans. It is believed that a conflict involving affluent clans requires someone of high office or influence to resolve.<sup>14</sup>

The personal reputation and prestige of a mediator is, as it was in the late nineteenth century, still fundamental to the success of justice and conflict mediation. This reveals the continued notion that justice and moral righteousness is connected intimately with power and rule. It also indicates that power remains personalized, since the authority of a high state official is still expected to be demonstrable and personally evident through mediation and adjudication. This personalization, under colonial rule, allowed Sulu's political system to survive within its framework. Sulu has been, like other Southeast Asian states, 'dynamic' in the sense that central control is often ephemeral. If precolonial Southeast Asian societies were 'personalized', the functions that we often associate with the state,

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<sup>12</sup> Torres. *Rido*. P. 114

<sup>13</sup> War Dept. "Report of the Philippine Commission, 1901." P. 96

<sup>14</sup> Torres. *Rido*. P. 114

such as the application of justice, were also personalized. The operative guarantor of justice and hence, a moral order, were relationships of trust on an individual basis. It was individual interaction, for example, that established trust in order for trade to be conducted, in the absence of an overarching regulatory framework of a formal state. These rituals establishing trust and an impression of morality replaced (or predated?) formal elements of the state. Personally negotiated rituals that guaranteed stability were essential where there was no reliable state that could do it.

The contest within Sulu's political elite over the source of a moral order, had set the internal political tone for decades afterward. As we have seen, this contest was ultimately between an emerging dynastic tendency after the death of Jamalul Alam in 1881, and a more traditional choosing of the ablest eligible candidate. One might even suggest that the dissatisfaction of proponents of the latter after the establishment of young and weak, albeit pedigreed sultans, drove powerful factions to turn to American alternatives. The focus Sulu polities placed on the pursuit of the morally ascendant ruler and regime continued throughout the end of the Spanish and the whole of the American colonial periods. Americans were thus absorbed into this struggle, becoming potential candidates for rule as individuals. This Tausug driven ideological endeavour in a real sense subjugated aspects of the colonial endeavour, as Spanish and American imperialists articulated their power in local terms to gain a permanent foothold in Sulu. They played the roles of the distributors of wealth, just mediators of disputes and protectors of followers whilst they reported progress in democratic ideals, rational education and capitalist impulses to their political superiors in Manila and Washington. Likewise, the Tausug, in pursuit of the ablest *datu* to realize a moral order, sacrificed their sultanate which in the opinions of men like Kalbi, Julkarnain and Indanan, had given up the criteria of ability for lineage traced to the illustrious Sultan Jamaulu Kiram I and his son Pulalun of the early nineteenth century. In 1915, Kiram II was reduced to a religious figure and symbol with no remaining political powers.

Yet at the same time, the pattern of absorbing colonial forms was already an established one. As we have seen, traders-come-rulers have been incorporating

alien titles and auspices of rule for centuries before the arrival of Spain and America. The introduction of the Sultanate by Arab traders in the fifteenth century is a most prominent example.<sup>15</sup> The political system at the American arrival reflected Indic influence, perhaps via the expansion of the Srivijaya into the straits of Malacca in the seventh century.<sup>16</sup> Sanskrit titles such as *maharajah* and *rajah*, similar to those used in areas of Srivijayan control in Sumatra and the Straits, were still commonplace in the early twentieth century, as were the political positions of *bendahara* and *panglima*, which were Sanskrit derivatives.<sup>17</sup> Outsiders were certainly bringers of change to Sulu, and could often bring positive change as the Tausug were incredibly open to and absorptive of these. Many powerful and influential Tausug at the arrival of the United States were open to comparable change, albeit as long as it met their perception of just, moral rule.

The Americans, however, were attempting to build what they saw as a ‘modern’ state in Sulu with institutions inspired by and modeled on their own. Their framework of legitimacy, premised on the superiority of their civilization and the assumed self-evidence of this, did not possess the necessary political currency in Sulu’s localities. This undermined the ability of the regime to establish the state as the single source for moral governance. Their own perception of the rational legitimacy of the ‘modern’ American-made state did not fit well into the way the Tausug understood society, order and justice. In particular, the way it was implemented in Sulu was informed by the assumption that they needed to transform the Moros into better types of people so that they would behave in the prescribed fashion of the state they envisioned for them. In other words, the central ethos of the regime early on was tutelary, doomed to clashing with established political and social notions in Sulu. Members of the Tausug elite were selected by Americans in power and ‘developed’ along the lines of American civilization in the hopes that they would serve as role models and examples for the rest of the population. But because the institutions and processes of the colonial state excluded many other Tausug from both the elite and common folk, what this small number of individuals became instead were mediators between the locality

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<sup>15</sup> Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. P. 12

<sup>16</sup> O. W. Wolters. “Śrīvijayan Expansion in the Seventh Century”. *Artibus Asiae* 24.3/4 (1961). Pp. 417–424.

<sup>17</sup> Saleeby. *History of Sulu*. P. 47



and the administrative centres of the modern state, serving the needs of security and coercion for Manila, and providing justice and mediation of disputes for the locally present native para-state. Likewise, as colonial agents slid into roles fitted for the alien in the Sulu political system of the late nineteenth century, they positioned their regimes in the native system whilst simultaneously reinforcing it within their own.

The fact that colonial officials acted like native rulers is evident in studies of other empires, in particular, that of the British. Colin Newbury explained that: "Governors and residents or commissioners were not 'chiefs', but they sometimes behaved like chiefs. Indigenous chiefs and their subordinates were not 'civil servants', though in a number <sup>18</sup>of administrations (Fiji, Malay states, Buganda) they were posted as officials." Newbury suggests that this was more than the often asserted 'indirect rule', since the practice of this method was more steeped in local politics than the term suggests.<sup>19</sup> Indeed he states that: "...the more closely the politics of over-rule are examined in different regions, the more they are seen to derive in large part from pre-colonial structures."<sup>20</sup> In a description that applies well to the Sulu case, Newbury details British colonial rule in Fiji:

Coordination in Fiji, it has been claimed, created a new hierarchy as a 'projection by the Fijians of their own rank and status systems into the colonial situation', so that Europeans became their 'chiefs', 'and the Queen the greatest chief of all'.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed in Sulu, Sweet, Wallace, Scott and Fugate were certainly chiefs, as we have seen, and the U.S. president was the paramount chief among them, in the Tausug conceptualization of power and legitimacy. The native basis of a local leader's legitimacy may have been exploited by the Americans as a means to the eventual end of Americanizing Sulu, but this practice actually ended in reinforcing those bases, as the native population never came to appreciate legitimacy of rule by the same logic as imperialists did. But as Newbury laments, this fundamental understanding of the native perspective is "...unusual in the literature of imperial rule..."<sup>22</sup> Indeed it is rare in the literature of European imperial rule, and almost

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<sup>18</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*. P. 256

<sup>19</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*. P. 257

<sup>20</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*. P. 257

<sup>21</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*. P. 258

<sup>22</sup> Newbury. *Patrons, clients, and empire*. P. 258

completely absent in literature about American imperial rule. In Sulu and Mindanao, where historical interpretation has political and often violent impact on the lives of many in the region today, the underestimation of the native perspective has severe repercussions.

Newbury, however, in his survey of many colonial locales, understandably focuses on the patron-client relationship in them, which is more universally applicable, but perhaps is too broad and simplistic to answer our current questions concerning Sulu. To stop at the patron-client relationship between native elites and colonial administrators does not provide for the complexities of the Tausug historical experience in pursuit of a morally ascendant regime. However, Newbury's approach in considering the native precedents of rule that were perpetuated has provided an analysis from which this study has started. Indeed, we have extended the analysis and have found that the collective effect of these relations was the skewing of the understanding of the state for native inhabitants, creating the dissonant conceptualization of place and duty those on its borderlands possess. In Sulu this has cemented a duality in rule where the local native patterns of governance served functions that the formal colonial state was unable to establish. These local rituals of governance, however, are not a disconnected patchwork of informal local practices, but an identifiable whole with distinct continuities with the pre-colonial system of the past. The parallel-state that this has resulted in is thus not completely separate from the formal state, but partially subsumed in it as it overlaps like a *datu's* authority, with the actionable jurisdictions of the former. The assumption is often that there was only one state, either the colonial or the pre-colonial. Sulu is an example of how these two systems can coexist in the colonial context. It also demonstrates the delicate nature of their interaction, as the varying foundations of legitimacy, if left unrecognized, can contradict each other during events, often resulting in bloody contestation.

What becomes evident, therefore, is that both colonial and native systems used each other to create enough stability to pursue their own ideological goals. The Tausug were not powerful enough to completely dictate the terms of colonial intrusion, whilst Americans were likewise not powerful enough to maintain their regime without compromising with local allies. What this led to was the situation

where the moral legitimacy of the colonial state was articulated one way in the locality, and another way at the metropolis. The language of rights, democracy and scientific objectivity having currency in capitals of Manila and Washington, while the language of justice, evident moral ascendancy and personalization having currency in the localities of Maimbung, Parang, Patikul and Luuk. Thus a fundamental change in the way power worked in Sulu - its locus, source, acceptable actions and the basis for its legitimacy to the Tausug - did not necessarily occur. Loyalty remained personalized and transferred from leader to leader, rather than being anchored to the abstraction Americans were imposing that was the colonial state. While the sultan and various *datu* may have been replaced by American men, the functioning of *datu* rule through them continued and was never completely superseded. The statistical successes that were much touted during the first two decades of U.S. rule over the Muslim Philippines amounted to the Americans' setting up Moro province's formal structure, capitalizing on its wealth, and making it more comfortable for Americans, foreigners and Christian Filipinos. Meanwhile, its actual benefit for the majority of the archipelago's native inhabitants was largely overlooked.<sup>23</sup> This therefore puts to question the actual depth of the colonial legacy in Sulu in terms of the degree to which the *datu* system remained well beyond the arrival and departure of American imperial rule. In a sense the car got a new paint job, but it was still the same old car.

This study, therefore, while providing additional insight into Sulu's colonial relationship with empire, also invites further examination of the modern state's everyday relationship with the locality. With precolonial realities such as the local parallel-state persisting in Sulu, this brings to question the 'modernity' of the colonial and postcolonial state overall. Every national framework needs to be anchored in the locality and national discourse made relevant through the local idiom of legitimacy and power. To what extent do these precolonial notions extend upward into national politics? To what extent have precolonial states survived, merely re-articulated in national discourses as informal processes functioning within the modern framework of the nation state as either mediatory peacebuilding practices at best and 'corrupt' and 'illegal' ones at worst?

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<sup>23</sup> Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*. p. 603

As the colonial era becomes ever more distant in time, we become increasingly liberated, albeit never completely, from the assumptions it imposed. Disunity is a long-standing critique of Philippine societies dating back to the American era. This is what most often is used to explain their inability to resist colonial conquest. In the case of Sulu, however, it is that very disunity that held colonial power from displacing everyday rituals of justice, legitimacy and rule. What is ultimately remarkable in the story of the Tausug are the ways and degrees to which a borderland society such as itself, supposedly conquered by colonial empires, could continue to influence governance of the locality through the persistence of their own notions and practices of rule.

## Appendices

### Appendix A:

Letter from Colonel Owen J. Sweet to the Sultana Inchy Jamila, June 20, 1901.<sup>1</sup>

#### HEADQUARTERS THIRD DISTRICT OF MINDANAO & JOLO

Jolo, Jolo Island, June 20, 1901.

From your father, Colonel Sweet, Commanding Officer of the Sulu Archipelago, to his daughter ther Sultana Incy Jamela, Maibun, Jolo Island, P.I., with greetings and best wihses for a long life and a happy and prosperous future:-

Being in Zamboanga recently on a visit to my great, good brother General Kobbe, greater Governor of Mindanao & Jolo, I mentioned to him your great loyalty, friendship and zeal for American interests, and your faithful attitude towards us since American occupation of Jolo. I further reported at length your great interest and untiring personal effort for the welfare of your people and the peace and prosperity of the Sultanate. The Governor, General Kobbe, was so greatly pleased to hear such commendable reports, that he said he would be highly pleased to present you with a large and handsome silken United States flag on behalf of the American Government, as a mark of our personal esteem and the high appreciation in which you are held by the American people. It is my great pleasure to now hand you this very beautiful banner, the emblem of American love, power and respect throughout the universe. – Then please accept this token in the same spirit with which it is tendered.

I have the honor to remain with considerations of high personal regard and esteem, expressing the hope that God may signally bless you ever more and keep you as well, true and steadfast in the future and the past.

Very respectfully,  
Lieut. Colonel 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry,  
Commanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 2, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

## Appendix B:

Letter from the Sultana Inchy Jamila to Colonel Owen Sweet.<sup>1</sup>

This is the letter from your sister, Paduka Pangiyen Inchi Jamila addressed to my brother, the Governor. I wish to inform (you) that your letter and that of my brother, the Governor in Zamboanga, have been received and, certainly, understood what is therein. I thank you very much for the brotherly way you have treated me and accept also your concern for me. And the flag you sent to me by my brother, the Governor in Zamboanga, has strengthened in my heart our mutual relation. In fact, now that I have your flag as an inheritance from you, I hope to see in you the readiness to really help me when there are nations that come to oppress us, and, also, I wish to inform the Governor that it was reported that the ways of Maharadja Indanan's people cannot help him in his battles. They have been blocked by Panglima Hadji Tahlil. If the report is true, my brother the Governor should stop the act. After finishing the comment to my brother on the report concerning Panglima Hadji, he has been duly apprised. Now, it is asked of him to really forthwith do something to remove whatever prevents the help of the people of Maharadja Indanan. In fact, they are concerned of him. And also, I like to verify from my brother the case of my father-designate, Amilusin.

And, also, whatever is the thinking of my elder, the Civil Governor, I wish my letter to be duly answered soon by my elder the Governor. End.

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<sup>1</sup> Paduka Pangiyen Inchi Jamila to the Governor-General, Surat 8. In Tan. *Surat Sug: Kasultanan*. P. 16 (no date)

### **Appendix C:**

Letter from Sultan Jamalul Kiram II to Brig. Gen. John Bates.<sup>1</sup>

This letter from H.H. The Sultan Hadji Mohamad Jamalul Kiram to my brother the Brigadier General John Bates.

I beg to lay before you and the President the grievance of my people, who are suffering greatly from the sudden introduction of the custom duty here in the Sulu Archipelago and beg that you will be kind enough to remove them in order to relieve my people, who, through our brotherhood are now also your people, from the burden which has so suddenly been placed upon them.

I beg you and the President to be lenient with the Sulu people who, owing to the cattle disease here in the Jolo Archipelago have become very poor. About ninety seven per cent of the cattle have died off. Who can assist us, but you? It is only right that we should come to you, who are now our brothers, and ask you to assist us in our trouble.

Therefore we beg of you to be kind enough to give us time, until the country is in a fitter state, and until then to suspend the custom duty for the Sulus, Chinese and other traders.

I beg to send my best wishes to you and especially to the President.

Written this 27<sup>th</sup> day of the moon Ramthan, in the year 1317.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 2, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>2</sup> 29 January, 1900.

**Appendix D:**

Letter from Colonel William M. Wallace requesting Maharajah Indanan to arrest Biroa,  
June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1903 and Indanan's reply on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1903.<sup>1</sup>

P O S T O F J O L O

Jolo, P.I., June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1903.

To Maharajah Indanan,  
Parang, Jolo, P.I.

GREETING:

I look to you who command the Sultan's men to arrest Biora, [sic] Sankola and Padjing and those who were with them, all of them followers of Hadji Panglima Tahir ; they went last night to the house of Amlim, near Mr. Schuck's house at Amling, and killed Amlim and carried off the girl named Sabdia. I expect you to bring the girl and the murderers to me before tomorrow night.

When the Sultan left here, he asked me to act for him in matters of this kind. Therefore obey this order.

(sgd) W.M. WALLACE,  
Colonel, 15<sup>th</sup> Cavalry,  
Commanding.

This letter from Maharaja Pahalauan Indanan to the Governor.

I cannot make the arrests because Biroa took his slave. The one who was killed was his slave. There are still more there, who will also be taken.

(Sgd) Charles Schuck,  
Official Interpreter

Received July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1903.

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 5, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.



## Appendix E:

Conversation between Maj. Hugh L. Scott and Sultan Jamalul Kiram II, September 30, 1903.<sup>1</sup>

September 30, 1903.

Conversation between the district governor, Major Scott, and the Sultan of Jolo, at the governor's office.

Present: the District Governor, The Sultan, Hadji Butu, Hadji Taib, Madji Mohamad, Habib Mura, Hadji Tahil etc.

Q. Any change this morning?

A. My intention was to come back directly, but then I did not want to come back without something sure. My heart is with the Americans; there may be a change in governors but there will never be a change in my sentiments. If it depended only upon myself, there would never be bad relations between us, but others are causing the trouble.

Q. How are the people in the country feeling?

A. They feel more assured about you and that the soldiers do not go out to do them harm.

Q. You seem to have something on your mind.

A. Yes, about my brother Attick. (Sultan shows to Governor a letter bearing Sultan's seal and signature). This seal was stolen from me and the signature is forged.

Q. What is the meaning of the letter?

A. When Attick came back from Singapore, he knew that I had some money outstanding with Maharajah Sarapuddin of Lugus Island- 1600 pesos. Attick sent this letter with my seal and forged signature and got the money from Sarapuddin. (Sultan shows another letter bearing seal and signature). This letter is also forged, it was sent by Datto Attick to Katz Brothers in Singapore, its purport [sic] is to borrow from them 1200 pesos, but he did not get the money because the firm was suspicious.

Q. Where is Datto Attick now?

A. At Maibun. I am afraid he has made other bad use of my seal.

Q. What use?

A. About Palawan. I have heard that it was said that the Sultan of Brunei has a document from me regarding the sale of Palawan. A messenger from the Sultan of Brunei came to me in Singapore and said that part of Palawan belonged to the Sultan of Brunei, but the Sultan of Brunei would buy my share of that island; somebody wanted to buy the whole island for 4, 000,000 pesos. I told the messenger that I did not want to have anything to do with this matter. I heard that the messenger then went to Datto Attick and I do not know the result. Since I returned to Jolo and have seen Attick's forgeries, I have suspicions. I told Datto Attick in Singapore not to have anything to do with the messenger of the Sultan of Brunei.

Q. Did Attick steal the seals?

A. Yes.

Q. Where are the seals now?

A. I have them. He got the seals secretly and stamped blank paper with them.

Q. Has he got any more of that paper?

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 6, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

A. I don't know; but I am afraid that he gave a document to the messenger of the Sultan of Brunei. I have spoken to Datto Attick, he swore he had no more.

Q. If he got your money from Sarapuddin on a forged letter, you can punish him. As to the Palawan affair, if there is anything in it, it will probably reach the governor at Manila, then come to the governor at Zamboanga, and then to me. I will then let you know about it.

A. As punishment, I can do nothing against my own brother. Our religion does not permit it. (called "sumbang")

Q. I understand that Attick confessed to you?

A. No, but the Rajah Muda told me.

Q. That Datto Attick wrote these two letters and also to the Sultan of Brunei?

A. Attick told him.

Q. That he has written to the Sultan of Brunei?

A. No. But I suspect him. When Attick returned to Jolo, he spoke bad of me. When I returned he got frightened, he had told the people that I would never return.

CONTINUATION.

Q. How about getting Biroa?

A. Did not Panglima Ambutong tell you about it Yesterday?

Q. He told me something.

A. They have had a conference about getting him; did not Ambutong tell you?

Q. No.

A. Panglima Hassan comes on Sunday. I have done my best. I have sent the Rajah Muda to Hadji Panglima with a letter, the Rajah Muda even offered to stay with Hadji Panglima Tahir's people as a hostage until the return of the Panglima from Jolo, but the Panglima did not want it, he did not allow the Rajah Muda to get to them on the top of the hill. Then I sent Panglima Ambutong to Hassan. Hassan said that they had had a conference to go on Sunday, so it was of no use to go now. He told Ambutong to tell me that they would surely get him on Sunday. That is why I sent Ambutong to you to tell you of this arrangement.

Q. Did you see Hassan?

A. When he arrived at Maibun; but when I returned to Maibun he had left.

Q. Why did not Hassan come when I sent for him?

A. When did you sent [sic] for him?

Q. Lately.

A. Panglima Hassan sent a letter to you.

Q. Why did he not come himself?

A. I don't know.

Q. If you see him, tell him he is doing something very dangerous by not coming when I send for him.

A. He will surely come on Sunday if he gets Biroa.

Q. If I send for any chief, I want him to come; otherwise I may take 2 or 3 troops of cavalry and get him.

A. Whenever I see any chief, I tell him to go and see you.

Hadji Butu: It is a Moro custom, though a bad one, even when the Sultan sends for any chief, they take their own time about coming.

Q. You better tell Hassan when you see him on Sunday, to come to me.

A. I am not sure whether he will stop at Maibun or go right through – It has been a very bad custom in this country that chiefs come or stay away as they like.

Q. That will be changed now.

A. I am lenient with my people. If I am not, I would have no subjects left. If I am angry with them, they leave me. Even Colonel Wallace has seen that he can do more with kindness.

Q. Tell Hassan to come and say what he has on his mind.

A. Panglima Hassan is no child, he knows enough without my telling him.

Q. Will they get Biroa?

A. Yes, Panglima Hassan, Panglima Dammang, Panglima Ambutong and Maharajah Indanan have taken it upon themselves. I am not like the governor, I do not have 3-400 soldiers at my disposal; I have to depend upon my chiefs. While I was away, my brother the Datto rajah Muda had a bad time of it. My only soldier is Hadji Taib. Everybody knows that I have only a few men at Maibun under my immediate control. The mountain people say even now, why, you do not pay us for this.

Q. Tell the people that they can do no looting.

A. I will do so.

CONTINUATION.

Q. How is the rice crop this year?

A. The crop has been very good, but many people did not plant on account of the cholera.

Q. What is the main food of the people?

A. More rice is eaten than tapioca. [*sago*]

Q. Is there plenty to eat now in the hills?

A. Yes, those that planted have enough to last them two years.

Q. Do they eat much American Corn?

A. Not much.

Q Tapioca?

A. Not very much.

Q. And Sweet potatoes?

A. This is not the time to plant them.

Q. So there is plenty to eat and nobody suffering from want?

A. No, nobody is suffering in this country.

## Appendix F:

Transcript of the case of Panglima Ambutong and Asakil, Panglima Dammang's brother, January 2, 1904.<sup>1</sup>

Jolo, Jolo, P.I., Jan'y 2, 1904.

Asakil, Panglima Dammang's brother, and Ula, Dammang's son, and followers, - and Panglima Ambutong and followers report to the Governor for investigation of their mutual claims:

Governor (to Ambutong) : I am glad that you came: it is much better than if I have to go after you. If you come this way, the gates are always open for you to go out as you please; but when I go after you you are liable to get killed. So I feel glad that you were wise enough to come. Now, there are some matter that need straightening out. How about this (interpreter reads reports to Asakil, Hajerol, Ibrahim and other about thefts and robberies committed by Ambutongs men, also letters from the Governor demanding return of the stolen property and delivery of the thieves, and letter of the Governor demanding Ambutong's [sic] personally reporting to the Governor)? Why did you not come in here before with those people, why did you not return the stolen cattle? Why did I have to write you again and tell you that I would have to go after you? Now answer.

Ambutong: - When I was in Jolo, the last time I complained.....

Governor: - Never mind that now. I am talking about something else I want you to answer my question.

Ambutong: The reason was I had to investigate, whether they stole the cattle.

Asakil's people robbed me ever since the fight. About 2 weeks ago a bay horse was stolen... (tells about a horse)...

Governor: - You do something very dangerous. I told you to return the cattle and send in those men. That is plain. I do the investigating. - I won't always send a second letter; instead of writing I might go out and one nice morning you find yourself surrounded by troops, like it happened to Biroa. I don't write you letters for amusement; they are orders for you to obey and that promptly, and I warn you that difficulties will surely arise if my orders are not obeyed promptly in the future. - What have you got to say now about having thieves under your protection.

Everytime [sic] I saw you I have warned you; I will put an end to that thieving and robbing, and even if I have to kill a whole lot of people. What do you say?

Ambutong: My two sons-in-law were not mixed up in that goat stealing business; they never left my house. - My house and corral was broken into before the fasting month; when I went the house, we found a man; this man said that Asakil had the cattle, and Askil and Jelani cousin of Asakil took it...

Asakil: I am no thief, we were enemies...

Governor: Never mind that now, we will find out about that later; go ahead with your story.

Ambutong: I made investigation and found that the cattle was with Asakil. Then I was in the house of Jelani, nobody there. The Sultan told me to try the case about the brother of Arasain, I claimed from the sister of Arasain 400 coconuts....

Governor: I think you are leaving the subject.

Ambutong: 400 coconuts four slaves and one Snyder rifle and 4 head of cattle and 43 bamboo and one barong with a gold handle. The barong was to be returned to

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 7, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

the sister of Arasain. The next morning I went there to try the case, I send for Arasain and Amik, the uncle of Alian, the husband of Taiong which sent her husband Amil to get the barong. When Amil went there they killed him; I made them put up their slaves. After they put up the bail, I told them not to fight and not to steal and not to complain. (Ambutong is confused, seems to have lost track of the story) They made their statement and it was written down. Before it was completed, something happened, I heard that Ibrahim had taken the goats belonging to Arasain, at Dankan, and that Arasain had taken also goats from Ibrahim. Ibrahim had taken 50 goats, because it was against the Sultan's and my orders to steal from each other. My two sons-in-law were not in that at all. We are enemies with Asakil and have not made up yet. Pula was seen riding a bay mare, he was chased and came to Alian's place; then he took two head of cattle He was caught and tried. (Pula was repoted by Hajerol as being detained forcibly by Alian, Ambutong's man). I don't know about the black horse...

Governor: I am getting tired of this. – Where is Alian?

Alian: I have the black horse...

Governor: Where is the bay horse?

Alian: I don't know.

Governor: Where is Pula?

Alian: He is in the house of my mother.

Governor: Asakil, what do you know about this?

Asakil: Pula is with Alian.

Governor (to Ambutong): Now you were telling me a whole lot of things, I do not care about, and that have very little to do with what the question was. Now answer me this. You want to fight with me? (Ambutong horrified denies). Why do you permit this stealing to go on after I forbade you to do it?

Ambutong: - Two Sundays ago I lost again...

Governor: Answer me my question.

Ambutong: - The cattle are at Asakil's place...

Governor: That is not answering my question. I want you to tell me whether or not you are going to obey my order.

Ambutong: I don't allow stealing...we are enemies; so as to taking I don't know...

Governor: I am asking you, whether or not you are going to obey me.

Ambutong: He is taking from me...

Governor: Yes or No?

Ambutong: I obey your orders.

Governor: All right, now I want you to return those 37 goats, the 4 carabaos, the 2 bulls, and the 2 horses.

Ambutong: Ibrahim took 50 goats...

Governor: That is another case. Will you return that property?

Ambutong: Asakil has my cattle and Ibrahim...

Governor: Wil you, Yes or No?

Ambutong: If you say so, they will be returned.

Governor: You will do that, or turn those men over to me for punishment, right now.

Ambutong: All shall be returned

Governor: (to Asakil) Do you understand that?

Asakil: (rejoicing) : Yes.

Ambutong: I will have to investigate the matter and get that people together that stole it.

Governor: When will that be?

Ambutong: The cattle that is in possession of Alian, I will return, but there is a difficulty about Sakati and Timbang; they are Indanan's men/ Two carabaos have gone back to Asakil...

Governor: take them off.

Ambutong: The bulls will be returned,

Governor: when will you do this?

Ambutong: Let Asakil wait until this day next week.

Governor: (to Asakil) you come and report to me if it is not done. (Asakil rejoicing). (To Ambutong) when are you going to return the goats to Ibrahim?

Ambutong: Next Saturday. The goats that are not there will be paid for. – I don't know about the red horse; I know only about the black mare...

Governor: Find the red horse and give it back to Hajerol.

Ambutong: I have not got the red horse...

Governor: Find it and give it back with the black mare.

Ambutong: How can I return what I have not got?

Governor: Are you going to return it or not? I fine you that horse, the next time I fine you a whole lot more. When will you do it.

Ambutong: By next Saturday.

Governor: (To Asakil) You report to me whether it is done. Now Asakil, I have to tell you a few things. You are Dammang's representative, are you not? On October 28, 1903, I wrote a letter to Dammang to return seven horses and one carabao that had been stolen by your men. How about that? From October 28<sup>th</sup> till now is a long time. Why did you not do what I ordered?

Asakil: You will have to mention the names of the men...

Ambutong: The buffalo is with Israel...

Governor: And you have the horses. But, why did you not answer the letter, that I sent you? (no answer) - . How about this? (interpreter reads section of Ambutong's complain, that Dammang brothers Ilig and Akil stole 4 head of cattle and one carabao)

Did you return that cattle?

Asakil: The [claim] that Ambutong makes is from the time before the fight, when we were enemies. I don't make any claims about what happened at that time.

Governor (to Asakil) : Where are the horses?

Asakil: I don't know.

Governor: Where are the carabaos and cattle?

Asakil: I don't know.

Governor: You will give them back by next Saturday.

Asakil: The horses were taken at the time of the fight.

Governor: If you had answered me in time, there had been a chance for you to have an investigation about all that. Now I have you pay for it. Will you turn it over by next Saturday?

Asakil: I have nothing to do with it. The horses are gone.

Governor: Do you want me to go down and put you in Jail for disobedience of orders? I am tired of this. If you want to fight about it, just say so, if not, obey my orders. Will you do it?

Asakil: I will do it. (Ambutong rejoicing)

Governor: You, Ambutong will report to me if it is done, by next Saturday. – I see this is a plain case of repressals, [sic] you are both stealing from each other. I will hold you two headmen responsible now that this business stops, right away. And I want you to come in here and report to me if it does not stop. If one side steals, I

will not tolerate that the other side steals back. You come to me and report it and if there is any fighting to be done, I will do it.

Asakil: I don't want to be responsible for Timbang and Sakati.

Governor: If they don't stop stealing in your country, bring them to me.

Ambutong: If they come in my country, I will kill them, if they resist arrest.

Governor: I am determined to put an end to this thieving. I have called you, both parties. I have heard both sides and made a decision. You have both agreed on a settlement. You both have an old quarrel with each other. I don't see why you should not make up this quarrel right here.

Ambutong: How about the horses that were stolen?....

Governor: That case is too far back – I was not Governor then.

Ambutong: It was last July...

Governor: According to your own statement, as taken out of your mouth, October 28, 1903, it was three months ago at that time. I will not take that up that matter. (Records are looked up)

Asakil: That carabao was taken also.

Governor: You will return it as a fine for not answering my letter. I will not go into history any longer. I want you to make up.

Ambutong: (hesitating) Two weeks ago...

Asakil jumps up and grasps Ambutong's hand, Ambutong will not permit it.

Governor: What is the matter. Asakil wanted to shake hands with you and you refused it. I shall have that recorded.

Ambutong: I want to make a complaint; about 2 Sundays ago I lost a horse....

Governor: I cannot go into this. You had a chance to make your claim, before, it is too late now.

Ambutong: I mentioned it. (Reference is made to the notes of the stenographer, found correct.) Panglima Jaal owned the horse, he gave it Hussein(?) to take care of. ....

Asakil: Don't record that. I turned the horse already over to Maharaja Sussula.

Ambutong: The horse was turned over to me to take care of.

Governor: You stole the horse from him, so you return it to him. (Ambutong and Abdullah wisper [sic])

Ambutong: There was another horse...

Ula (Dammang's son): no there was not.

Ambutong's followers: There were two horses....

Governor: Now you stop that kind of business. I am not going to let you bring up all the old stories and claims. I never would come to an end with you. I called up both sides, and acted on your original charges, as recorded here. I want you now to make up and shake hands before me. Asakil offered to shake hands with you, but you refused.

Ambutong: I shook hands with him.

Governor: Get up and shake hands, I want to see it. (They shake) also with Ula (They shake). All of you shake hands, Abdullah, get up there, and shake hands with Sakil and Ula, Alian you too, it will do you good. And remember that means that you stop stealing. (All shake hands across the aisle).

I have a Koran here, I want you two (Asakil and Ambutong) to promise by an oath on the Koran that you will keep what you agreed upon to-day. You Asakil take that oath in the name of your brother and your own. Who won't take that oath, don't obey my orders.

Ambutong (Oath is administered by Habib Mura)

"I will stop stealing and keep peace with everybody."

"I will do everything I promised to-day".

"I will not protect thieves"

"If any of my people won't obey, I will turn them over to the Governor."

If I swear false, God will curse me."

Asakil: Same oath.

Governor: All right now, I looking to you now that you keep your promise.

Ambutong: Ibrahim should return the 50 goats...

Governor: Never mind that; I will see into this. You see that his goats are returned.



## Appendix G:

Datu Pangiran calls on the Governor of Sulu, March 26, 1904.<sup>1</sup>

### S U L U G O V E R N O R

Jolo, P.I., March 26, 1904.

Datto Pangiran, Dayang Dayang Tata, Panglima Tatung (Tata's husband) of Tubigdayan, Ubian Island, and Panglima Julkani of Ubian Island call on the Governor.

Datto Pangiran came to say goodbye [sic] before returning to Laminusa. The Governor directs him to advise his sister Dayang Dayang Galu to come here. Pangiran about the titles of the Sultan and the Dattos to the different islands.

"The Spaniards turned 12 islands over to me: Laminusa, Tara, Buli Pulul, Musa, Manobol, part of Pandokan, one river in Pangutaran (Suba) , part of Tonquil (formerly of Panglima Idiris), part of Tabawan, part of Ubian (Dayang Tata, other part follows Kalbi), Bun Bun in Jolo, part of Tapul (Panglima Baldji).

There are certain rights that belong to the Sultan; whoever is Sultan these rights will go with him. The islands are divided between the Dattos. The Datto Maharajah Deinda Tahula used to be the greatest Datto, had the most following (father of Datto Dakolah) ; he was the brother of my grandmother. If the Governor is interested I can give him the all the old history of the Moros.

"Seripul Hassim was the first Datto that came here, from Mekka [sic]. Abbu Bakal went to Johore, his son was Seilal Aberdeen. He came to Jolo was made Sultan and called himself Seriul Hassim. This was over ten generations ago. The following are his descendents. [sic]

His son was Kamaluddin, his son was Muhamad Diladji, his son was Muhamad Opo, his son was Pangiran Budinan (the same as my name) , his son was Marutun Bungsu, his son was Marutun Krama, his son was Baraluddin, his son was Amirul Uminin, his son was Salapuddin, his son Sakilura who was the brother of Jamalul Kiram (same father, different mother), Sakirula's sons were Israil, Buyoc, Idding; Israils son was my father, Aliuddin, Buyoc's son was Jamalul, Idding's son was Israel, who had no sons. Jamalul's son are Indal, Ujong and Dayang Dayang Galu, Indal's son was Jamalul Alam the father of the present Sultan Jamalul Kiram. "

Q. You spoke of certain rights?

A. The people of certain islands were supposed to be our followers. But now everybody wants to get big and rule himself.

The Governor admonishes Dayang Dayang Tata, to see that Oto Banig a Panglima of Ubian comes in to submit himself to the governor.

A.: He is Kalbi's follower.

Q.: You can tell him to come anyway.

About Smuggling in Ubian, customs duties.

About Tungaln and Amil. About Amid of Tapul.

About the Sultan levying taxes in Siassi and Laminusa. Pangiran is instructed to inform the C.O. in Siassi, who will get the Governor's instructions in such case.

About Opium smoking. Pangiran asks for whiskey to prepare medicine for himself against the opium habit.

Official Interpreter.

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 8, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

## Appendix H:

Hadji Butu reports to the Governor about Ambutong, April 30, 1904.<sup>1</sup>

Jolo, P.I., April 30, 1904.

Hadji Butu reports to the Governor.

Many people say that Panglima Ambutong does not want to accept the changes made by the American Government. ; he would not accept the slave law; he prefers to die and get burned rather than [sic] accept American rule. He is getting his property in his fort. He does not want the Sultan to go to Manila; if he does go, he would not accept him any more as Sultan. ; he also would not accept the Governor. When Indanan and Dammang heard this talk and that Ambutong carried his goods into the fort, they said it was a disgrace to let Ambutong talk that way. They want to fight him, because they say that the Governor is the support of all the Moro people, and not only they but also the Sultan is upheld by the Governor. If he would allow them they would fight Ambutong. Hadji Butu thinks it would be good to let them fight, because it would finish up their ammunition. – Hadji Butu thinks they want to fight him because he is their old enemy, and is too independant [sic] for them. He won't let them boss him. – Another talk is, that Ambutong does not want anybody to interfere with trials in his country. – He knows that he cannot resist the Governor, it is just strongheadedness and stubbornness. – If it comes to a fight, about 40 would stay with Ambutong. His house is within the cotta, about a mile from the sea shore, at Bawisan. The cotta is something like Hassan's cotta, but the walls not so high.

Official Interpreter.

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 9, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

## **Appendix I:**

Extract of an agreement on theft between Parang and Lati Chiefs.<sup>1</sup>

EXTRACT OF AN AGREEMENT between the Parang and Lati Chiefs, dated Jolo, May 27, 1904.

1. The chiefs will watch their followers and forbid them to steal and to buy stolen property. Anybody violating this agreement will be punished.
2. Any person buying or selling will have the same witnessed by the chief. Anybody violating this agreement will be punished as a thief.
3. Any citizen of Parang selling cattle or horses to Lati and vice versa must have a letter from his chief that the animal has a good title; if he has not such a letter from his chief he will be arrested and tried as a thief.
4. As for returning and claiming cattle and horses from each other, we beg our father, the Governor to waive this act as it will give only a great deal of trouble to usall [sic], because our father, the Governor, said that property lost only since he is Governor of Jolo can be claimed, so we all think that many will be cursed (take a false oath) because property lost five years ago will be claimed and sworn to as having been lost since our father's arrival in Jolo.

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<sup>1</sup> Folder 10, Container 55, Official File Cuba & Philippines, Hugh L. Scott Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

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