



Borneo and Beyond: Reflections on
Borneo Studies, Anthropology and the
Social Sciences

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Working Paper Series 3

Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Gadong 2013

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Borneo and Beyond: Reflections on Borneo Studies, Anthropology and the Social Sciences

Victor T. King

Abstract

In many respects, this paper is a starting point in the consideration of research on Borneo as a field of studies which has both relied upon and contributed to the more general field of anthropology and the wider social sciences. I believe that this represents the first attempt to take stock of and to reflect on what has been achieved in scholarship on Borneo in the post-war period and it has also considered the post-war colonial legacy and what has been achieved in research during the period of independence in Malaysian and Indonesian Borneo and Brunei Darussalam and in the era of nation-building and development. In presenting an overview of the field I have reflected on the literature and attempted to arrange and evaluate it in a more consistent and ordered fashion. I have used an overlapping set of organisational principles based on chronology, themes, individual legacies and contributions, and debates and controversies. There is much more I could have referred to and discussed in this introductory overview but the intention has been to stimulate reflection and debate on the development of our understanding about the societies and cultures of Borneo since the 1940s.

Keywords: Borneo Studies; anthropology; social sciences; chronology; major themes; individual legacies; debates and controversies.

The Context

In many respects this is a very personal review of the anthropological and related social science literature on Borneo which has been produced since the Second World War. It is impossible to cover even a reasonably comprehensive segment of what is an extremely large amount of material. Therefore, I have had to be selective, though I trust in attempting to evaluate some of the major achievements of anthropological research on Borneo, I have addressed those contributions which have been recognised and acknowledged as of some scholarly significance.

This has been an interesting and constructive exercise for me in that I have not been actively engaged in field research in Borneo since the 1990s, though I have attempted to keep in touch with the development of this field of studies, primarily by continuing to read in the literature, reviewing books on Borneo, supervising research students, assessing papers for publication and examining research theses. However, within the last year from mid-2012 I have begun to take up where I left off and, on my return to research on Borneo after a relatively long absence, I thought it would be worthwhile to take stock of past and current achievements in preparation for considering how we might formulate and carry forward a research agenda for the future. What struck me forcefully in examining and, in some cases re-examining both published work and doctoral materials produced during the past two decades at least, is the preoccupation with issues of identity and cultural politics. Of course, there is much else in this recent literature on Borneo but it seems to me that the theme of identity and more specifically ethnicity and ethnic relations is one of increasing and significant interest in the literature, and one which has resonance in other parts of Southeast Asia as well.

In order to give this theme the attention it deserves I have devoted a separate paper to the relationships between culture and identity (see King, 2012a), but I do make reference to some of this literature in this general paper. By way of introduction we have to pose the question why it is that we have witnessed this upsurge in concern and interest in Borneo Studies in issues of identity construction and transformation, and the ways in which identities are formed, sustained and changed in social and cultural encounters and in the context of processes of globalisation? (see, for example King, 2012b; Zawawi Ibrahim, 2012)?

Cultural politics has been an important phenomenon across Southeast Asia in recent years (see, for example, Kahn, 1995, 1998, 2004), but I think in the Borneo context that this is in

no small part due to the dramatic events in Indonesian Kalimantan from late 1996 to 2001 when serious and bloody conflicts ensued between the native Dayaks, Madurese and Malays in the provinces of West and Central Kalimantan. In some respects they form part of a wider series of ethnic conflicts in other parts of the Indonesian archipelago following the collapse of Suharto's New Order in 1998, the institution of policies of decentralisation and the politicisation of ethnic identities. Nevertheless, some of the conflicts pre-dated these events and evidence of Dayak-Madurese tensions and anti-Chinese actions go back to at least the 1950s (Tanasaldy, 2012). Therefore these inter-ethnic encounters involved not only various Dayak groups but also Malays, immigrant Madurese and Chinese in what were primarily openly conflictual relations.

Even from 1945 there was a politicisation of ethnicity in the continuing struggle between the Indonesian nationalists and the Dutch colonialists, and before the introduction of Sukarno's Guided Democracy in 1959 and the implementation of the highly centralised and authoritarian policies of the New Order from 1966, the Dayaks of Kalimantan had already begun to organise themselves politically and to build a pan-Dayak identity (König, 2012). This occurred well before the non-Muslim indigenous populations of Sarawak and British North Borneo (Sabah) began to develop and express a Dayak and other sub-Dayak identities in the run up to independence within Malaysia in 1963 (see for example, Leigh (1974; Zawawi Ibrahim, 2008a, 2008b). Dayak identities were also formed in relation to, or we might say in opposition to the development of politically conscious movements among immigrant communities, particularly the Chinese, across the former territories of British and Dutch Borneo. After 1963 the Malaysian Borneo territories were also drawn into the model or template of ethnic difference which had been progressively rationalised in Peninsular Malaysia. The sultanate of Brunei too has addressed the issue of ethnicity, language and culture which it has embedded in racial or ethnic categories and distinctions in its 1959 Constitution (see, for example, King, 1994a).

I have already indicated elsewhere (King, 2012a) that even though the identification of ethnic groups and categories has enjoyed some prominence and a long history in Borneo Studies, it has become an increasing preoccupation during the past two decades with, for example, the important stimulus provided by the publication of the four special issues of the Sarawak Museum in 1989, organised primarily in terms of the major ethnic groups identified in the state (Chin and Kedit, 1989). These followed the government-sponsored *Cultural Heritage of*

Sarawak Symposium held in Kuching in 1988 to mark 25 years of Sarawak's independence within Malaysia.

Other key moments were the publication of Jérôme Rousseau's *Central Borneo: Ethnic Identity and Social Life in a Stratified Society* (1990), Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place* (1993) and Bernard Sellato's *Nomades et Sedentarisation à Borneo. Histoire Economique et Sociale* (1989) and *Nomads of the Borneo Rainforest* (1994, and see 1986). A more recent manifestation of this rapidly expanding interest in identity is the edited book by Zawawi Ibrahim *Representation, Identity and Multiculturalism in Sarawak* (2008a, 2008b), and Peter Metcalf's tour de force *The Life of the Longhouse: an Archaeology of Ethnicity* (2010).

The opportunity for me to bring together a wide range of literature on the theme of culture and identity in a comparative way across Borneo was provided at the Borneo Research Council international conference held at Universiti Brunei Darussalam on 25-28 June 2012 (see King, 2012a). This exercise resulted in further developments which suggested that it was necessary to embark on a more wide-ranging consideration of the achievements and challenges of anthropological and wider social science research on Borneo. Through the support of the Institute of Asian Studies, which has Borneo Studies as one of its five main research themes, it was decided that we should organise a follow up workshop to enable several Borneo-based researchers to assemble and discuss what scholarly contributions have been made to our understanding of the societies and cultures of Borneo in the social sciences, and particularly in anthropology, during the post-war period in order to begin to indicate likely future directions of research. This introductory paper 'Borneo and Beyond' served as a means to structure the workshop discussions; it has undergone several revisions since then and appears here in rather more considered, detailed and extended form.

My focus in this review and overview is on topical issues which are at the forefront of concerns about social and cultural transformations in post-war Borneo; some of these concerns also have important policy dimensions. I have also attempted to capture chronologically significant moments and debates during the past fifty years of research on Borneo, primarily in the field of anthropology. Of course in the past, there have been several surveys of research, and proposals for undertaking urgent anthropological research and bibliographical compilations, but after hearing and participating in the discussions in the

workshop we are in the process of compiling an edited book which covers our major findings and observations and which also draws on contributors who did not attend the workshop.

At this juncture it might be helpful to set out the main objectives of the workshop: these were

- (1) to widen the agenda beyond anthropology, though this remains a vitally important focus in order to examine the contribution of the social sciences more generally to our understanding of Borneo societies and cultures and their transformations since the Second World War (which will also include the multidisciplinary fields of development studies, environmental studies, social policy studies, cultural studies, tourism studies and gender studies);
- (2) to address a range of conceptual issues as well as more substantive problem areas in that, though Borneo Studies has quite understandably been preoccupied with ‘real-world’ issues of change and development and with the application of social science knowledge to practical, everyday problems and processes, there have been some significant conceptual and theoretical contributions as well;
- (3) to locate Borneo Studies within the wider studies of Malaysia and Indonesia and within the context of Southeast Asian Studies; widening the frame of reference also applies to the only fully national territory in Borneo, Negara Brunei Darussalam;
- (4) to situate Borneo Studies within disciplinary contexts and examine the contribution of the study of the island’s societies, cultures and transformations to the development of the social science disciplines more generally;
- (5) to look to the future and try to determine fruitful and important lines of scholarly enquiry; in other words on the basis of what has been done so far and what is currently exciting the attention of researchers, what are the urgent matters which we need to address and to elaborate on in the future and which have not received the attention they deserve?; and what is the scope for future disciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration?
- (6) to examine the higher profile controversies in Borneo Studies in order to establish the crucial issues in the social sciences which have been debated and which have been of sufficient importance to warrant an engagement in scholarly exchanges.

Overviews and General Books

There have been several reviews and overviews of disciplines and subjects within the field of Borneo Studies, a significant number of which have tended to give prominence to work in Sarawak. The Borneo Research Council has also called for a series of overviews in particular disciplines and subject areas. There are also several single author publications which have attempted to cover the whole island as well as edited compilations. I shall indicate what I consider to be some of the most significant contributions later. With regard to compilations we should emphasise the importance of the monumental 4-volume *Encyclopedia of Iban Studies* edited by Vinson and Joanne Sutlive (2001); within that there is the important overview paper by George N. Appell (at least up until about a decade ago) on Iban Studies (2001: 741-785). The categories he devises, though specific to the Iban in relation to more general Borneo ethnography, do provide the beginnings of a more general categorisation of research. I should also draw attention to Appell's bold statement about Iban Studies because it provides us with an orientation to the general field of Borneo Studies and it does provide a focus for debate. In other words, to what extent and in what ways has the study of the Iban and culturally and historically related populations in West Kalimantan provided an agenda for anthropological research?

In this connection, I think it can be argued that of all anthropological monographs on Borneo communities it has been (J.D.) Derek Freeman's very widely quoted *Report on the Iban* (1970) and *Iban Agriculture* (1955a) which have been the most influential and which have provided a baseline and set a standard for the study of cognatic societies and for our understanding of shifting or swidden agricultural economies in the humid tropics. It is also true that of all Borneo peoples it is the Iban, both in Sarawak and in West Kalimantan who have been the most extensively studied across a wide range of subjects and themes. After all only the Iban have a four-volume encyclopaedia devoted to them and several dictionaries of their language. Students of other Borneo societies most certainly view with enormous envy the considerable level of scholarly work and publications on the Iban.

In support of their importance George Appell also says:

This uniqueness of [Iban] culture and optimistic vitality have brought researchers from around the world to study Ibanic society and culture, not only to make an ethnographic record for posterity but also to learn what contributions a study of their society and culture would make to social

theory.Furthermore, because of this extensive study, Iban society now provides the model, the background phenomena, on which all other ethnographic inquiries of Borneo societies can proceed. Iban research has informed the discussion of many theoretical issues in anthropological inquiry, particularly those dealing with the structure of cognatic societies, i.e., societies without any form of descent group. Thus, Iban culture forms the fundamental grounds against which other cultures are compared in order to elicit cultural information and to test hypotheses in social theory (2001: 741).

With specific reference to the study of social organisation and kinship I had also noted some time ago that Freeman's publications on the Iban had 'provided the base-line for comparison and most Bornean scholars have assessed at least some of their findings in relation to Freeman's observations on such features of Iban society as the *bilek-family* (or household), the kindred and the longhouse' (King, 1978a: 6). Furthermore, George P. Murdock's edited book on *Social Structure in Southeast Asia* (1960a) served further to consolidate the importance and influence of Freeman's Iban material by including a chapter by Freeman in his volume as a case-study of a cognatic social system which would serve to provide templates for 'the types and organizational variations of cognatic societies' (1960b: 7).

In exploring his particular proposition in relation to the importance of the Iban for anthropological contemplation and theorising, Appell also devises a very useful categorisation of the major themes in research on the Iban. Some of these can most certainly provide the basis for a wider categorisation of the literature on Borneo Studies whilst others are rather more specific to the Iban.

Appell's categories for his discussion of the Iban literature comprise:

- (1) Social organisation and the nature of cognatic societies;
- (2) The cultural ecology of swidden agriculture;
- (3) The analysis of land tenure;
- (4) The nature of egalitarian society;
- (5) Ethnogenesis;
- (6) Gender studies;
- (7) Warfare, headhunting and the expansion of the Ibans;
- (8) Religion, ritual and symbolism;
- (9) Oral literature;
- (10) Regional variation in Ibanic cultures; and
- (11) Problems of social change.

These categories not only reflect the emphases in the literature on the Iban, which of course also reflect some of the major characteristics of Iban society, culture and history, but they also reflect some of George Appell's own theoretical concerns, particularly in his own work on social organisation, land tenure and social change. Of course, there has also been a

significant amount of research which has emerged since the publication of his paper which would require the elaboration of his categories. But if we wish to use this categorisation for a more general exploration of the literature on Borneo then obviously we would need to widen some of the categories and also rearrange them. Nevertheless, the strength of Appell's paper is that he provides a detailed summary and evaluation of the literature in the categories which he formulates. Let us consider these in more detail.

- (1) Social organisation and the nature of cognatic societies is certainly a theme which has played a major part in research on Borneo, and the Iban have been a paradigmatic case in this respect, as I have already said. I would suggest that this theme should include such other organisational principles as residence and territory, age, class, status and power (I would bring the issues raised by Iban egalitarianism, and the debates on equality and inequality, into the general category of social organisation), and likewise gender (Appell's category of gender studies seems more appropriate in a general consideration of social organisation). I consider issues raised by debates about cognation later in this paper.
- (2) The emphasis on the cultural ecology of swidden agriculture could be broadened to include a wide range of studies on rural development, agricultural modernisation and resettlement among the Iban and other populations in Borneo and I would bring land tenure into this category in addition to broader environmental issues, and environmental history (see, for example, Wadley, 2005). Issues of development became increasingly important in research undertaken from the 1980s as we shall see in my chronological treatment of the literature.
- (3) The concept of ethnogenesis, which refers to the emergence of identities and the ways in which groupings and categories of people come to a consciousness of their difference from others in what has come to be called 'ethnic' terms and the ways in which this consciousness is expressed, sustained and transformed, perhaps requires a greater stress on inter-ethnic relations and boundary-crossing, and, as with the work of such researchers as John Postill, an increasing emphasis on the whole field of the media, nation-building and identities (1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2008; and Barlocco, 2008, 2009, 2010). I would bring Appell's category of regional variation in Ibanic cultures into this category of ethnogenesis, inter-ethnic relations and identity. Later in this paper I attempt a categorisation of the literature on identities in Borneo.

- (4) Warfare, headhunting and the expansion of the Iban is a very important theme in Iban history, but processes of migration, expansion and inter-ethnic conflicts have a more general importance in Borneo, and certainly these considerations along with ethnohistory can embrace other literature as well. I make reference to some of this literature later, but, if space allowed I would have provided a more detailed examination of research on movement and migration.
- (5) Religion, ritual and symbolism can also serve as a general category along with processes of religious conversion. I devote a separate section later to this important field of studies.
- (6) Although Appell indicates oral literature within his major categories we might want to expand this into the fields of language and linguistics to provide again a more general delimitation of a field of studies. An evaluation of the literature on language and linguistics requires a level of expertise which I do not possess, and I have only made brief reference to some of the available research in this paper.
- (7) Problems of social change (perhaps we should extend this to cultural, economic and political change) also embrace rural-urban migration and urbanisation, and this area of study both within the Iban literature and more widely should include such matters as urban identities and the emergence of an urban middle class (we should note that in the concern with migration, perhaps for the Iban at least more attention might be given to the changing institution of *bejalai* to carry on Peter Kedit's work [1993]); there is also the interesting phenomenon of the Iban diaspora (and this applies to other Borneo communities as well) now residing and working outside Borneo (in Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore especially). Studies of tourism are gaining ground in Borneo, but they can also be included within the general field of social, cultural and economic change. I touch on some of this literature in my consideration of ethnic identities, and this category of research also overlaps with my section 4 above.
- (8) There are other areas which are not really covered directly in Appell's categorisation, one of which is that of material culture and museum studies. I refer to some of this literature in my consideration of identities, but the examination of material culture does demand a much more detailed review.
- (9) There is also the category of film, photography, dance and performance. Again I have made only brief reference to this important field of studies.

Therefore, it is my view that with appropriate modifications in Appell's scheme there seems to me to be several themes which can be applied across Borneo. However, I think a thematic categorisation should be brought together with a chronological treatment of the field of studies whilst also drawing attention to significant debates and controversies and to the work of prominent scholars who have made major contributions to our understanding of social and cultural organisation and change.

There is more to say about Appell's contribution at this juncture. Given his long involvement in Borneo Studies, his central role in the editing and production of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* and his coordination of gatherings of Borneo scholars, particularly at past annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, George Appell has also produced important Borneo-wide edited volumes. One of his major contributions to the more general study of cognation is his: *The Societies of Borneo: Explorations in the Theory of Cognatic Social Structure* (1976a) along with another edited book which covers a range of issues including religion and symbolism: *Studies in Borneo Societies: Social Process and Anthropological Explanation* (1976b). He has also undertaken other surveys of social science work on Borneo, for example his edited volume with Leigh Wright *The Status of Social Science Research in Borneo* (1978, and see Appell, 1969a), and his more specific contributions to the evaluation of social science research in Sarawak (for example, 1977) and Sabah (for example, 1968) and his direction of our attention to urgent anthropological research which is required for Borneo (for example, 1969b, 1970).

In addition, I suppose my recently published 'Borneo Studies: Perspectives from a Jobbing Social Scientist' (2009: in *Akademika*), and within that references to anthropological and sociological studies of development, change and modernisation in Sarawak [1986]) might also serve as a means of orientation. Although I have also been considering some of the literature on Borneo in terms of categories of study or fields of interest, I have also tended to undertake these exercises in a chronological way, and perhaps we need a combination of categorisations both by time period and fields of study or themes.

Let me also list here some Borneo-wide contributions with a view to indicating the kinds of themes which have excited interest in a comparative way: the Borneo Research Council's Proceedings series usually covers the whole island. The themes address some of the categories which I have outlined in relation to Appell's categories. These edited volumes (numbers 1 to 8) and some volumes in the Monograph Series embrace a number of themes,

but are broadly within the areas of social change, rural development, environmental change; language and oral traditions; gender; material culture; and religion and ritual. They are in the sequence of publication: Vinson Sutlive, *Change and Development in Borneo* (1993); James T. Collins, *Language and Oral Traditions in Borneo* (1993); Peter W. Martin, *Patterns of Language Use in Borneo* (1995); Victor T. King, *Tourism in Borneo* (1995); Robert L. Winzeler, *Indigenous Architecture in Borneo* (1998); Victor T. King, *Rural Development and Social Science Research: Case Studies from Borneo* (1999a); Peter Eaton, *Environment and Conservation in Borneo* (1999); and Peter W. Martin and Peter G. Sercombe, *Languages in Borneo: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives* (2009).

Some of the edited volumes in the BRC's Monograph Series also demonstrate Borneo-wide ambitions: Vinson Sutlive, *Female and Male in Borneo: Contributions and Challenges to Gender Studies* (1991); Robert L. Winzeler, *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo* (1993); and William D. Wilder, *Journeys of the Soul: Studies of Death, Burial, and Reburial Practices in Borneo* (2003). Other general reference materials are located in the *Borneo Research Bulletin* (and see the valuable index of the Bulletin, volumes 1-42 [2012] compiled by the Borneo Research Council), *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, *The Brunei Museum Journal*, *The Sabah Society Journal*, the publications of the Sabah Museum, and Institut Dayakologi in Pontianak, particularly the Institute's *Kalimantan Review*, as well as in the journals and publications of the universities and other research institutions in Borneo such as the *Sarawak Development Journal*, including the proceedings of the Borneo-Kalimantan Inter-University Conferences which were held at UNIMAS, Sarawak, and in Pontianak and Banjarmasin. In addition, the local interest in Borneo seems to be on the increase with the recent launch at Universiti Malaya of the *Borneo Research Journal*.

There are also a number of bibliographies which require our attention, among others those by Jérôme Rousseau on Central Borneo (1988; and see 1970), Jan Avé, Victor King and Joke de Wit on West Kalimantan (1983), the checklist of Iban materials in the Iban Encyclopedia (King, et al, 2001), A.A. Cense and E.M. Uhlenbeck on Borneo languages (1958), Hans J.B. Combrink, Craig Soderberg, Michael E. Boutin and Alanna Y. Boutin (compilers) *Indigenous Groups of Sabah: an Annotated Bibliography of Linguistic and Anthropological Sources* (2

Vols, 2008; earlier editions, 1984, 1986, 2006), and Mohd. Yussop's bibliography of bibliographies (2001).

In addition, there are also general books on Borneo which contain a wealth of information and important bibliographical material to assist us in our data gathering. Those which immediately come to mind include: Jan Avé and Victor T. King, *Borneo. The People of the Weeping Forest: Tradition and Change in Borneo* (1986a, and the Dutch edition 1986b); Bernard Sellato, *Nomades et Sedentarisation à Borneo. Histoire Economique et Sociale* (1989), and in English as *Nomads of the Borneo Rainforest: The Economics, Politics, and Ideology of Settling Down* (1994), and his *Innermost Borneo: Studies in Dayak Cultures* (2002); Mark Cleary and Peter Eaton, *Borneo. Change and Development* (1992); Victor T. King, *Essays on Borneo Societies* (1978b), and *The Peoples of Borneo* (1993); Harold Brookfield, Lesley Potter and Yvonne Byron, *In Place of the Forest: Environmental and Socio-economic Transformation in Borneo and the Eastern Malay Peninsula* (1995); Christine Padoch and Nancy Lee Peluso, *Borneo in Transition: People, Forests, Conservation, and Development* (1996); Robert L. Winzeler, *Indigenous Peoples and the State: Politics, Land, and Ethnicity in the Malayan Peninsula and Borneo* (1997); Cristina Eghenter, Bernard Sellato and G. Simon Devung, *Social Science Research and Conservation Management in the Interior of Borneo* (2003); Reed L. Wadley, *Histories of the Borneo Environment. Economic, Political and Social Dimensions of Change and Continuity* (2005); Fadzilah Majid Cooke, *State, Communities and Forests in Contemporary Borneo* (2006); Peter G. Sercombe and Bernard Sellato, *Beyond the Green Myth: Hunters-Gatherers of Borneo in the Twenty-first Century* (2007); and Gerard A. Persoon and Marion Osseweijer, *Reflections on the Heart of Borneo* (2008).

My First Encounters

Having provided a general bibliographical and categorical orientation I think it appropriate in my excursion into this field of studies to look back to the late 1960s and the early 1970s when I encountered Borneo as a research student to consider what the scholarly landscape looked like at that time. Hopefully this will provide a context for this review. In the course of about three years of reading around the ethnography, anthropology, history and geography of Borneo at that time, I think I managed to cover much of what had been published. If we

compare what was available then to what we have now, then the development of the field of studies has been quite staggering, though there are still major gaps in our knowledge, as we would expect. But for a recent newcomer to the field there is now an enormous literature to cover. We will obviously need to ponder where the major gaps in our knowledge remain and this in situations which are fast changing.

What was it like then? There was not much that inspired me from the pre-Second World War period. There were of course the ethnographic compilations of Charles Hose and William McDougall, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912) and of Henry Ling Roth *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (1896), and Owen Rutter *The Pagans of North Borneo* (1929). But for me there were two stimulating publications which had both theoretical and ethnographic interest: Robert Hertz's *Death and the Right Hand* (translated by Rodney and Claudia Needham and published in 1960), which comprised two essays: one on *A Contribution to the Collective Representation of Death* (1907), which stimulated Peter Metcalf's admirable work on Berawan funeral rites *A Borneo Journey into Death. Berawan Eschatology from its Rituals* (1982, and see 1981) and with Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: the Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (1991); and Hertz's *The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: a Study in Religious Polarity* (1909), which gave rise to a body of work and debate in the late 1970s and 1980s on symbolism and structural analysis in Borneo, in which I was involved, especially in an exchange with Peter Metcalf in his paper 'Birds and Deities in Borneo' (1976) (King, 1977, and see King 1980, 1985a; and Sellato, 1994).

The analysis of symbolism and symbolic structures within the general field of religion and ritual had also influenced Erik Jensen in the 1970s in his study of Iban religion (1974), which was hardly surprising given that his supervisor was Rodney Needham, and Needham had edited at that time *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, celebrating the work of Robert Hertz and the *Année Sociologique* (1973). These exercises brought the anthropology of Borneo into a loose alliance with structural anthropology, the study of symbolism and the influential school of French ethnology which had been founded by Emile Durkheim. The other important work, for me at least, was Hans Schärer's *Ngaju Religion: the Conception of God among a South Borneo People* (1963), again translated by Rodney Needham from Schärer's 1946 publication *Die Gottesidee der Ngadju Dajak in Sud-Borneo* (1946; and see Schiller, 2005; Schwartzberg, 1994). This served to connect Borneo anthropology to the important stream of structuralist analysis which had emerged from Leiden and the studies of Indonesian cultures undertaken by Dutch scholars including J.P.B.

de Josselin de Jong, WH Rassers, P.E. de Josselin to Jong and their students (see, for example, P.E.de Josselin de Jong, 1977).

It is important to note that the preoccupation with the ideas and rituals surrounding death in Borneo Studies has continued and gained momentum, which for me demonstrates the enormous importance which this has had not just in the anthropology of Borneo but more widely in the anthropology of religion (see, in particular Wilder [2003], and Couderc and Sillander, [2012]).

A Chronology

Early Years and the Colonial Social Science Research Council

Let me now give you some sense of what I have been examining and what I have considered important and, in some cases, stimulating during my past 40 years of engagement with Borneo Studies. When I came to this field of studies we were confronted with the overwhelming importance of studies of Sarawak; the dominance of Sarawak in this area of work can still be felt and it stemmed in large part from two significant factors: first, the internationally recognised status of the Sarawak Museum both because and in spite of Tom Harrisson (I say in spite of because of the tensions and conflicts between Harrisson and various of the overseas visiting anthropologists [including Edmund Leach, Derek Freeman and Rodney Needham]; and see Heimann, 1998, Sheppard, 1977, and Winzeler, 2008; and obituaries of Harrisson by, among others, Sandin, 1976, McCredie, 1976, and O'Connor, 1976). The Museum was founded in 1888 and *The Sarawak Museum Journal* first printed in 1911. Secondly, there were the major anthropological studies sponsored by the Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSRC) in Sarawak in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

These pioneer developments gave Sarawak a considerable advantage over other parts of Borneo in the formulation, organisation, coordination and execution of research. Harrisson had departed Sarawak and its Museum by the mid-1960s, and then, among many other activities, spent time helping develop the Brunei Museum in collaboration with P.M. Dato Shariffuddin and contributing to the work and research of the Sabah Museum (McCredie, 1976; Harrisson and Harrisson, 1971). When I arrived in Kuching for the first time in 1972 Benedict Sandin was Curator and Government Ethnologist, and, among other activities, Stephen Morris, Clifford Sather and Hatta Solhee were working from the Museum and were engaged in the Miri-Bintulu regional planning study; Michael Heppell, a student of Derek

Freeman, had also arrived to do research on the Ulu Ai Iban (1975). The Museum was the magnet which brought researchers together. Peter Eaton also appeared in order to undertake his doctoral research on education and school leavers (1974). Carol Rubenstein was based in the Museum involved in her oral literature project (1973), and Stephanie Morgan had returned from field research in West Kalimantan (1980).

Moreover, although there had not been a great deal of research undertaken in the 1940s and 1950s across Borneo, the anthropological domain was dominated by the work that had emerged from the Colonial Social Science Research Council studies of (J.D.) Derek Freeman (1916-2001), W.R. (William Robert) (Bill) Geddes (1916-1989), H.S. (Harold Stephen) Morris (1913-1993) and T'ien Ju-K'ang (1916-) which were presided over by Raymond Firth (1901-2002), as the then Secretary of the Council, and instigated by Edmund Leach (1910-1989; Strickland, 1989) who had been commissioned by the Council to undertake social science surveys of Sarawak and North Borneo (see also Tambiah, 1998). Subsequently Stephen Morris provided an informal, insightful and amusing insider's view of the Council-sponsored socio-economic studies which were undertaken by what local administrators referred to as the 'socio-comics' (1977).

The Commonwealth Connection

Interestingly, the New Zealand connection was very marked in these early CSSRC studies (Freeman was a New Zealander, though with an Australian father and mother; Geddes also hailed from New Zealand; and though born in England and spending his childhood in Rhodesia, Morris's mother was a New Zealander; Raymond Firth too was from New Zealand). With regard to the CSSRC studies, although Leach had paid a week-long visit to the Crown Colony of North Borneo in November 1947, and produced a report, the momentum which he had achieved in neighbouring Sarawak was never attained in North Borneo other than the subsequent study undertaken by Monica Glyn-Jones of the Penampang Dusun and the report which she produced in 1953. Given the brevity of his stay in North Borneo Leach's report on a *Visit to Kemabong, Labuan and Interior Residency, British North Borneo, 1-8 November, 1947*, could never match his much more ambitious, wide-ranging and insightful *Report on the Possibilities of a Social Economic Survey of Sarawak* (1948) published as *Social Science Research in Sarawak* in 1950.

In North Borneo there was no obvious research institution to promote field studies, and, though its roots go back some way, a museum was not formally established there until 1965, when it was housed modestly in a shop house in Gaya Street. In Kalimantan the situation was yet again altogether different; the turmoil occasioned by the Indonesian revolution and the continuing economic and political instability under Sukarno in the late 1950s and 1960s never provided the environment within which sustained social science research could be undertaken or scholarly institutions established and developed. The Indonesians were valiantly attempting to build an educational infrastructure in a situation of economic decline and the Dutch had long departed.

Finally, it was not until the late 1960s when research began to be encouraged by the Brunei government in the remaining British dependency in northern Borneo, still under British protection; the Brunei Museum was established in 1965 and it is then that we witness the first stirrings of anthropological-sociological research there. We should note here the important pioneering role that museums, especially in the northern Borneo territories, played in the promotion of advanced research, but their position in this regard has increasingly been marginalised since the 1980s with the establishment of universities and their importance in funding, organising and sponsoring field research in the social sciences. Nevertheless, there are fields within which museums continue to play an important role, particularly in archaeological and biological research, and in such obvious fields as material culture and local technologies.

For me the highlights of the 1950s and the early 1960s were undoubtedly Freeman's publications on Iban agriculture and social organisation (1955a, 1955b), and specifically on the concept of the kindred with special reference to his Iban ethnography, and on the Iban domestic family (*bilek-family*) and its developmental cycle. At that time the Sarawak Museum through Tom Harrisson and his staff were increasingly involved in archaeological excavations at the Niah Caves and Santubong, and aside from that Harrisson published his rather idiosyncratic *World Within: a Borneo Story* on the upland Kelabit (1959a) and was undertaking research on the Malays of south-west Sarawak as well as keeping up a prodigious published output in his own *Sarawak Museum Journal* and other regional journals (1970). Rodney Needham was also pursuing his research on the Penan of Sarawak in 1951-52 (1953) and publishing papers on them in the 1950s and early 1960s, though neither Harrisson nor Needham were part of these earlier specially commissioned CSSRC studies (but Leach had indicated in his report that these other groups were worthy of study and Harrisson did

receive funding support from the Colonial Social Science Council for his study of the coastal Malays).

However, it is worth noting that, although he had never worked in Borneo, a scholar who influenced and directed work in the former British territories was Raymond Firth. He held court at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) from 1944 to 1968 as the professorial successor to Bronislaw Malinowski, and during a formative period in British social anthropology. In my view, Firth was not only a central figure in sponsoring and supervising work on Borneo, but also a vital figure in developing a programme of anthropological research on the wider Southeast Asia (following his own field research on Malay fishermen undertaken in the late 1930s [1946], and his wife's, Rosemary's research on Malay domestic affairs [1943]).

We have to keep in mind that most of the British-based anthropological work on Southeast Asia, and specifically on Borneo, in the first decade after 1945 was undertaken through or had a connection with Firth at the LSE, and his close associates, Maurice Freedman and Edmund Leach (before Leach went to Cambridge); the major exception is Rodney Needham at Oxford (see Leach, 1984). And Freeman, though he wrote his doctoral thesis at Cambridge under the supervision of Meyer Fortes, had been trained at the LSE prior to leaving for Sarawak; even Meyer Fortes who spent most of his senior career at Cambridge from 1950 and between 1946-50 at Oxford had been a research student at the LSE in the 1930s, had studied there under Charles Gabriel Seligman, and had trained with Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth (see, Abrahams, 1983; Herskovits, 1941; Murdock, 1943; Macdonald, 2002; and see Kuper, 1996).

More recently in the post-modern, post-colonial, post-Orientalist environment within which there has been an important re-evaluation of the work of early anthropology, the conduct of research in such places as Sarawak, the issues which were given importance (and those questions which were ignored or given little attention), the images of 'native' populations which were constructed and the ways in which research findings were interpreted have come under increasing scrutiny and criticism. Pamela Lindell's critique of Geddes' Bidayuh research (2008) and Robert Winzeler's examination of Tom Harrisson's contribution to Borneo ethnology, ethnography, and archaeology and his relationships with visiting anthropologists (2008) are cases in point.

Social Structure, Kinship and Descent

The period of the 1950s and 1960s, when E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, Raymond Firth and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown dominated British anthropology, was characterised by an increasingly sharp division between British social structural and American cultural anthropology (and see King and Wilder 2006). Freeman's work on the Iban demonstrated the unmistakable influence of the British preoccupation with social structure and the functions which social groups performed (and within that kinship and marriage and the mechanisms and processes which provided social order and continuity), which was also reflected in Freeman's dialogue with British descent theorists who had worked primarily in Africa.

When I entered Borneo Studies in the early 1970s one of the major interests was kinship, descent and marriage as central elements within the study of social structure (and within that studies of the domestic family or household, or small family, the kindred, ambilineal, bilateral or cognatic descent, the structure of the longhouse or village, affinal relations and residential arrangements before and after marriage; and relationship terminologies).

Although Borneo societies were not constituted on the basis of unilineal descent groups, Freeman and others analysed the properties of kindreds and ego-focused kinship networks which functioned in some respects like clans and lineages in that they had the capacity to mobilise, organise and coordinate large numbers of people (1961). Even among the Bidayuh, Geddes managed to uncover the elements of 'community' which gave coherence and order beyond the household or small family (1954); and Morris examined and presented the main principles of local grouping, kinship, residence and descent and hereditary rank which served to organise and lend coherence and order to the coastal Melanau (see King, 1978b: 1-36, Morris, 1953, 1978; and see Appell, 1976a).

Anthropology in and out of Borneo

What was striking for me about this early post-war period was that the anthropologists who carried out research in Borneo overall did not continue to be preoccupied with it as a site of fieldwork, nor had some of them commenced their early research career there. Probably this circumstance in part reflects the comparative perspectives of anthropology and the desire and need to draw out similarities and differences across cultures and communities. What this early period of research also demonstrates is that the four anthropologists sponsored by the CSSRC, though they met from time to time, did not work together as a team; they produced their monographs without much reference to their counterparts. Interestingly the only

significant collaborative project which I have come across is that between Freeman and Geddes, but it was directed to research on Oceania and not to Borneo (Freeman and Geddes, 1959). It is also clear from Monica Freeman's diaries that relations between the researchers, and particularly between Freeman and Morris and Freeman and Geddes respectively, were not close and collegial (Appell-Warren, 2009).

These early researchers were first and foremost anthropologists and not regional specialists. T'ien produced his *The Chinese of Sarawak: a Study of Social Structure* (1953, LSE; and see T'ien and Ward, 1956), but he then carved out a career for himself in mainland China working and publishing on Chinese culture, society, history, and social and cultural change, primarily as Professor of History and Head of Sociology at Fudan University in Shanghai (see, for example, 1986, 1993, 1997). Moreover, his PhD thesis, which was submitted in London before his departure for Sarawak, was on mainland Southeast Asia: *Religious Cults and Social Structure of the Shan States of the Yunnan-Burma Frontier* (1948; and see 1986).

Geddes too had received his PhD in London in 1948, in his case on *An Analysis of Cultural Change in Fiji*. After his Land Dayak study he went on to become heavily involved in research and the application and administration of research based in the Tribal Research Centre in Chiang Mai in the hills of Northern Thailand from 1959 through to the early 1960s, subsequently producing his volume *Migrants of the Mountains: the Cultural Ecology of the Blue Miao (Hmong Njua) of Thailand* (1976). During this period of his research he also published on peasant life in communist China, based on a visit to China in the mid-1950s (1963). His inaugural lecture at the University of Sydney in 1959 also demonstrates his increasing distance from his research in Sarawak, though his interest in Land Dayak religion (1957) must have informed some of his thinking on the anthropology of religion (1960).

Like T'ien Geddes never really built up a programme of studies in Borneo anthropology. In comparative terms Geddes and T'ien published very little from their Sarawak research other than the reports commissioned by the Research Council. Geddes produced his report on the Land Dayaks in 1954 and, aside from a few papers, also wrote what most interested readers will remember him for, *Nine Dayak Nights* (1957) and the way in which he entered Land Dayak culture through the story of a folk hero, Kichapi, told by a village shaman over the course of nine nights of festivities; his ethnographic films too have made an impact: two on the Hmong (Miao) of northern Thailand (*The Opium People* and *Miao Year*) and three on the Land Dayaks, *The Land Dayaks of Borneo*, *The Soul of the Rice* and *Brides of the Gods*,

which he made following his return to Sarawak and the village of Mentu Tapuh (Appell, 2002). Overall Lindell was particularly critical of Geddes' failure to address in any sustained way various processes of social change, particularly in relation to conversion to Christianity, and the absence in Geddes' monograph of the interpretation of 'community' and social organisation in the context of social and cultural transformations (2008: 50-54; and see Golson, 1989, 2007).

Morris is an interesting case in this respect too; he studied forestry at Edinburgh University in the early 1930s and then took up a career in law. It was not until 1945-47 that he moved into anthropology and studied for the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Anthropology at the LSE, which then took him to Sarawak. After writing his Melanau report which subsequently appeared in 1953, he spent three years in Kampala and undertook a study of the East African Indians. It was this subject and not the Melanau which was to preoccupy him for the next 20 years. He was 40 years of age before being awarded his PhD, not on the Melanau but on *Immigrant Indian Communities in East Africa* submitted to the University of London in 1963. His book on *The Indians of Uganda* appeared in 1968, and at this time he became interested in the concept of the plural society (1967a). In the late 1950s and into the 1960s he was publishing on East African Indians, though he continued a sporadic engagement with the Melanau (see, for example, 1967b, 1980, 1981) and unlike Geddes, Freeman and T'ien he was then to return to Sarawak on a fairly regular basis and ultimately to produce two important locally published monographs on the Melanau (see Clayre, 1993 and King, 1994b).

As an aside, it's interesting how chance and fate affect one's life and career. My supervisor at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1970-71, before I began a serious interest in Borneo and when I was studying for my MA, happened to be Stephen Morris's wife, Barbara E. Ward, whom he had married in 1953, and who had undertaken a study of Hong Kong Chinese boat people. Had it not been for her departure to Clare College, Cambridge in the early 1970s, I would in all likelihood have stayed on at SOAS (I had a SOAS Governing Body scholarship) under her supervision and undertaken research on social movements and rural change in north Java. In the event I returned to the Centre for South-East Asian Studies at the University of Hull to work with Mervyn Jaspán, an Indonesianist, and obtained a Social Science Research Council studentship, which was a financially much more generous award than the SOAS grant.

Jaspan, who at that time had been working with Tom Harrisson and Benedict Sandin on a comparison between the indigenous scripts of the Rejang of Sumatra and the so-called 'writing boards' of the Iban of Sarawak then pushed me to do work in Indonesian Borneo, which is where I ended up. Interestingly, Paul Beavitt, a student of Stephen Morris at the LSE and who happened to be lecturing in sociology in Hull at that time, having recently returned from research among the Iban of the Saratok region of Sarawak, was in touch with Stephen, who suggested tentatively that I go to study the Punan Bah in Sarawak instead. In the event I didn't, and Ida Nicolaisen and her husband went there. Where would I be now? Well, possibly engaging with students of Java and not Borneo (see, for example, King, 1973).

In any event, Stephen Morris' monograph *The Oya Melanau* was published with the Sarawak Branch of the Malaysian Historical Society in 1991, two years before his death. Another of his legacies was the work which he encouraged on the Melanau language by Iain F.C.S. Clayre and Beatrice Clayre. Iain Clayre received his PhD on the Melanau language in 1972, at Morris's old university, Edinburgh (and see Beatrice Clayre, 1997; and Chou Shu Hsui, 1999). And it was the close relationship which Stephen forged with Beatrice that enabled her to see to press Morris' posthumously published *The Oya Melanau: Traditional Ritual and Belief with a Catalogue of Belum Carvings* (1997, *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, volume 52, issue 73).

The most prolific researcher during this formative period of research on Borneo, however, was undoubtedly Derek Freeman. He too had undertaken research outside of Borneo prior to his Iban studies. He had been a language teacher in Samoa in 1940-43, and he wrote a postgraduate thesis in anthropology on Samoan social structure which was presented to the University of London in 1948; this was around about the same time that Freeman, along with Geddes, Morris and T'ien were undertaking their postgraduate training under Firth at the LSE. From 1949 through to the early 1960s Freeman was engaged primarily with his Iban materials, but then for the next three decades he returned to his Samoan research and became engaged in a sustained critical analysis of Margaret Mead's work on adolescence, behaviour and culture in Samoa.

Freeman completed his doctoral thesis at Cambridge, under Meyer Fortes in 1953, *Family and Kin among the Iban of Sarawak*. His classic reports on Iban shifting cultivation and social organisation were published in 1955 (1955a, 1955b), and then a series of papers on Iban social organisation from 1957 until 1961, including his chapters on the developmental

cycle of the Iban *bilek-family* (1957) and his general chapter on Iban kinship and marriage (1960) which culminated in his superb Curl Essay Prize paper ‘On the Concept of the Kindred’(1961).

Derek Freeman’s Legacy and Wider Debates

Therefore, one of the major legacies from this period was left by Freeman (see Appell and Madan, 1988a and 1988b). He revisited Borneo in March 1961 where he was said to have suffered a nervous breakdown as a consequence of the acrimonious and intense rivalry and argument with Tom Harrisson arising specifically from Harrisson’s alleged mistreatment of Freeman’s research student Brian de Martinoir (who at that time was undertaking a study of the Kajang in the Belaga area). Freeman became convinced that Harrisson was psychopathic and suffering from extreme paranoia. It is said, and Freeman also confirmed this, that the whole experience was part of his personal and academic transformation (‘a cognitive abreaction’, something akin to a religious conversion) and it marked his change of perspective in anthropology from a British-influenced social structuralism to an approach which was directed to discovering the universal psychological and biological foundations of human behaviour. He embraced an ‘interactionist’ anthropological or sociobiological model drawing on neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, psychoanalysis and a range of studies of the brain’s functions. Perhaps to mark this redirection and rebirth he changed his publication name from J.D. Freeman to Derek Freeman (this is something John Barnes remarks upon in his autobiography *Humping my Drum*, 2008; and see Appell and Madan, 1988b; Caton, 2005, 2006; Fox, 2002; Hempenstall, 2012; Heppell, 2002; Tuzin, 2002; Wikipedia, 2013).

I remember when I had written a critical piece on Freeman’s work on the kindred in the 1970s, drawing on the doctoral research of John E.Smart on the Isneg of Luzon (1971), Freeman said that he would respond to this, and sent me a detailed questionnaire relevant to the issues which I had raised (King, 1976; and see Appell, 1976d). But to my knowledge he never drafted a rejoinder. Instead he sent me theoretical papers on sociobiology which argued strongly for a radically different approach to anthropology (1966, 1973). He informed me in a letter that he had moved on from concerns with kinship and social organisation in Borneo, and was no longer so much engaged in his Iban material.

From the later 1960s Freeman became intensely preoccupied with Margaret Mead’s work on Samoa and how his new interests and approach to anthropology could decisively demonstrate

the fallacy of Mead's Boasian-influenced approach which focused on the role of culture in the explanation of adolescence, and sexual and other behaviour. He returned to field research in Samoa in 1966-67, and in 1983 his *Margaret Mead and Samoa: the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* appeared to enormous controversy, particularly in the American anthropological establishment (and see Freeman, 1996). Freeman later also published *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead* (1999), again to much controversy, in which he argued that Mead's ethnographic and conceptual errors in her study of Samoan culture were due to her having been 'hoaxed' by two of her female Samoan informants.

The shift to concerns with sociobiology and evolutionary psychology can also be illustrated, I think, in Robert J. Barrett's later penetrating work on Iban psychology and culture (for his publications and data see Anna Chur-Hansen, 2008; Chur-Hansen and Appell, 2012; and see Barrett and Lucas, 1993). Yet the Freeman-Mead controversy rumbles on after Freeman's death with the more recent questioning of Freeman's 'trashing' of Mead and his argument that she had been the victim of a 'hoax' (see, for example, Shankman, 2009, 2013).

There were two subsequent and important scholarly interventions, among others, in which Freeman did return to things Bornean. First, his engagement with Rodney Needham's paper 'Blood, Thunder and Mockery of Animals' (1964), which Freeman addressed in his subsequent paper 'Thunder, Blood and the Nicknaming of God's Creatures' (1968). This latter paper gives expression to Freeman's conversion to biological anthropology, whilst Needham tended to keep to his particular tradition of Anglo-French-Dutch structuralism and his interests in social organisation (an important and influential comparative and structuralist paper which emerged from Needham's Penan work was 'Age, Category and Descent' [1966]). Nevertheless, both Needham and Freeman were moving towards explanations of symbolism and cultural behaviour and interpretation based on the assumption of the unity of humankind.

Needham continued to pursue the fundamental and universal principles of logic which structured 'collective representations' and he embraced the notion that certain symbols like fire and stone were 'archetypal' or 'natural' symbols'; whilst Freeman had moved further down the road of psychoanalytical explanation, the importance of the unconscious processes of the mind and the principle that we share a universal biological heritage and character. His commitment to explanations in psychological and biological terms and to the complex

interrelationships between culture and nature can also be seen in other publications on the Iban (see, for example, his analysis in ‘shaman and incubus’ 1967; and his interpretation of ‘severed heads that germinate’, 1979)

Secondly, there was the rather acrimonious criticism of Jérôme Rousseau’s paper on ‘Iban Inequality’ (1980); Freeman’s *Some Reflections on the Nature of Iban Society* (1981) addressed Rousseau’s argument in robust terms. Contrary to the position taken by Freeman and others that the Iban are ‘egalitarian’ and their society and culture characterised by a high degree of individualism, Rousseau proposed instead that the Iban possess an ‘unequal social structure’, though, Rousseau recognised that they also hold to an ‘egalitarian ideology’ (1980: 61). Freeman, in his response, reaffirmed his earlier pronouncements on Iban equality, democracy, individualism and autonomy, but, as we shall see later, the interrelationships between equality and hierarchy are much more complex than we have hitherto allowed.

Therefore, following a flurry of publications on the Iban and with the occasional return to his Iban field materials after the mid-1960s, Freeman then moved into other theoretical and ethnographic fields. He usually only revisited Borneo when he wanted to demonstrate the importance of an interactionist paradigm in relation to the interpretation or re-interpretation of the Iban ethnography, and to engage with other anthropologists who had re-stimulated his interest or had challenged some of his fundamental understandings of Iban society and culture.

But what the early anthropology of Borneo served to do, connected as it was to the wider world of anthropology through the work of Freeman and Needham in particular, and to some extent Leach, was to situate Borneo Studies within wider debates in anthropology. This is most obvious in Freeman’s arguments against what he viewed as the flawed, primarily American anthropological position of ‘cultural determinism’ within anthropology and what he saw as its misguided and radical separation of culture from nature. Moreover, and with reference to Rodney Needham’s contribution to Borneo Studies and the wider field of anthropology we should note that Needham had read Claude Lévi-Strauss’ *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949), and much else in French sociology, and was very well acquainted with Dutch or more particularly Leiden structuralism before he embarked on his fieldwork among the Penan.

Perhaps this structuralist perspective compromised, if this is the right word, his desire to pursue and develop his study of Penan social organisation. After Sarawak, Needham then went on to undertake research in Mamboru, Sumba, eastern Indonesia (where he was confronted with the kinds of kinship and marriage systems that he was then to spend a large part of his career analysing). And beyond that he undertook a wide range of total structural analyses (embracing both symbolic and social structures) in mainland and island Southeast Asia, as well as supervising a large number of research students who worked mainly in Indonesia and Malaysia and within the Needham-generated, Oxford-based structuralist tradition (see Forth, 2010).

It is intriguing and instructive with regard to the social organisation of nomadic peoples that Needham, though he published much in article form on the Penan, never completed a monograph on them after submitting his DPhil thesis in Oxford on *The Social Organisation of the Penan: a Southeast Asia People* (1953). When I asked him, in our correspondence about Borneo anthropology, how we, as anthropologists, might understand the Penan in organisational terms, he responded in Needhamesque fashion, that we should present them ethnographically ‘in terms of a range of cultural particulars’ (personal communication, September 1974). As Endicott has indicated, and, as I discerned in my meetings with Rodney Needham, he was rather dissatisfied with his Penan materials (though he had a large amount of data) in providing him with the tools to construct a coherent and ordered social and cultural account, or, perhaps to put it another way, Penan social organisation did not lend itself to the kinds of structural analyses to which he committed much of his professional life; infuriatingly, for him they lacked social structure (Endicott, 2007: 16-17); and in describing his doctoral thesis he indicated that it was ‘purely descriptive ethnography’, apart from the last chapter which compared the Penan with other hunting-gathering groups (Sather, 2007). I was privileged when he showed me extracts of his hand-written manuscript on the Penan on which he was working in the 1980s during one of my visits to All Souls College; he was intending it to be the monograph which he had never managed to commit to publication. Unfortunately it is now lost to us.

Within the space of ten years from his Penan doctoral thesis Needham had published his masterpiece of structural analysis of alliance systems in his *Structure and Sentiment: a Test Case in Social Anthropology* (1962), essentially a sustained criticism of and the presentation of a radically different perspective from the work of George C. Homans and David M.

Schneider in their *Marriage, Authority and Final Causes* (1955); this was a statement of the fundamental differences between Anglo-French-Dutch structuralism and American cultural anthropology (and see Endicott, 2007).

This connection to wider debates in the work of Freeman and Needham did not really happen to any extent through the work of Geddes, Morris and T'ien; they moved into other fields but this did not seem, in my view at least, to provide major contributions to anthropological theory. It did, however, present us with some important and substantial ethnographic material. Nor did they provide a training ground for research students in Borneo Studies; they invariably supervised students who were pursuing research in other parts of the world. This also applies to Needham and Leach. In the case of Needham, he supervised an astonishing range of doctoral work on Southeast Asia, though very little on Borneo, perhaps because, in part, the structuralist project in anthropology was not realisable in cognatic societies. Erik Jensen was an exception in that he provided one of the first major studies of aspects of Iban religion (1975; and see *Iban Belief and Behaviour: a Study of the Sarawak Iban, their Religion and Padi Cult*, 1968), though Freeman was to have a number of criticisms of it (1975: 275-288).

Leach also supervised a considerable number of research students, though again, under Leach's supervision only Jérôme Rousseau undertook field research in Borneo (1974, PhD), and Leach had adopted an important advisory and mentoring role in Derek Freeman's work. It is worth noting here that Rousseau was another anthropologist who moved beyond Borneo from his Cambridge thesis *The Social Organisation of the Baluy Kayan* (1974), to undertake more general theoretical work in the area of social inequality and stratification (for example, *Rethinking Social Evolution: the Perspective from Middle Range Societies* (2006, Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, and his 2001 JRAI paper). Apart from his major monograph on *Kayan Religion* (1998), his most significant contribution to the understanding of Borneo societies and their interrelationships (in a wide-ranging perspective on identity) must be *Central Borneo: Ethnic Identity and Social Life in a Stratified Society* (1990, Oxford: Clarendon Press). This major excursion into the study of identity was prefigured in his important 1975 paper when he explored, among other things, the 'folk' classification of the Kayan in identifying and naming their neighbours (1975).

However, in making an assessment of this early period in Bornean anthropology, it was Freeman above all who left a very substantial legacy. A landmark event to my mind was the

publication in the LSE Monographs series in 1970 of *Report on the Iban*. Prior to this Freeman's *Iban Agriculture* (1955a, London: HMSO) and his *Report on the Iban of Sarawak* (1955b, Kuching: Government Printing Office), had been out of print for some time and difficult to obtain. He had also had a hand in supervising George Appell's thesis on the Rungus Dusun, *The Nature of Social Groupings among the Rungus Dusun of Sabah, Malaysia* (1965) (which for me serves as a hallmark of the kind of work that was being done in Borneo in the 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s). Appell undertook field research on British North Borneo/Sabah as a research scholar at the Australian National University from 1959 until 1964. He received his PhD in 1966. Freeman was his supervisor but then, according to Appell, Freeman moved away from the kind of anthropology that Appell was doing (which was much more in the British tradition focusing on social structure, corporate groups and jural rules); John Barnes took over as supervisor.

Moreover, recent communication with George Appell in April-May 2013 has helped me develop my understanding of what he was attempting to achieve in his fieldwork among the Rungus (personal communication, 'Response to King', 7 May 2013). Above all, he says, he wanted to discover the social entities or units that the Rungus themselves identified in order to reflect the social world, including the jural domain of the people under study. He was especially concerned with the concepts of 'corporation' and 'corporate group', and argued that the major diagnostic feature of a corporate group presented by British social anthropologists - that these units existed in perpetuity - was a misleading characterisation, and that, instead corporate groups should be defined by their capacity to 'enter into jural relations' (Appell, 1983, 1984, 1990a). What he also draws attention to is that when he was working on these issues in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, unbeknown to him at that time a group of Yale anthropologists including Ward H. Goodenough and William C. Sturtevant were working on the same set of problems (that is the identification of local or indigenous concepts), though they were primarily concerned with the 'cognitive world' rather than that of social organisation. Furthermore, his focus on corporate groups, their definition and capacities became of crucial significance in another major area of work on which he was to focus, that of land tenure and property rights (see below).

Among Appell's important legacy, apart from a truly substantial corpus of published work on Borneo, was the founding of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* (Appell, 1990b, 1990c), the organisation of the biennial international conferences, the BRC's publications series, the

advocacy on behalf of Borneo, and the enormous networking that he has undertaken. In addition there is the work of his daughters, Amity Appell Doolittle (see, for example, her socio-historical study of property rights and power struggles in Sabah, 2005a, 2005b) and Laura P. Appell-Warren (see her thesis on the social construction of personhood among the Rungus, 1988, and her editing of Monica Freeman's diaries, 2009), and of his wife Laura W.R. Appell (see, for example, 1991; and with G.N. Appell, 1993, and G.N. Appell and Laura W.R. Appell, 1993, 2003) which have been indispensable in Borneo Studies. Appell too connected Borneo anthropology to broader issues in anthropology (property rights, jural personalities, development, and ethics in particular). I've already referred to his two important edited books on *The Societies of Borneo* (1976a) and *Studies in Borneo Societies* (1976b).

Like others before him Appell also engaged in wider debates within anthropology, particularly in what he referred to as 'cognitive structuralism' (1973), in the impacts of social change and modernisation on indigenous peoples (numerous papers), on the concept of 'corporation', corporate social groupings and cognatic descent, and on the ethics of anthropological enquiry (in, for example, papers in *Current Anthropology* [1971a], *Human Organization* [1971b] and *Anthropological Quarterly* [1976], and his book *Dilemmas and Ethical Conflicts in Anthropological Enquiry: a Case Book* [1978a]). There is also his important co-edited book with Triloki N. Madan, in celebration of the work of his one-time doctoral supervisor and mentor, Derek Freeman: *Choice and Morality in Anthropological Perspective: Essays in Honor of Derek Freeman* (1988). In that volume Appell, in part at least, returns to his long-established concerns with the relationships between jural relations, social isolates and social structure, but there he also investigates the ways in which choice, individual action and opportunity can be included within his paradigm of social isolates and social groupings, and specifically 'jural isolates', 'jural aggregates' and 'jural collectivities' (1988). Here too Appell contributed to more general debates in anthropology.

Freeman's legacy in Iban Studies was also continued through his research students who went on to produce significant published work on the Iban: Michael Heppell (*Iban Social Control: the Infant and the Adult*, 1975), James Masing (*The Coming of the Gods: an Iban Invocatory Chant [Timang Gawai Amat]*, 1981), and Motomitsu Uchibori (*The Leaving of the Transient World: a Study of Iban Eschatology and Mortuary Practices*, 1978). Heppell, in particular went on to undertake research in other parts of Borneo and to publish on a range of issues in

Borneo anthropology. For a time Freeman also supervised Brian de Martinoir, a Belgian anthropologist (with no discernible result) and Roger D. Peranio, an American, who studied the Limbang Bisaya (but who returned to the USA from Australia without completing his thesis at that time, and eventually submitted it at Columbia University in 1977). I should also mention my own PhD student, Traude Gavin, who worked on Iban textiles in her *Iban Ritual Textiles* (2003/2004), and who received advice not only from Rodney Needham, but especially from Derek Freeman, who kindly agreed to allow her access to his field notes, and to Monica's, his wife's drawings. Penelope Graham and her work on Iban shamanism also benefited from Freeman's direction and support (1987).

Early Materials on Kalimantan

Let me return to my personal reflections. When I look back on my preparation for field research in Kalimantan in the early 1970s, there was precious little modern field research to access. I learned to read Dutch, and struggled with German, and covered just about everything that was relevant in missionary journals and archives and in the monumental scope and work of A.W. Nieuwenhuis (1900, 1904-1907, 1994; and see Van Goor, 1995 and Sellato, 1993), J.J.K. Enthoven (1903), which was enormously important for my historical work as was P.J. Veth (1854-56); the ethnographic work of Donatus Dunselman (see, for example, 1955, 1959) and M.C. Schadee was invaluable (see, for example, 1903-04-05-06-07); and G.A.F. Molengraaff's account (1900), and that of Karl Helbig in German (1955) provided some important contextual information (see, for references King, 1985b; and for a commentary on Dutch sources Avé, King and de Wit, 1983).

But in English there had only been a handful of studies. Those scholars whom I contacted were unfailingly helpful: Herb and Pat Whittier whom I met in Hull in 1971 on their return from Kalimantan and who had undertaken work on the Kenyah in the Apo Kayan (see Herb Whittier's thesis on symbols of social differentiation [which had a great influence on some of my subsequent work on the symbolism of social stratification], 1973, and Pat Whittier's on systems of appellation, 1981); Alf and Judith Hudson who had worked on the Ma'anyan in south-eastern Borneo (his door-step of a thesis at Cornell on their social structure and culture [an excellent model of its time on how to handle cognatic social systems], 1967). The Hudson's work, and then through the linguistic work which Alf Hudson did (see, for example, 1977), also had a major ethnographic influence on me. I called on them to

contribute to *Essays on Borneo Societies* (1978) along with George Appell (Rungus) (1978b), Jay Crain (Lun Dayeh) (1978), Stephen Morris (Melanau) (1978), Jérôme Rousseau (Kayan), Cliff Sather (Bajau Laut) (1978), William Schneider (Selako) (1978) and Herb Whittier (1978).

Though perhaps less useful there was also the mission-based work of William Conley on *The Kalimantan Kenyah: A Study of Tribal Conversion in terms of Dynamic Cultural Themes* (1976). In correspondence with Needham (who directed me to Hans Schärer's work), with Tom Harrison (rather terse exchanges), and in my meetings with Anthony Richards and Edmund Leach in Cambridge I accessed much of what I could on Indonesian Borneo. Though I didn't contact him directly, I had also read all the published work in article form of Douglas Miles on the Ngaju of Central Kalimantan. Subsequently he published his *Cutlass and Crescent Moon: A Case Study of Social and Political Change in Outer Indonesia* (1976) which was an early study of inter-ethnic relations between Banjarese Malays and Ngaju Dayaks, based on field research undertaken in 1961-63 (and see Alexander, 2008, and see Miles, 1994). The most valuable pre-fieldwork meeting was with Jan B. Avé in Leiden and through him my introduction to the world of Dutch ethnology and history, museum collections on Kalimantan, photographic materials and the Leiden school of structural anthropology (see King, 2012c), and his recommendation that I read, among many others, Waldemar Stöhr's *Das Totenritual der Dajak* (1959). A rather curious though also important book which he recommended was Tjilik Riwut's *Kalimantan Memanggil* (1958).

Expansion in the 1960s and 1970s: Ethnic and Ethnographic In-filling, but with Some Conceptual Development

There was a veritable explosion of doctoral studies on Borneo in the 1960s and into the 1970s which I kept track of and read avidly, though these were primarily presenting ethnographic data on social organisation and, on occasion, such cultural matters as religion, and various dimensions of change and development; these latter themes or what we might term social and economic transformations (whether spontaneous or government and institutionally-driven) were to become much more important from the late 1970s and into the 1980s and 1990s. In other words, whilst this early body of work might well be structured in terms of a particular research theme or interest or in relation to a particular concept or conceptual framework, their main purpose was to present an ethnographic record on a population, which usually had not been the subject of previous detailed, first-hand field study. The tendency for foreign

researchers (myself included) was to go where others had not been and studied before; many of us were into anthropological imperialism in those days, laying claim to peoples and places which others had so far not managed to claim before our arrival. Perhaps we might refer to this as a period of ethnic and ethnographic in-filling, and in some cases ethnographic elaboration.

Apart from the studies of the Iban which continued to proliferate, the rest of Borneo seemed to be a landscape of opportunity for anthropologists. What, I think, characterises this period is the undertaking of research primarily by overseas researchers, primarily American, primarily male, primarily in Sarawak, and primarily pursuing projects of their own choosing for their doctoral studies. There was also a scatter of researchers from other English-speaking countries: the UK, Australia, Canada. During this early period there was little evidence of local scholars undertaking research (with the exception of such Iban experts as Benedict Sandin [for example, 1967] and Peter Kedit [1980]), and this, along with changing government priorities in Borneo resulted in a very marked shift from the mid-1970s in what was to be studied and how it was to be done.

But this early period of activity saw other parts of Borneo (other than Sarawak) gradually coming into the purview of modern social science. I have already referred to the early anthropological studies in Kalimantan by the Hudsons, the Whittiers, Douglas Miles and William Conley, and by me as the lone British researcher (though in terms of its size and ethnic diversity Kalimantan was only sparsely covered, see also Martin Baier, *Das Adatbusrecht der Ngaju-Dajak*, 1977). Brunei also began to be the subject of serious and sustained research with the studies of Donald E. Brown, most well-known for his *Brunei: the Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate* (1970), based on his Cornell doctoral thesis *Socio-political History of Brunei: a Bornean Malay Sultanate* (1969), and a wide range of papers on social organisation and socio-historical analysis (see for an appreciation of some of these King 1994a, 1996).

Brown, like some other senior anthropologists, particularly Freeman, Needham, Appell, and then in the next generation Rousseau, was also to make a contribution to wider anthropological debates. He moved beyond Borneo in his later work, most prominently in his *Principles of Social Structure: South East Asia* (1976). In that book he explored the concept of 'corporation' and its utility in the structural analysis of social forms and processes, and then he illustrated the operation of a range of principles of organisation: sex/gender, age,

ethnicity, locality, descent, ritual and belief, common property interests, occupation, rank, and voluntary association; and demonstrated the interrelationship between different principles of organisation in the Brunei case.

In addition, a theme which Brown had developed in relation to his Brunei materials was that of the relationship between social stratification and historiography in his *Hierarchy, History, and Human Nature: the Social Origins of Historical Consciousness* (1988). He later turned this interest into a wide-ranging comparative study which examined, in the context of social hierarchy, the question of why some societies suppress history or at least do not take a particular interest in it, and why some celebrate and emphasise it. Finally, in his *Human Universals* (1991), and the subsequent papers which developed from it (for example, 2004), Brown comes close to Derek Freeman's concerns in his exploration of the fields of human biology, genetics, ethology, neurology and psychology (we have already noted Freeman's conversion from a British-based social structure-focused perspective and one which was critical of the 'culturalist' position of such American anthropologists as Franz Boas and Margaret Mead). Rather than cultural relativism and the emphasis on human differences, Brown, moving from a concern with 'corporations' and social structure, searches for similarities in human behaviour, personality and culture rooted in human nature and the human mind, in interaction with the natural and cultural environment within which they are embedded.

There is another interesting connection between some of Brown's and indeed Freeman's work with that of Rodney Needham in the latter's increasing interest in, what he himself in Lévi-Straussian terms, referred to as the 'fundamental structures of the human mind' and 'radical factors' of thought and action. For Needham, in his later work, there is no such thing as 'beliefs' or 'inner states' (1972a); these are the product of the working of the human brain, independent of language and culture. Needham therefore searched for the 'cognitive universals' or 'primary factors' generated by the human mind. These comprise such elements as colours, sacred numbers, symbolic polarities and their associations, right and left, percussion and transition, the sacred and the secular, and certain archetypal figures. For Needham kinship systems too can be reduced to a small number of organisational forms and marriage rules; and relationships between categories, groups and symbols can also be reduced to a limited number of possibilities (opposition, exchange, alternation, reversal, inversion, transition and complementarity). He published a series of tightly written and succinct

volumes on these general cultural principles which he had been adumbrating since the 1970s (1978a, 1978b, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1985, 1987; and see Forth, 2010).

Two other contributions to the early development of Brunei anthropology came from Allen Maxwell and Linda Amy Kimball; there was Maxwell's ethnographic thesis on the Kadayan in which he also explores issues of ethnic identity (*Urang Darat: an Ethnographic Study of the Kadayan of the Labu Valley, Brunei*, Yale, 1980); and Linda Amy Kimball's *The Enculturation of Aggression in a Brunei Malay Village* (Ohio, 1975). Maxwell also undertook work on the Brunei Malay language and literature and on linguistic, historical and ethnographic matters in Sarawak; but he did not stray far from Borneo. Apart from her *Borneo Medicine: the Traditional Healing Art of Indigenous Brunei Malay Medicine* (1979) and *Alam Brunei: the World of Traditional Brunei Malay Culture* (1991), Linda Kimball also wrote with Colin Tweddell *Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Asia* (Tweddell and Kimball, 1985) and with Shawna Craig and Dale K. McGinnis *Anthropological World: an Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (1986).

A large amount of work was undertaken in Sarawak in the late 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s, with a significant proportion of it on the Iban: those studies which covered other groups included James Deegan on change among the Lun Bawang (1973), Roy Bruton on socio-cultural transmission through schooling among the Bidayuh (1981), Roger Peranio on Bisayan social change (1977), Peter Metcalf on Berawan concepts and rituals of death (1982), Jérôme Rousseau on Kayan social organisation (1974), Iain Clayre on a grammatical description of the Melanau language (1972), B.G. Grijpstra on issues of Bidayuh rural development (1976), William Martin Schneider on Selako social organisation (1974), and Richard Fidler (2010/1973) on a Chinese urban community in an upriver bazaar, and Zainal Kling on the social, economic and cultural organisation and values of the Saribas Malays (1973).

The substantial amount of work on the Iban included studies by Robert F. Austin on Iban migration (1977), Don David Cobb on Iban shifting cultivation (1988), Rob Cramb on Iban land tenure (1987), Michael Heppell on social control and socialisation (1975), James Jemut Masing's analysis of an Iban invocatory chant (1981), Motomitsu Uchibori on Iban eschatology and mortuary practices (1978), Margit Ilona Komanyi on the involvement in decision-making of Iban women (1973), Christine Padoch on migration and its alternatives in long-settled Iban areas (1978), Richard L. Schwenk on the reasons underlying family

innovativeness among the rural Iban (1975), James M. Seymour on rural schools and development (1972), Robert Pringle on the Iban under the Brooke Raj (1967), Vinson Sutlive on the movement of Iban from the longhouse to the town (1972), and Clayton Hsin Chu on Iban shamanism (1978).

There was also more general work on rural settlement (Gale Dixon, 1972), the social history of urban development in Kuching (Craig Lockard, 1974, 1987), the development of political organisations (Michael Leigh, 1971), and post-independence bureaucratic change and ethnicity in both Sarawak and Sabah (William Wu Shou-Chiang, 1972).

Although not as significant in its quantity there was also important research undertaken in Sabah particularly following Appell's studies and publications in the 1960s; among others, David H. Fortier's study of cultural change among Chinese communities in rural areas (1964), Robert Harrison's study of socio-economic variation among different Ranau Dusun agricultural communities (1971), Clifford A. Sather's study of Bajau Laut kinship and domestic relations (1971, 1997), Jay Bouton Crain's work on marriage and social exchange among the Lun Dayeh (1970), Elizabeth Koepping's study of Kadazan social relations (1981), and Han Sin Fong's work on occupational patterns and social interaction among the Chinese (1971). A later edited volume by Sherwood G. Lingenfelter on *Social Organization of Sabah Societies* (1990) continued this earlier focus on social forms including kinship, and covering a range of other communities as well; and Jean Morrison addressed issues of gender among the Bajau (1993). Most recently scholars at Universiti Malaysia Sabah have carried on this tradition of field research (see, for example, Pugh-Kitingan, 2004, 2012).

Studies in the 1980s: the Turn towards Development and Practice

In Kalimantan there was also a resurgence of studies: they include Michael Dove on the subsistence strategies of the Kantu' (1981), Richard Allen Drake on Mualang 'material provisioning' (1982), Francis McKeown on the Merakai Iban with special reference to dispute settlement (1989), Joseph Aaron Weinstock on religion and identity among the Luangan (1983), Bernard Sellato on the sedentarisation of hunting-gathering communities (1989), Carl Lewis Hoffman's controversial thesis on the Punan (1983, 1986), Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's study of politics and culture among the Meratus Dayaks (1984), and Olivier Sevin on a socio-geographical study of the Ngaju of the Seruyan and Kahayan (1983).

There was also a developing tendency in ethnic terms to begin to build upon work that had already been done among particular ethnic groupings, including the emphasis on Iban-related peoples in West Kalimantan which continued the focus on the Iban initiated by Freeman in neighbouring Sarawak; the development of work on the Barito-speaking populations initiated by Hudson; and comparative research on hunting-gathering or previously nomadic groups which had been pioneered by Needham in Sarawak. Research also continued on the Ngaju, a large and important population which had been the subject of interest in the work of Schärer and Miles, among others.

In Sarawak too we began to see the development of important work on the upriver Kajang groups related historically and culturally to the coastal Melanau and Morris' studies: Simon Strickland on the Kejaman and Sekapan (1986, 1995); Ida Nicolaisen on the Punan Bah (1976, 1977-78, 1983, 1986, 1995), though she had also worked among other peoples as well which provided, among other publications, *The Pastoral Tuareg*, 1997, and *Elusive Hunters: the Haddad of Kanem and Bahr el Ghazal*, 2010); and Jennifer Alexander on the Lahanan (1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 2006/1993, and with Paul Alexander, 1995).

But from the late 1970s and onwards I think we can detect a significant shift in thematic interest and focus, prompted in no small part by the closer control which the three governments responsible for Borneo exercised over research undertaken by foreign researchers in particular. It was marked, among other developments, by Peter Kedit's announcement in *The Sarawak Museum Journal* (1975) that henceforth research in Sarawak should be much more practically oriented and should address the problems of socio-cultural change in the state. This in turn coincided with the rapid increase in commercial logging in

Sarawak, Sabah and Kalimantan and the obvious environmental, economic and social costs of the exploitation of the rainforests and the impacts on local communities. Reflecting on this period of research it is my view that we witnessed a significant shift in research themes, and I was certainly part of this movement towards applied studies and policy issues.

Of course, research of a more practical, applied nature was undertaken before then in the 1960s and 1970s (as we can see in some of the references above) and it was one of the principles, though rather more flexibly interpreted, underlying the much earlier CSSRC-sponsored studies. But its prominence in government and academic agendas became especially pronounced in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and this is where the work of local researchers came to the fore as well. This was for obvious reasons; local scholars were grappling with the serious issues of economic development and growth and its consequences among their own communities, and government funding was very much directed to these concerns. However, I should state very strongly here that this stream of work is by no means devoid of theoretical content.

I have already made the case for the importance of the relationships between theory and practice in my *Anthropology and Development in South-East Asia* (King, 1999b). Only a brief catalogue of work can be provided here; in Sarawak there is a wide range of materials available (much has emerged from UNIMAS and government institutions, and quite a lot of the research appears in the form of doctoral theses which were primarily written at overseas institutions). It includes work by Abang Azhari Hadari (1991), Abdul Majid Mat Salleh and Mohd Yusof Kasim (1990), Abdul Rashid Abdullah (1993), Warren Aris (1998), Poline Bala (2008), Madeleine Berma (1996), Henry Chan (2007), Chin See Chung (1984), Dimbab Ngidang (1993), Hatta Solhee (1984), Hew Cheng Sim (2003, 2007), Evelyne Hong (1977, 1985, 1987), M.B. Kambrie (1990), Jayl Langub (1983), Jayum Jawan (1991), Jegak Uli (1996), Francis Jana Lian (1987), Salfarina Abdul Gapor (2001), Peter Songan (1992), and many others.

Overseas researchers also undertook work relevant to various practical development concerns, including Hanne Christensen (1997), Robert Cramb (1987, 2007), A.E. Duffield (1999), Robert Gerrits (1994), Monica Janowski (1991) and Jill Windle (1997). A similar account can also be given for Sabah where there has also been a very prominent emphasis on applied work through Universiti Sabah Malaysia (and such researchers as Fadzilah Majid Cooke [1999, 2006] and Paul Porodong [2010] among many others) and the Institute of

Development Studies there, the work of foreign researchers such as Alison L. Hoare (2002), and the impetus given to development-oriented concerns early on through the advocacy of George Appell (and see Amity A Doolittle, 1999, 2004) among others. There has also been a particular emphasis on issues to do with tourism and development in Sabah, see for example, Goh Hong Ching (2007), Timothy Maurice Pianzin (1993), Ong Puay Liu (2000, 2008) and Zainab Khalifah (1997), on land settlement and rural development (Anna Hewgill, 1999) and on health and illness (Ismail Simon Charles, 2004).

I have said elsewhere that this more practically oriented work demonstrates ‘the crucial need to address the human dimensions of development, the complexity of development interventions and the need to listen to the voices of ordinary people who are the targets of centrally planned policies’ (King, 2009: 28; and see Zawawai, 2001). Earlier on George Appell had made a similar case, and was especially concerned about the undermining of indigenous rights to land in Borneo and the emergence of landlessness (see, for example, 1985, and Appell’s chapters on the Rungus and Bulusu’ in that volume). In Kalimantan, and especially in the eastern province, much of the research has focused on such issues as rainforest clearance, changing systems of shifting cultivation, sustainable agricultural systems, responses to such hazards as fire, off-farm work and rural-urban linkages, poverty, resettlement and transmigration, health issues and rural development, and ethno-botanical knowledge and use of medicinal plants; among others there is the work of Lucia Carol Cargill (1996), Carol Pierce Colfer (2008, and see Colfer, Peluso and Chin, 1997), Stacy Marie Crevello (2003), Rokhmin Dahuri (1991), Michael Dove (1981), Cristina Eghenter (1995, and Eghenter, Sellato and Devung, 2003), Stephanie Theresa Fried (1995), Mary Beth Fulcher (1983), Lisa Gollin (2001), J.C. Hall (1993), Michaela Haug (2010), Han Knapen (2001), Indah D. Kusuma (2005), Danna Jo Leaman (1996), Cynthia Mackie (1986), Judith Hannah Mayer (1996), Frank Momberg (1993), Muhammad Yunus Rasyid (1982), Nancy Lee Peluso (1983), Nick N. Salafsky (1993), Wood, William Bruce (1985), Syamsuni Arman (1987), Donna Mayo Vargas (1985), Andrew P. Vayda (1981, 1983 and his senior role in the Man and Biosphere programme in particular), Reed L. Wadley (1997a) and Danny Wilistra (2000).

Culture and Identities

The applied, practical, policy concerns in Borneo research have continued within what we used to refer to as development studies. But during the past 20 years there have been other developments which have emerged from and addressed issues which have come onto the wider social science agenda, and indeed which have a resonance in Borneo itself. Most of them can be captured within the frame of cultural studies, and have been taken up in my paper *Culture and Identity* which provides a much more extensive consideration of the relevant literature (2012a). It is in the cultural realm (in the construction and contestation of identities and the relations between identity formation, nation-building and globalisation), and the discourses which are generated in the interfaces between people and the nation-state on which we need to focus. I will only summarise the contributions here which come under seven headings: (1) the nation-state, majorities and minorities; (2) religious conversion and identities; (3) the media, identities and nation-building; (4) borderlands, margins, migrations and identities; (5) inter-ethnic relations and violence; (6) arenas for identity construction in tourism and museums; and finally (7) emerging middle classes, lifestyles and identities in urban settings.

The Nation-state, Majorities and Minorities

The first category covers the literature which moves from a focus on a local or defined population to one which sees a particular community or group within the nation-state and in engagement with political elites and associated dominant groups through which they have to negotiate their identity and resources. This category is best illustrated in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's study of the Meratus Dayaks (1984, 1993), Kumpiady Widen's study of Ma'anyan Dayaks (2001, 2002, and see Kusni, 1994, 2001), Kustanto's study of the Sungkung (2002), Hui Yew Foong's (2011) and Mary Somers Heidhues' (2003) work on the Chinese in West Kalimantan, Laura Steckman's recent thesis on Dayak identity in relation to state action (2011), and Robert Winzeler's edited collection on the relationship between the state and minorities [1997a, 1997b], though there are many other studies which could be cited (see King 2012a).

Religious Conversion and Identities

The literature on religious conversion and on transformations in religious ideas and practices has increased substantially in recent years and it points to a social and cultural process which

has assumed much greater prominence in the context of nation-building in Borneo. To provide a context for these changes we are fortunate in having major studies of ‘traditional’ religions, which address issues of ritual performance, the language of ritual (in prayer, song, chant, myth, invocation), cosmology, symbolism, and the transitions involved in birth, initiation, marriage and death, the architectural and material expressions of religion, the ways in which health and illness are conceptualised and dealt with (in shamanism and spirit mediumship), and the interrelationships between religion and the mundane, everyday activities of securing a livelihood, particularly in the traditional pursuits of agriculture, and hunting and gathering; these studies include Ann L. Appleton’s *Acts of Integration, Expressions of Faith: Madness, Death and Ritual in Melanau Ontology* (2006). Jay Bernstein’s study of Taman shamanism *Spirits Captured in Stone: Shamanism and Traditional Medicine among the Taman of Borneo* (1997; and see 1991); Julian Davison’s *Image and Metaphor: an Analysis of Iban Collective Representations* (1987); Penelope Graham’s *Iban Shamanism: an Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature* (1987); Eva Maria Kershaw’s *A Study of Brunei Dusun Religion: Ethnic Priesthood on a Frontier of Islam* (2000; see also the work by Brunei Dusun researchers Bantong Antaran, his *The Brunei Dusun* [1993] and Pudarno Binchin’s recent study *Singing Siram Ditaan* [2013]); Lake’ Baling’s *The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform* (2002); James Jemut Masing’s *The Coming of the Gods* (1981, and see the extended published version 1997); Peter Metcalf’s *A Borneo Journey into Death* (1981, 1982) and *Where are You Spirits; Style and Theme in Berawan Prayer* (1989); Stephen Morris’ posthumous study of Melanau religion in *The Oya Melanau* (1997); Jérôme Rousseau’s *Kayan Religion: Ritual Life and Religious Reform in Central Borneo* (1998); Benedict Sandin’s *Iban Adat and Augury* (1980); Clifford Sather’s *Seeds of Play, Words of Power: an Ethnographic Study of Iban Shamanic Chants* (2001); Hans Schärer’s important work on *Ngaju Religion* (1963, 1946); and Motomitsu Uchibori’s *The Leaving of the Transient World* (1978). It should be noted here that Metcalf, like some of the other anthropologists to whom I have referred in the context of the process of carrying debates beyond Borneo, has also produced work in the more general anthropological field (for example, his introductory text *Anthropology: the Basics* [2005] and his reflective piece on doing fieldwork and its problems, *They Lie, We Lie: Getting on with Anthropology* [2001]).

Following Conley’s early study of Kenyah religious conversion (1973), we have enjoyed a spate of studies, mainly examining processes of conversion and its social and cultural

consequences, as well as the continuities and discontinuities which result from changes in religious belief and practice. Of course, particular religious configurations, specific beliefs and practices, and the connections established between myth, cosmology and ethnic origins are important ingredients in the construction and maintenance of identities. The major focus in research on Borneo has been on conversion to Christianity rather than to Islam, and the impetus for this has come from American missionary activity, though with a more modest interest from the UK, the Netherlands and Germany. In Sabah we have the work of Annette Harris on *The Impact of Christianity on Power Relationships and Social Exchanges: a Case Study of Change among the Tagal Murut of Sabah, Malaysia* (1995); in Kalimantan, we have considerable material on the Ngaju and other neighbouring groups in Anne Schiller's work on Kaharingan in *The Dynamics of Death: Ritual Identity, and Religious Change among the Kalimantan Ngaju* (1987) and *Small Sacrifices: Religious Change and Cultural Identity among the Ngaju of Indonesia* (1997); Sian Eira Jay on *Shamans, Priests and the Cosmology of the Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan* (1991); and Fridolin Ukur *Tantang-djawab Suku Dajak (1835-1945)* (1971); and Joseph Aaron Weinstock *Kaharingan and the Luangan Dayaks: Religion and Identity in Central-East Borneo* (1983); in West Kalimantan there are the studies by David G. Bonney on *Development of Training Services for KGBI Seminary Students who Come from Rural Areas and who Minister in the City of Pontianak* (1995); Arnold Leon Humble on *Conservative Baptists in Kalimantan Barat* (1982); Donald R. Bryant on *Functional Substitutes for the Animistic Sacrifices Associated with the Cultivation of Rice in West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (1985); and Larry Kenneth Thomson on *The Effect of the Dayak Worldview, Customs, Traditions, and Customary Law (adat-istiadat) on the Interpretation of the Gospel in West Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo* (2000); in East Kalimantan, along with Conley's study there are Michael C.C. Coomans *Evangelisatie en kultuurveranderingen: onderzoek naar de verhouding tussen de evangelisatie en den socio-kulturele veranderingen in de adat van de Dajaks van Oost-Kalimantan (bisdom Samarinda), Indonesië* (1980), Jennifer Connolly's *Becoming Christian and Dayak: a Study of Christian Conversion among Dayaks in East Kalimantan, Indonesia* (2004) and Mariko Urano's *Appropriation of Cultural Symbols and Peasant Resistance* (2002); in Sarawak on Bidayuh conversion to Christianity there are Liana Chua's *Objects of Culture: Constituting Bidayuhness in Sarawak, East Malaysia* (2007a) and *The Christianity of Culture: Conversion, Ethnic Citizenship and the Matter of Religion in Malaysian Borneo* (2012; and see 2007b, 2009); Fiona Harris' *Growing Gods: Bidayuh Processes of Religious Change in Sarawak, Malaysia* (2002), as well as Tan Sooi Ling's *Transformative Worship among the Selako in Sarawak,*

Malaysia (2008) and Pamela Lindell's *The Longhouse and the Legacy of History: Religion, Architecture and Change among the Bisingai of Sarawak (Malaysia)* (2000); for the Iban there is J.A. Fowler's *Communicating the Gospel among the Iban* (1976); Karen Westmacott's study of change among the Kayan of the Baram region, *Christ is the Head of the House: Material Culture and New Modes of Consumption for the Kayan in the 1990s* (2002); and Zhu Feng's study of the *Chinese Christianity and Culture Accommodation of Chinese Overseas* (2004); and in Brunei Asiyah az-Zahra Ahmad Kumpoh's *Conversion to Islam: the Case of the Dusun Ethnic Group in Brunei Darussalam* (2011).

The Media, Identities and Nation-building

The third category of research on identities in Borneo has taken the media route to nation-building and has posed the important question 'How are communities and ethnic groups in Borneo responding and reacting to media-generated nation-building in Malaysia and Indonesia?' This is an emerging area of research pioneered by John Postill (2000, 2006), Fausto Barlocco (2008) and Poline Bala (2008), among others, and it explores dimensions of identity formation and the different ways in which minority populations respond to the opportunities and constraints presented within a nation-state structure.

Borderlands, Margins, Migrations and Identities

Research within the fourth category has focused primarily on Indonesian border populations and the responses of these marginal communities in territorial terms to the pressures of what is perceived to be a remote central government (which is dominated by culturally and ethnically different populations with different priorities); the work of Eilenberg and Wadley (2009) is important here. Research on the Sarawak side of the border has also focused on spatially marginal populations, cross-border relations and the ambiguous and shifting relations with the nation-state (see Ishikawa, 1998, 2010; Amster, 1998; Bala, 2002; and Reid, 1997); this work also presents us with a range of case-studies which complement and overlap with those on media-generated nation-building and the responses of minorities to the actions and ideologies of dominant political elites.

Inter-ethnic Relations and Violence

As I have already indicated in my introductory remarks, this category of research has emerged in the necessary engagement with the violent inter-ethnic conflicts in West and

Central Kalimantan in the 1990s and the relationship between the construction, transformation and expression of ethnicity, the politicisation of identity, the underlying reasons for ethnic conflict, and its cultural patterning and local interpretation, in the work of an increasing number of anthropologists, historians and political scientists, among them Davidson (2002, 2008), Dove (2006), Harwell (2000), Hawkins (2000), Heidhues (2001), König (2012), Peluso (2003, 2006, 2008), Peluso and Harwell (2001), Sukandar (2007) and Van Klinken (2004).

Arenas for Identity Construction in Tourism and Museums

I like to think that I kick-started an interest in tourism research in Borneo with the panel which I organised at the BRC conference in Sabah in 1992 (see King 1995). This was a time when tourism began to be promoted very vigorously in Borneo. But, of course, there was already some work being undertaken on tourism by, among others Heather Zeppel (1994). Encouragingly this interest has continued in, for example, studies by researchers in Sabah (already referred to above, Goh, Pianzin, Ong, Zainab), and Sarawak, including William Kruse's *Selling Wild Borneo* (2003).

Prior to the establishment of universities in Borneo the museums were the major supporters and managers of research, the obvious example being the Sarawak Museum and subsequently the Brunei Museum. Yet their major influence has been in categorising ethnic groups and presenting particular interpretations of culture and identity by attaching items of material culture to them. What is more their role in relation to the general public and to tourist visitors has become increasingly important as state governments have seen museums as a significant government institution in tourism promotion. It is clear from the work of Dianne Tillotson (1994) and Christina Kreps (1994) that museums are important agents for constructing and presenting culture, and as departments responsible to government they usually present a nation-state view of what ethnic groups are important and how they are defined (and see Gill, 1968). Indeed, Tillotson posed the question in her thesis 'Who invented the Dayaks?' We should also note the important work that has been undertaken on material culture and its relationship to identity (see, for example, Gavin, 2003/2004, and Sellato, 1992, 2012).

Emerging Middle Classes, Lifestyles and Identities in Urban Settings

Globalisation is our current preoccupation and we might have anticipated that research on Borneo would have reflected this concern. Unfortunately it has not. There is very little

research available on urban societies in Borneo which documents what local people experience in relation to the most immediate manifestations of global processes and late modernity, through encounters with the state and bureaucracy, nation-building symbols and actions, the media, technology and consumerism, international tourists, and representatives of other ethnic groups. There is nevertheless an emerging, though still rather modest interest in identity construction in urban areas and the lifestyles of an expanding middle class (see, for example Boulanger, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2008, 2009).

Some Controversies

An additional way in which we can usefully survey some of the field of Borneo Studies is by examining particular debates and controversies; it is interesting in surveying the field of studies that several of the debates turn on the problem of identities and the identification, labelling and depiction of ethnic groups and categories and the ways in which these groups have interacted with and encountered each other through time. Other issues tend to concern themselves with problems of ethnographic accuracy and those to do with social organisation, including the relationship between social groups and rights in property and access to material resources.

In the pages of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* one could point immediately to George Appell's excursion into ethnographic errors in Borneo studies (1991, 1992), and Roger Kershaw's emulation of this exercise with reference to 'errors and imbalances' in 'foreign analysis' of ethnic minorities in late twentieth century Brunei (2010). A specific example of these kinds of ethnographic debates can be found in the exchanges between George Appell, Peter R. Goethals, Robert Harrison and Clifford Sather on the one hand and Thomas Rhys Williams (1969) on the other in relation to the latter's work on the Sabah Dusun (see, for example, Appell, 1966, 1967, and Appell et al, 1966; and Sather, 1967).

Another and rather long-running debate was directed to systems of land tenure and property-holding groups in Borneo with reference to 'ecological determinism' which started with a brief and exploratory paper in the *Borneo Research Bulletin (BRB)* by George Appell on the possible relationships between such environmental variables as rainfall and soil and the kinds of rights and access which farmers establish in land (1971c). Appell's interesting proposition

emerged from his ongoing concerns with land tenure, property systems and jural relations (see, for example, Appell, 1971d; and see 1974, 1991).

His paper sparked a whole series of interventions, ethnographic additions, and disagreements among several anthropologists who published their views primarily in the *BRB*; there was also a wider literature relevant to these concerns: Gale Dixon (1974), Victor King (1975), Joseph Weinstock (1979a, 1979b, 1981), Michael Dove (1980, 1982), and a later follow up on Kayan land tenure with Jérôme Rousseau (1987) and George Appell (1986; and see Appell, 1997), and on Iban land tenure (Cramb, 1989; and Wadley, 1997b). Debates turned on the reliability of the data, the specific cases used and the importance of using indigenous terms and categories and not externally imposed and generated ones, the complexity of the combination of factors at play – social, cultural, economic, environmental, historical, political – and the lines of causality involved, keeping in mind the possibility of multiple or plural causality (see, for example, Dove, 1982: 31-33).

Returning to some of the debates and controversies on ethnic identities, these have revealed sharp differences of view over the nomenclature of ethnic groups which in turn is related to how these groups are constituted and differentiated in the interpretations presented by anthropologists and other social scientists; Tom Harrisson's and Rodney Needham's exchange over 'Punan' and 'Penan' comes to mind immediately (Harrisson, 1949a, 1949b, 1959, 1975; Needham, 1953a, 1953b, 1953, 1954a, 1954b, 1955, 1958, 1972b; and see Jayl Langub, 1975). Needham was arguing against the dangers of viewing hunter-gatherers as linguistically and culturally homogeneous, and there has been a subsequent intense debate about hunting-gathering as a definable mode of livelihood, about the origins of hunter-gatherers, whether or not they are best understood in terms of ecological autonomy and independence or as engaged in a relatively regular way with agriculturalists, about the appropriateness of the distinctions between an agricultural and a hunting-gathering way of life, and about processes of sedentarisation and devolution.

Much of this debate was instigated by Carl Hoffman's provocative thesis entitled *Punan* (1983, and see 1984) and the book published from it *The Punan: Hunters and Gatherers of Borneo* (1986, and see Hildebrand, 1982) based on his argument that hunter-gatherers are devolved agriculturalists, specialising in the collection of valuable products from the rainforest which are channelled into Asian networks of trade through persisting relations between forest nomads and neighbouring agriculturalists. This in turn led to deliberations and

debates on the constitution of the Punan as a category of populations in Borneo which could in some way be differentiated from others, or, on the other hand, a category which was more appropriately characterised as diverse in socio-cultural, ethnic and ecological terms.

Hoffman's thesis led to a series of counter-arguments about, among others, (1) the viability of hunting-gathering without the need to engage in trade in forest products; (2) that rather than devolution from settled agriculture the most common processes at work in Borneo have been in the reverse direction from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture; and (3) that it is misleading to characterise livelihoods in terms of a too simple distinction between agriculture and nomadism; instead there is a continuum of activity from farming to horticulture to hunting-gathering, and various populations move between various of these activities or practise them simultaneously. These detailed studies of nomadism have come from Bernard Sellato on a range of forest nomad groupings in Kalimantan (1986, 1988, 1989, 1994, 2002), (James) Peter Brosius on the Penan Gang (1988, 1991, 1992), Nicolas Césard on the Punan Tubu (2007, 2009), Shanthi Thambiah on the Bhuket of Sarawak and West Kalimantan (1995), Rajindra Kumar Puri on the Penan Benalui (1997, 2006), Katherine Holmsen on the Punan Kelai at Long Suluy (2006), Henry Chan on Punan Vuhang (2007) and Lars Kaskija on the Punan Malinau and other groups in East Kalimantan (2002, 2012), among others. The enormous literature on hunter-gatherers and logging and that which relates to Bruno Manser (2004) and other opposition activities certainly merits examination, probably starting with Tim Bending's work on 'contentious narratives' (2006, and see King for a review of Bending and Puri, 2006).

As for other discussions and debates, I have already referred to those between Freeman (1968) and Needham (1964) on blood, thunder and the mockery of animals (and see King, 1985c), and between Freeman (1981) and Rousseau (1980) on Iban social inequality. Following on from this debate, the issues surrounding so-called 'egalitarian' and 'ranked' or 'stratified' societies and the concepts of 'equality' and 'inequality' in Borneo have been explored in considerable detail by a range of researchers. The most significant issues and arguments have been brought together in an insightful and meticulous paper by Clifford Sather 'All Threads Are White' (1996). Our understanding of the complexities of the relations between equality, autonomy, hierarchy, control and dependence have also been advanced and debated by, among others, Jennifer Alexander (1990, 1992, 2006) with reference to the Lahanan, and Rita Armstrong (1991, 1992, also see 1998, and see 1987, 1989) with a focus on the Kenyah Badeng. Christine Helliwell further develops our

understanding of these relationships between equality and their more subtle conceptualisations arising from her field research among the Gerai of West Kalimantan (1990, 1994, 1995, 2001). I noted these developments briefly in a reprint of my *Essays on Borneo Societies* (King, 1994c: vii-x) and argued that the relations between cognation, equality and hierarchy also required much greater attention and analysis (King, 1990).

Rather than the simplistic distinction between egalitarianism and hierarchy and equality and inequality these later contributions to the debates argue for the need to examine the relationships between ideology and practice (an egalitarian ideology can co-exist and interrelate with unequal relations and outcomes in practice); the ‘equality of potential’ can exist in a dialectical relationship with the ‘attainment of achieved inequality’ in the operation of ideas about individuality, autonomy and merit (Sather, 1996: 73-78); inequality in the domain of politics can be found in relation to relative equality in matters of material life and gender and there are often differences between relationships in the domestic or internal and the public or external spheres of life; ethnic groups characterised or categorised as either ‘egalitarian’ or ‘stratified’ are commonly not homogeneously organised social entities and the boundaries between ethnic groups are frequently fuzzy and ill-defined; and we should acknowledge that social forms are dynamic and are subject to change by human agency over time. In other words in any given social unit the principles of equality and inequality are in dynamic tension one with the other.

The earlier preoccupations with the delineation, definition and description of bounded social groups such as households, longhouses and villages, and the debates about the nature of kindreds and their utility in helping us to capture the main forms and processes of social life in Borneo societies (see, for example the debate between King [1976] and Appell [1976d]) (and the same can be said for debates about whether or not a particular society or ethnic group is egalitarian or hierarchical) have given way to much more fine-grained analyses and discussions of individuals, groupings and communities (which are usually not clearly demarcated). The work of Christine Helliwell on the Gerai of West Kalimantan demonstrates the problems of defining longhouses and communities in terms of clearly defined, independent households (*‘Never Stand Alone’: a Study of Borneo Sociality*, 2001; and see 2006), and Rita Armstrong’s work has addressed the problematical distinction between egalitarian and stratified societies with reference to the Kenyah Badeng (see *People of the Same Heart: the Social World of the Kenyah Badeng*, 1991, and 1992). The concepts of sociality, domesticity, domestic conflict, personhood, rice/ritualised hearths, ‘house

societies', and authority and social action are also explored to demonstrate the complexity of social relations, which in the earlier literature on Bornean societies tended to be seen in terms of corporate and bounded units of one kind or another or 'jural personalities' (see for example Véronique Béguet on Iban, 1993; Monica Janowski on Kelabit, 1991; Antonio Guerreiro on Modang, 1984; Kenneth Sillander on Bentian, 2004; Fudiat Suryadikara on Banjarese, 1988).

Studies of social units such as the household have also given way not only to studies of individuals and networks and the permeability of boundaries but also to studies of gender in relation to such processes as socio-economic change and culture (see for example Hew Cheng Sim on Bidayuh, 2001, 2003; Morrison on Bajau, 1993; and Mashman, 1991 and Gavin, 1996 on Iban, 1991; and for more wide-ranging coverage Sutlive, 1991). But, as Harris says in relation to research on Sarawak (which applies to the other parts of Borneo as well), 'Little research has been published that includes a discussion of gender issues, and Sarawak women have little or no voice in the ethnographies' (2008: 57; and see Graham, 1996).

Perhaps to conclude this brief review of debates and controversies, I should make reference to one in which I have been involved in relation to the Maloh of the Upper Kapuas and my monograph on the ethnography and socio-history of social inequality (1985). It brings together a number of issues which I have just raised, particularly in relation to debates and differences of view about ethnic identities and the identification of ethnic units in Borneo, inter-ethnic relations, the nature of cognatic society and the problematical conceptualisation, analysis and socio-cultural expressions of equality and inequality. Although it is difficult to reflect on one's own work in relation to studies of other societies in Borneo, it might be suggested that my study of the 'Maloh' has produced considerable controversy in which both foreign and local scholars have been involved (aside from myself there have been local researchers from the Embaloh and Taman communities, from Java working in French, from the Netherlands, Japan, and the USA); or, if not directly involved in the debates they have at least contributed to the ethnography of the debate.

It is gratifying that so many researchers, including local social scientists have undertaken studies of this complex of communities in West Kalimantan which I originally labelled 'Maloh', following Iban convention and the commonly used nomenclature in the Sarawak literature (see, for example, Harrisson, 1965, 1966). Debates have been conducted on ethnic

identity and the appropriateness or otherwise of certain ethnic referents as well as on the forms of social structure and actions, relations and behaviour which flow from particular principles of organisation. I have tried to capture the sense of these debates, and to resolve some of the differences of opinion in two papers, one in the *Borneo Research Bulletin* entitled 'Who are the Maloh? Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change in Interior Indonesian Borneo' (2002) and 'A Question of Identity: Names, Societies and Ethnic Groups in Interior Kalimantan and Brunei Darussalam' in the journal *Sojourn* (2001), the latter paper bringing together issues raised from the Maloh literature, and also from discussions in which Donald Brown (1998) and Allen Maxwell (1996) became involved stemming from my arguments in 'What is Brunei Society? Reflections on a Conceptual and Ethnographic Issue' (1994a; and 1996) (and see Kershaw, 2010). The major issues of ethnic labelling were also brought together by Reed L. Wadley in 'Reconsidering an Ethnic Label in Borneo: the Maloh of West Kalimantan, Indonesia (2000).

Literature relevant to the 'Maloh' debates includes work by Y.C. Thambun Anyang (1996, 1998, and see Sellato, 1998), Mudiyono Diposiswoyo (1985), Henry Arts (1991), Jay Bernstein (1991, 1997), S. Jacobus E. Frans L. (1992; and Irene A. Muslim and Jacobus E. Frans, 1994); Anna Samagat Julia (1992); and Katsumi Okuno (1997). These debates raise the interesting question of how and why certain ethnic labels gain currency and are adopted by the people in question (the term 'Iban' is a case in point) and others remain the subject of dispute and are not accepted by those so named, and the role of the anthropologist and local scholars in this process (the 'Maloh' is a case in point). Another element in the debates is the issue of social inequality, how it is expressed in the society in question, by whom, and how the anthropologist interprets it. My view is clear on this, that systems of social organisation are flexible and subject to change; they cannot be easily and firmly categorised; individuals and groups deploy concepts of equality and inequality in a language of contestation and competition; and the communities and ethnic groups we study are interrelated and interact with their neighbours, and given increased physical and social mobility are embedded in wider, globalising systems; this in turn suggests that we cannot understand how societies and cultures are constructed and are changed within the confines of any one unit however defined (whether Bidayuh, Iban, Gerai, Maloh, Modang, Kenyah or Kayan).

In formulating my views about centres and margins/peripheries and in my excursions into the examination of the complex interrelationships between ethnic groups, communities, and political units I have of course been much influenced by the work of Leach (1950, 1954), but

also by, among others, Christopher Healey on ‘tribes’ and ‘states’ in Borneo (1985, though I do not agree with everything he has to say about inter-ethnic relations), and on a wider scale Bennet Bronson’s perspectives on upstream and downstream interactions developed primarily in a Sumatran context (1977).

Final thoughts

My Top Twenty

In undertaking such a stock-taking exercise and by way of conclusion I thought it useful to try to list what we might consider to be the top 20 contributions to Borneo Studies in the field of the social sciences, broadly defined. We are preoccupied with league tables, and although this is not a league table in a conventional sense, it nevertheless makes a statement about what has been most prominent and influential in Borneo Studies in the post-war era. This is a very personal list and one which I found most difficult to compile; perhaps I should have included journal papers and book chapters; instead I have only selected books. I do not rank them in order of priority, but my guess is that several of the books here would appear on most researchers’ lists. It is important to think about the major contributions to our knowledge of the societies and cultures of Borneo, and also to think about how those key contributions have influenced and changed our understanding.

The twenty most significant books on Borneo

Derek Freeman (1970) Report on the Iban.

Robert Pringle (1970) Rajahs and Rebels: the Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule 1841-1941.

Robert Hertz (1960) Death and the Right Hand.

Hans Schärer (1963) Ngaju Religion: the Conception of God among a South Borneo People.

Alfred B. Hudson (1967) Padju Epat: the Ethnography and Social Structure of a Ma’anjan Dayak Group in Southeastern Borneo.

W.R. Geddes (1957) Nine Dayak Nights.

Jérôme Rousseau (1990) Central Borneo: Ethnic Identity and Social Life in a Stratified Society.

Benedict Sandin (1967) The Sea Dayaks of Borneo before White Rajah Rule.

Bernard Sellato (1994) Nomads of the Borneo Rainforest: The Economics, Politics, and Ideology of Settling Down, and as (1989) Nomades et Sedentarisation à Borneo. Histoire Economique et Sociale (1989).

Tjilik Riwut (1958) Kalimantan Memanggil.

Donald E Brown (1970) Brunei: the Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate.

J.J.K. Enthoven (1903) Borneo's Westerafdeeling: Bijdragen tot de Geographie van Borneo's Westerafdeeling.

Han Knapen (2001) Forests of Fortune? The Environmental History of Southeast Borneo, 1600-1880.

Postill, John, 2006, Media and Nation-building: How the Iban became Malaysian.

George N. Appell (ed) (1976a) The Societies of Borneo: Explorations in the Theory of Cognatic Social Structure.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (1993) In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place.

Peter Metcalf (2010) The Life of the Longhouse: an Archaeology of Ethnicity

Waldemar Stöhr (1959) Das Totenritual der Dajak.

Traude Gavin (2003/2004) Iban Ritual Textiles.

H.F. Tillema (1938, and 1989) Apo-Kajan, een filmreis naar en door Centraal Borneo.

In presenting an overview of the field we should reflect on and recapture what has already been discussed and reconsider the ways in which we are best able to arrange and evaluate the literature. We have used an overlapping set of organisational principles based on chronology, themes, individual legacies and contributions, and debates and controversies.

An overall perspective

1. Chronological: we have moved from earlier studies and those which set the baselines for future work; through to ethnographic expansion and in-filling; the shift to applied work and policy-related concerns; the increasing concern with agency and fluidity and away from earlier social structural and corporatist analyses of Borneo social organisation; the all-consuming interest in identity construction, maintenance and transformation (including issues, among others, to do with minorities, nation-states, borders and boundaries, the media; and local agency and response to wider forces of change and globalisation);
2. Thematic: we have considered the main areas of social and cultural life which have engaged researchers in Borneo: cognation and kindreds; equality and inequality; the symbolism of death, shamanism and religion; rural development and change; ecology, the destruction of the rainforests, swidden agriculture and hunting-gathering; culture and identity, and so on.
3. Individual legacies and contributions: here we have considered the engagement of researchers with both Borneo and those peoples and places beyond Borneo as well as the legacy they have left in influencing and directing the work of others, in supervising doctoral research and in developing and supporting the infrastructure of Borneo Studies. I have dwelt on the Colonial Social Science Research Council researchers, particularly Freeman and his legacy; the work of Rodney Needham; the contribution of George Appell; and the ways in which such scholars as Donald Brown, Jérôme Rousseau and Peter Metcalf, among others, have made contributions outside Borneo Studies. Much more could be made of this dimension of intellectual history, and the contribution which Borneo Studies has made to wider fields of scholarly endeavour and to the ways in which research in Borneo has been influenced and directed by more general ideas and approaches in the social sciences.
4. Debates and controversies: here we have considered what issues have encouraged researchers in this field to engage in debates and scholarly exchanges; these include discussions of the factors which might explain variations in land tenure systems and property rights; ethnic nomenclature, classification and identity; the characterisation, definition and explanation for the nomadic way of life; explanations for symbolic forms; the nature of cognation and the analysis of social forms (kindreds, households, longhouses, communities); and the relationships between equality and hierarchy.

There is much more I could have referred to and discussed in this introductory overview. It is, in many respects, a starting point in the consideration of research on Borneo as a field of studies which has both relied upon and contributed to the more general field of anthropology and the wider social sciences. It is the first attempt, I think, to take stock and to reflect on what has been achieved in scholarship in the post-war period and it has said something about the post-war colonial legacy and what has been achieved during the period of independence and the era of nation-building and development.

What is clear, however, is that there has been a noticeable increase in the amount of work undertaken by institutions and scholars based in Borneo, and this trend will undoubtedly continue. It was to be expected that, in the early stages of research in Borneo Studies, foreign scholars would be dominant. But this situation has been changing quite dramatically and certainly since the 1980s. Moreover, we are now witnessing a very welcome development – there is now much more collaboration between foreign and locally-based researchers, and the workshop which was organised at Universiti Brunei Darussalam provides an excellent example of this scholarly collaboration in evaluating what has been achieved and where we might go from here.

Acknowledgement

I am especially grateful to George N. Appell for his detailed comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to Bernard Sellato and Jérôme Rousseau for pointing me to literature which I had neglected to include.

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