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The Socio-economic Impact of Merchant Capital on the Mode of Production of the Semaq Beri in Peninsular Malaysia

by

Kimball John Morris

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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Abstract

This thesis defines a single mode of production for the Semaq Beri of Peninsular Malaysia. The Semaq Beri are a group of hunters and gatherers who have been recently resettled by the Malaysia Government. Although required to make Kg. Kucing their permanent home, they still engage in a foraging economy. This economy is characterized by two dominant types of production; production for use (subsistence production) and production for exchange (commodity production). Other types of production are sometimes engaged in, such as rice agriculture, gardening, animal husbandry and rubber production, but these activityies are very sporadic and not considered significant. The thesis describes the forces and relations of production that are associated with each production enterprise. It is argued that production in terms of the forces of production is identical in both of these enterprises. In terms of the relations of production that are associated with each of these enterprises it is shown that for a variety of reasons capitalist relations do not dominate in of objects of production the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of objects of production. It is argued that the relations of production that dominate in subsistence production also order and determine the distribution, exchange, and consumption of commodities or their exchange value. This is so for a variety of reasons. First the forces of production which

include the division of labour, tools, technology, as well as the land and resources are similar between the production of commodities and the production of subsistence. This compatibility requires no major reorientation of the Semaq Beri's economic production. Secondly, the relations of production associated with subsistence production are shown to dominate the organization, distribution, exchange, and consumption of the *value* produced by exchanging commodities with the capitalist system. In conclusion, it is suggested that the production of commodities is compatible with the production and reproduction of the social formation of the Semaq Beri.

Acknowledgements

I would like thank all of the people who have waited so very patiently for the completion of this thesis. To my Semaq Beri friends who allowed me to live and learn from them, who taught me how to *swag ha' beri* and particularly how to understand what Sahlins calls generalized reciprocity, I pledge a continued committment. The experience was and is unforgetable.

my adopted father Batin Isa and older brothers Deso and Tembling, my special thanks for their patience and intelligence, and tolerance of my lack of understanding of their way of life.

A heartfelt thanks to the staff of Jabatan Antropologi/Sosiologi, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: to Dr. Hood Mohd Salleh, for his valuable assistance and friendship; to Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaharam, for stimulating theoretical disscussion; and to Halim Ali for his insight into Malay society and culture.

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Finally, I would like to particularly thank my co-worker, Danielle Seguin, for without her help, imagination and insight this work would not have been possible. I however, take full responsibility for the work, it's errors, and omissions.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

I. Introduction

The ethnographic data presented here is a product of fieldwork conducted with the Semaq Beri of Sungai Kucing, Ulu Tembeling in the State of Pahang, Malaysia.(see figure 1) Fieldwork was jointly undertaken by my co-worker Danielle Seguin, myself and our daughter. We began our fieldwork in November of 1981 and, with the exception of brief periods, we lived more or less continuously with the Semaq Beri until February of 1983. At the time of our fieldwork very little was known about the Semaq Beri and no field work had been conducted with the Semaq Beri in the upper Tembeling river system. The data collected was by participant observation and informal informant interviews conducted by myself and my co-worker. A certain division of labour in data collection, imposed by cultural norms of relations between the sexes, determined that my informants were for the most part men while my co-worker's informants were women.

Traditionally the Semaq Beri of this area are nomadic hunters and gatherers.[1] According to informants small bands of Semaq Beri would camp for a week or so and longer during several festival periods (flood season, honey and fruit

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[1] In 1964, the government, in it's attempt to remove these people from the influence of the communist insurgents, resettled them at Kampong Sungai Kucing providing itinerent medical aid, and in the mid 70's a teacher. The Semaq Beri are required by the government to reside in the resettlement, but they spend a great deal of their time in the rainforest, returning to the resettlement for short periods every month or so. The elderly and school age children (ages 6-12) remain in the village during the school year. Trips, however, are often organized around the school year to allow the children to accompany the adults to the rainforest.

season, and *bansal* ceremonies). Bands come together for these festivals, but also to trade, visit, and to look for mates. During these times temporary macro-bands form and may remain together for periods up to several months during the fruit season or during the spring *bansal* may remain only seven days [2] before quickly breaking camp. The composition of the bands that split off from these macro-bands is not necessarily the same as those that came together originally. New marriage partners or other families may attatch themselves to the original group. The larger macro-band represents the pool of potential mates and relatives which form the smaller bands. There are many such macro-bands that form from time to time for a variety of reasons. These macro-bands may also include other Orang Asli groups and often they will intermarry. The groups that split off from the temporary macro-band will be associated with a central figure.

In the resettelment of Kg. Kucing, where most of the data was collected, there are several bands. They are easily distinguishable by the manner in which they situate their houses and build fences around each group.

Task groups usually draw their members from their own band, but on larger subsistence forays, and commodity gathering trips (usually undertaken by men for a week or so

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[2] There is a taboo period that the group that participated in the ceremonies in the ceremonial house cannot split apart for a period of not less than seven days. This is one of the only times that I heard of rules enforcing macro-band cohesion.

at a time), the groups are larger and are drawn from the larger population of the resettlement - the modern 'macro-band'. As a rule one or two of the bands may be in the settlement at any one time, while the rest of the bands may be variously collecting rainforest produce for sale, visiting relatives, or out on hunting, fishing trips.

Our family was incorporated into the band associated with the headman (*batin*). This man and his band members were the first to settle in the new settlement and after several years, through government encouragement, several other bands made Sg. Kuching their base camp. The government appointed him headman which caused some tension with other bands living there.

Leaders have very little authority (in the Weberian sense of domination) with the exception of the ability to levy fines (but not to collect them) and mediate disputes. Leaders are 'elected' to fill this role by 'how many feet will follow' him or her. [3] People for the most part vote

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[3] The Semaq Beri are known in the literature and by other Orang Asli groups as the only group that have female leaders. There were central women in the village that we were living in. One had two husbands from two different generations, a marriage forbidden by the Semaq Beri and commented on on several occasions. Another appeared to have a group formed around her (she was overshadowed a bit by her brother who was the batin, my adopted father). This woman exercised some 'authority' over me, on occasion, which, as a rule, was not done by anyone else.

One acknowledged female *batin* was from a group of Semaq Beri from Ulu Dungun, Trengannu. We had the opportunity to visit this group for a short period of time when they were visiting the Ulu Sepia band. The occasion of the visit was to participate in a *bansal* ceremony undertaken sometimes just prior to the flood season. The female *batin* and her group were visiting from several days journey through the rainforest. She was addressed as *batin*, and was blind. She

with their feet.

The research that I conducted concentrated on the economy of the Semaq Beri. Most of the data collected was from participant observation with the band that we were associated with. For the most part, we lived and worked with the band associated with the batin. When they moved we travelled with them.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to outline the mode of production of the Semaq Beri, i.e. to analyse the forces and relations of production associated with specific production enterprises. [4] Once the forces and relations of production are identified in each of the production enterprises I will

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[3](cont'd) was a hala' (shaman) but the hala' in our group seemed unafraid of her, which is often the mark of a powerful hala'. Our group stayed for only five days and I didn't have much time to 'interview' her. We met her again at a rattan collecting camp and she was actively involved in trading with a few members of our group before we moved on. I was unfortunately unable to determine the source of her influence, but at the same time I was unable to determine the source of any of the male *batins* influence either.

[4]The concept of production enterprises is defined by the forces of production: labour, primarily composition and organization; tools, including their embodied social relations; and the resource, which is the goal of the enterprise. Production enterprises are undertaken to secure subsistence (or commodities) and are goal-oriented and temporary work groups. Terray makes the mistake of identifing production enterprises as distinct modes of production in his analysis (Terray:1972). This confounds the distinction between the forces of production and relations of production associated with certain production enterprises. Terray's error is that he treats division of labour as relations of production, which is antithetical to Marxs' intention. (See Hindess and Hirst, 1975; Miellasoux, 1981; and Godelier 1977 for critical comments on Terray's conception of mode of production.)

compare the fit between two production enterprises: subsistence production and commodity production. My argument will be based on an analysis of the relations of production that are identified in the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods.

This thesis argues that the kind of commodity production that the Semaq Beri engage in is well articulated with their subsistence economy. It discusses the features of this articulation from a mode of production perspective, which includes an analysis of the specific forces and relations of production associated with each production enterprise. [5] Objects produced for exchange within the subsistence mode of production are not objects of exchange in a 'market economy' sense. Whereas the exchange of commodities is individual, momentary, and equal or unequal (as the case may be), other objects are exchanged or rather distributed for other reasons or on a different basis (for example the manner in which some objects such as blowpipes or baskets are exchanged). The transfer of objects, what could be called loosely an exchange of object, is in reality two separate acts. These exchanges would be better characterized as distributions. Commensurability or equivilence does not describe these kinds of exchanges. It is argued that there is a high degree of compatibility between the two types of production enterprises (production for exchange and production for use) in terms of the forces

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[5] I am suggesting here that the so-called 'natural economy' (Bradby:1975) does not exclude production for exchange.

of production brought to bear on the enterprises and in the relations of production that order the exchange, distribution and consumption of the objects of production. The production of commodities is dependent on the production of subsistence goods and the Semoq Beri are exploited by the merchants at this level. At the same time, it will be argued, the exchange of commodities does not provide a significant amount of their subsistence needs, that is they do not 'exchange in order to subsist'. However merchant capital is not without it's effect. It is concluded that although there is a high degree of compatibility between production for exchange and production for use, this does not mean they are harmonious relations. On the contrary, merchant capital tends to bolster and maintain those specific relations of production that obtain in the subsistence sector at the cost of other relations that are part of the whole social formation (ritual, kinship etc.).

In this sense there is a dual action by merchant capital on pre-capitalist societies. On one hand, the exchange between merchants and producers puts an increased amount of goods into the traditional exchange networks bolstering their social relations by the sheer quantity of exchanges. Mechanisms to prevent accumulation of the product, such as sanctions against hording and positive rewards for re-distributing, exist to ensure a particular form of access to the surplus labour of other members of the society. These mechanisms also prevent accumulation of the

product for the purpose of other forms of reproduction (specifically capitalist relations). On the other hand, *certain* relations are bolstered at the expense of other kinds of relations (ritual relations, or interband relations)[6]

Thus the effect of producing for exchange is two-fold. On one hand, it provides material for the maintenance of relations of production; not only do people exchange more, they also engage in production more and produce more. On the other hand, it potentially sets the stage for a different form of production: exchanging with merchants in order to subsist.[7]

It is shown that the social relations that are appropriate to the subsistence sector order and dominate the production of commodities. Products must be exchanged, however, and the actual exchange of the product is determined by market relations. Although the commodities collected have (at least in the quantity collected) no use value, when converted into use-values they fall into generalized patterns of reciprocity (punun,kioy).

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[6] It is not that these relations cease to exist; they are as integral as those relations merchant capital bolster, but they are not as much on the forefront. This has a tendency to distort the social structure and plays on contradictions in Semaq Beri society by reducing the inter-dependence between members of the society.

[7] In a species diversified environment restricting access to territory is an impossible task. However, in an environment that has little diversity such as the environment exploited by North American Indians, people bounding and controlling access to particular ecological niches is far easier, but also at times more necessary.

The impact of commodity production is assessed with reference to two features of a mode of production, that is the ways and means of ensuring access to the means of production and the mode of appropriation of surplus labour.

The reproduction of the relations of production is crucial for the maintenance of the structure of the social formation of the Semaq Beri. It is argued that the reproduction of the relations of production is dependent on the subsistence enterprises and that the disruption of subsistence production is the place to begin an analysis of social change. The reproduction of relations of production depends on subsistence production and in the 'last instance' the destruction of subsistence production is the death nell of the system.

The logic of capitalism and capitalist penetration is to make the market the mediator of exchange and distribution, to control not only the exchange of goods but the production of them also, and to finally make human labour a commodity mediated by the market. The road to this domination by capitalism is resisted by the structure of many pre-capitalist social formations, that is the structure of relations existing between persons in traditional society where capitalism and the market are not dominant. [8] The

---

[8] Merchant capital or the action of merchant capital (excuse the reification), based as it is on a 'traditional' mode of production, is unable to transform that mode of production. It is this mode of production that must be destroyed in order to integrate people into capitalist relations. This is often done in a violent way (see Rey:1975). For the Semoq Beri attacks on subsistence production have been mounted by government agencies first by resettlement and then forcing

task, then, is to describe the mode of production of the Semaq Beri as it exists today in order to show the fortuitous fit between production for use and production for exchange in their economy. Following this some criticisms of Marxist thought on the articulation of modes of production will offered. A review of the relevent anthropological literature concerning the impact of commodity production will also be addressed in this chapter. Particular emphasis will be placed on the situation in North America.

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*(cont'd) new subsistence techniques (rice, agriculture, animal husbandry) on them, while actively discouraging foraging activity in the rainforest.

Environment

The Orang Asli inhabit a rain forest environment, which covers about 85% of the land (Ooi 1963). The Semoq Beri exploit what is known as lowland rain forest which covers roughly 60% of Malaysia, and submontane which covers about 10%. [9]

Flora

The lowland rainforest is composed of thousands of species of trees [10] , shrubs, herbs, and woody climbers. The upper story is about 100' to 150' high though trees, particularly the 'gul' tree or bee tree (Koompassia excelsa), grow to 200' or more. The upper storey is usually represented by Dipterocarps (50%). The main storey about 70 to 100 feet from the ground forms a continuous canopy and is characterized mainly by the families Burseraceae, Gulliferae, Myresticae, Myrtaceae and Popotaceae. The understory consists of saplings of the other two upper storeys with members of such families as Annonaceae, Euphorbraceae, Flacourticeae, and Rubiaceae. The density of this layer varies from unpenratable to open.

The vegetation on higher hills, (submontane) is much less homogeneous than that of the lowlands. The four major

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[9] According to a 1969 Jabatan Ehwal Orang Asli survey, approximately 60% of the Orang Asli livein the deep rainforest, others live in rural but accessible areas. They practice a variety of subsistence economics including hunting gathering,swidden horticulture, wet rice cultivation and marine economics.

[10] Usually up to one hundred different species with a girth of more than one foot are found to the acre (Wyatt Smith, 1964:203-204)

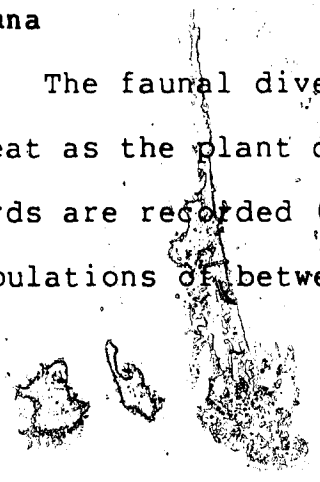
forest types are Hill Diptercarps, Upper Dipterocarpes, Montane Oak and Montane Ericaceous. The forest floor is relatively open and forest litter thicker than lowland types.

An idea of the species diversity can be obtained from Burkill's *Dictionary of Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula* (Burkill, 1966). Burkhill estimates that 92% of the text is devoted to botanical products and lists 1,751 botanical *genera*. Corner estimates that there are "between 8,000 and 9,000 species of flowering plants in Malaya and this excludes ... ferns, lichens, and fungi and so on" (1952 Preface p.1) . About 5% of these have been introduced to Malaysia and a small part of the species total represents exclusively strand or coastal vegetation.

There are an enormous number of harvestable botanical species, which are distributed widely throughout the rainforest environment. Thus, the ecology is highly diverse with many species represented, and few micro-environmental niches. This is in contrast to other environments that hunter-gatherer group exploit such as the forests of temperate climates which have low diversity and many more specialized ecological niches.

Fauna

The faunal diversity of the Malayan rain forest is as great as the plant diversity (Dunn, 1975:39). 575 species of birds are recorded (75% resident) (Medway, 1965). Bird populations of between 400 and 500 birds per 100 acres are



recorded from several tracts by Mclure (1969).

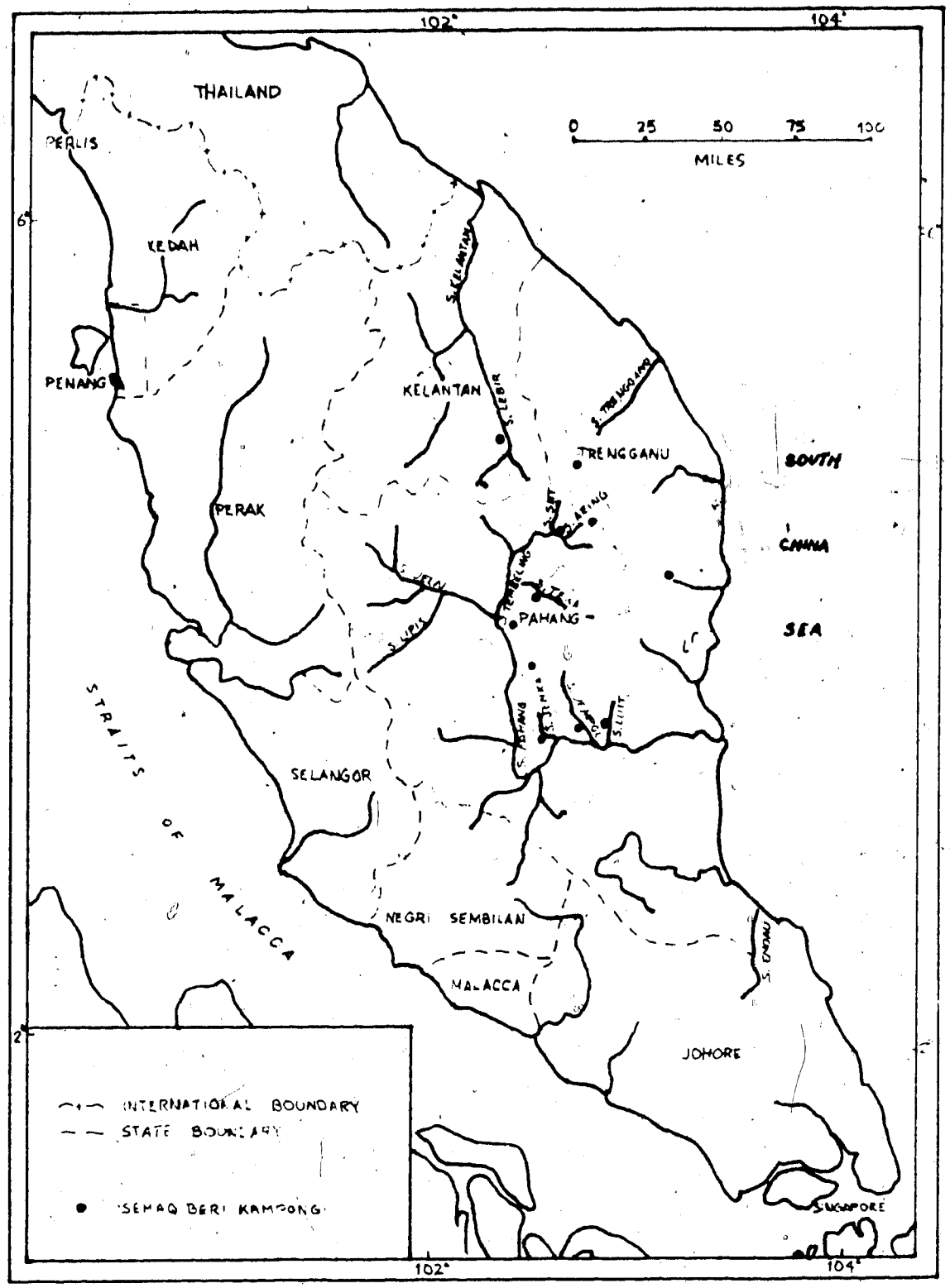
There are 206 species of mammals in Malaysia (Medway, 1978). Bats, rodents and carnivores (Chiroptera, Rodentia, Carnivora) represent 83% of all the mammals. There is relatively little segretation ecologically or altitudinally. Medway (1978:xiv) estimates biomass per acre to be 4-6 kg. Most Malayan mammals are creatures of the forest and like the birds are distributed vertically. Few mammals except the ungulates and some rats normally reside on the forest floor. Other vertebrates in Malaysia include some 129 species of snakes, (Tweedie 1957), 100 species of reptiles, 50 amphibians, and about 200 species of fresh water fishes (Tweedie and Harrison 1954).

There also exist many thousands of species of invertabrates important to man such as pests, or food sources (crabs, snails, mollusks, prawns, bees, and beetles).

Climate

Pahang, the state were this research took place, is, as is common with other states in Malaysia, a river basin. All rivers in this state drain into the Pahang river which is fed by the Jelai (and Lepis) in the western section and the Tembling and its tributaries in the east. Lesser river systems to the north are the Kelantan and south of the Pahang river the Bebir, Rompin, and Endau rivers which all drain into the South China Sea (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
MALAYA: LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA



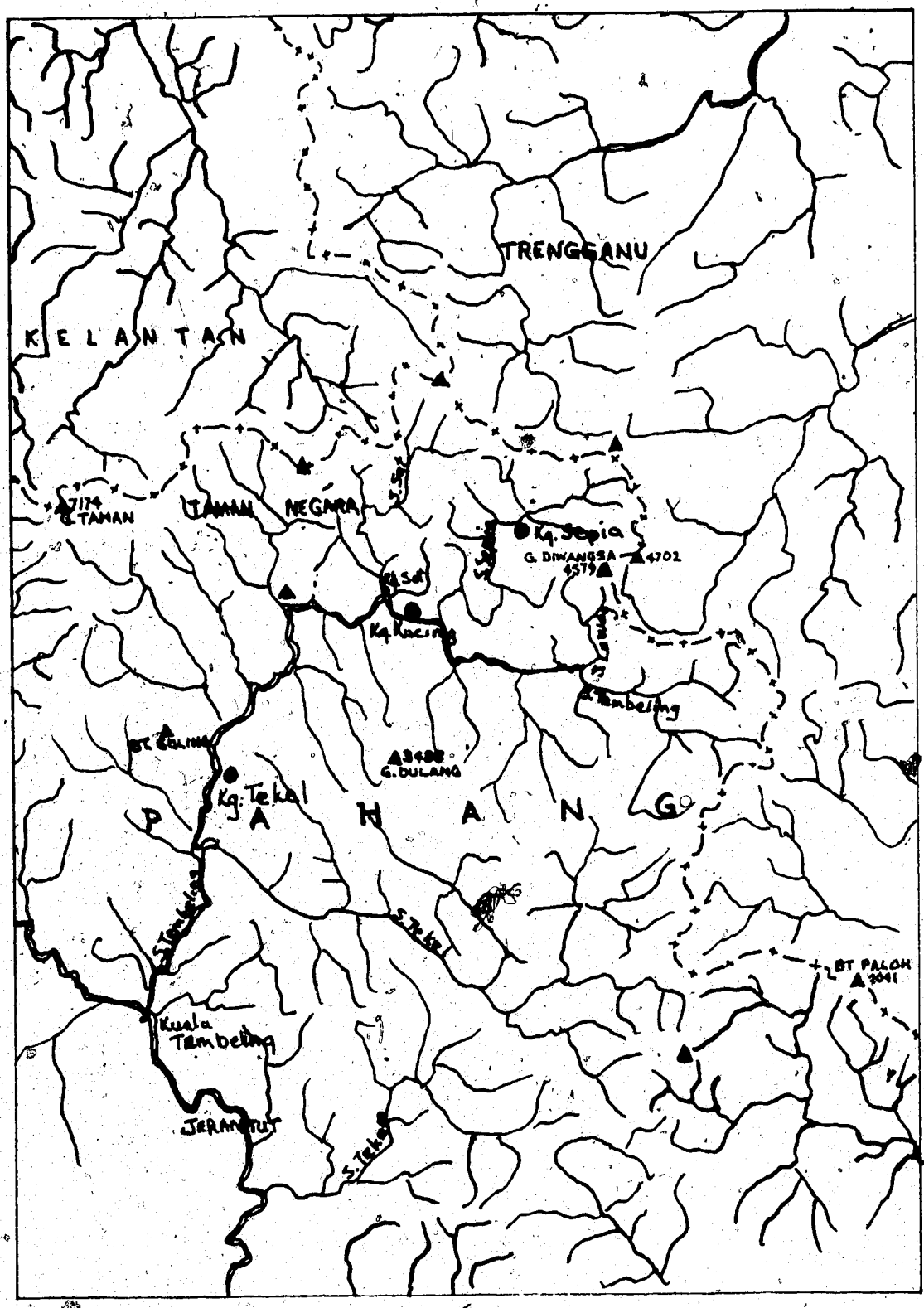
It has a warm humid climate with average temperatures between 77.4 F. at Kuala Lumpur to 81.3 F. degrees for Betong. Annual temperature variations are slight with exception of daily variation in areas asociated with altitude. Average rainfall is between 80.28 inches for Temerloh and 127.35 inches for the coast of Pahang. From December to January the north-east monsoons bring heavy rains and many rivers are subject to flooding. The Tembling is capable of rising several feet in a matter of hours and in periods of heavy rainfall as much as 120 feet in 1926 (Cant, 1973:115-118)

Periodic floods carry large amounts of silt down river. During the dry season shoals created by flooding make river navigation difficult if not impossible in the upper reaches of the Tembling River. However, the Pahang, Jelai and especially the Tembling were important lines of communication and transport.

Soils

The soils which are important for Malay agriculture are low humic gley soils which occur close to the coast and are associated with alluvial soils. In the area of study (see Figure 2) lethosols and shallow latosols which are unsuitable for agriculture predominate. Shallow red and yellow latosols and pozols can support permenant tree crops such as rubber, banana, fruit tree, etc. The soil depletion from shifting cultivation is very rapid and after a second or third season most attempts are abandoned.

FIGURE 2: STUDY AREA IN DETAIL



Regeneration after shifting agriculture takes place rapidly. Normally after 5 or 6 years a thick growth of shrubs is established. Belukar or secondary forest resembles a mature forest within about 25 years with the exception of the larger trees. Complete regeneration make take as long as several hundred years.

Prehistory of Malaysia

The archeological record of prehistoric settlement in Peninsular Malaysia is sparse but provides evidence of four cultural groups, two of these groups were stone age settlers and two appear to have been expatriate miners or traders who brought a metal culture from the north. These people inhabited Malaysia in successive waves. Evidence of the earliest occupations comes from cave sites in states of Perak, Pahang, Kelantan and Perlis, some well into the interior. Unfortunately much evidence contained in these prehistoric cave sites has been lost because of guano collecting activities.

The Hoabinians were the first to arrive around 11,000 years BP., and entered Pahang via interior waterways. They were essentially a hunting and gathering people who used flaked stone implements and lived in limestone caves and rock shelters. Pottery has been found in the top most layers but it is unclear from the literature (Dunn, 1964: 119-122) whether it was traded to Hoabinian people from contemporary lowland farmers or that some shards of the broken pottery,

left on top of a Hoabinian deposit by later 'Neolithic' people, had somehow worked its way down into Hoabinian deposits (Solhiem, 1980; Dunn, 1964:121). Peacock, (1967: 50) suggests that swidden agriculture may not have evolved until much nearer 5,000 BP at the beginning of the 'Neolithic' period.

There is ample evidence, however, of extensive trade relations. Resins and marine moluscs have been found in most cave sites (Matthews 1961:8, Callenfels and Evans 1928: 153-156; Tweedie 1936), at GolBa'it (Callenfels and Noone (1940:122); Gua Musang (Tweedie 1940:11) and Gua Cha (Sieveking 1954-55:88)

During the 5th millenium BP a Neolithic people descended through interior waterways to settle along flood plains of interior rivers. (Dunn 1975, Tweedie 1936). They were still heavily dependent on hunting fishing and gathering but by 5,000 BP root crops had assumed an important place in their subsistence economy (Dunn 1964). The habitation sites include caves but open habitation sites were certainly used. Coastal settlements are in evidence and Dunn suggests that they possessed knowledge of boat building. '' These people were accomplished potters and agriculturalists but there seems to be some cultural complex continuity in their ceramics from Hoabinian times. The literature indicates that this early period was additive rather than replacement by new peoples. There is as yet

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''Probably by 3,000 - 2,500 BP intermittant Chinese merchants reached the Peninsula.

little evidence for merchant trading before 5,000 BP but much direct and indirect evidence for trade within the peninsula (see Dunn 1975:120-137).

During this time when Neolithic populations were occupying flood plains of rivers, two waves of more technologically developed people moved through the interior water ways of Kelantan and Pahang (Cant 1965:16). The first group came in the 1st century and brought bronze objects which have been discovered in the valley of the Tembling, and Jehai rivers in Northern Pahang (Zoewenstien 1956:78). These people probably came as miners or traders for they left no evidence of well established settlements.

The second wave of people familiar with the use of iron and engaging in extensive gold mining entered the interior of Pahang towards the end of the 1st millenium (Loewenstien 1962:5-78). They apparently came from Indianized colonies which superceeded the Dong-s'on Empire in the south of Cambodia (Sieveking, 1956:79-138).

History of Ethnography of Malaysia

The first published work on the aboriginal people of Pahang is by Nicolas Von Miclucho-Maclay, a Russian ethnographer who travelled through Pahang and Kelantan in 1874-1875. He travelled through what is now the Negri Sembilan through Pahang via the Tembling River and into Kelantan by way of the Tahan River and Aring River.

In southern Pahang he met Semalai which he called Orang Hutan (rainforest people). They are almost certainly Semalai from comparison of the few ethnographic facts he discusses and my own knowledge of the Semalai language. He provides a word list easily recognizable as Southern Aslian (1878a):44).

He describes two kinds of Orang Asli, the Orang Sakai-liar and Orang Sakai-jinka (the wild and tame Orang Asli). The former live nomadically and have little contact with Malays while the other group either works for Malays or mediates exchanges between the 'Orang Sakai liar' and Malays. He lists gutta, rattan, different kinds of wood used as incense, dammar, ivory, rhinoceros horns etc., which are traded for parangs, cotton goods, salt, tobacco, seri, gambir and food stuffs (rice). The so-called 'tame ones' worked for Malays for short periods such as paddy harvesting, opening new plantations etc. Relations between Malays and the 'wild ones' were decidedly hostile. And according to Maclay, Malays cheat them in exchanges, and steal their children to keep or sell as slaves (1878b).

References to Orang Asli up to the eve of British administration in Pahang are sparse. Evidence of a pre-Malacean people of Pahang who occupied the Tembling river system is provided by irrigation works, mine workings, and pottery (an industry that survives today at Kuala Tembling). These people were gold, tin and iron miners planting rice for subsistence. They established settlements

as far up the Tembling as Jeram Kuoi and Jong Birlaboh.

During the early 1800s the investigation of the aboriginal populations of peninsular Malaysia was dominated by the British and it was around this time that this influence was being aggresively pursued by the British colonial office. Exploratory military expeditions were the impetus for government officials journeys into the interior where they came in contact with the aboriginal populations. There were also travellers, linguists and amateur enthnographers but most reports were of a general nature.

Early reports and investigations dealt with aboriginal populations in Johore (Logan 1847 a, b, c, d, e; Take 1894; Sewettenham 1894; Maxwell 1879; 1879; Machado A.D. 1902.); in the Kedah/Perak area (Low 1850, b; Croix 1881; 1885; Wray 1894.) ; in Selangor (Belaney, G.C. 1886; Campbell, J.A. 1887; Letessier 1892; Sheat 1895, 1896; Douglas 1897; Maxwell 1897; Roe 1897; Scott W.D. 1897; Stonar O.F. 1897) and others of a more areal nature (Anderson 1850; Favre P. 1848; Low 1850); a considerable amount of work on Semang or Negritoes (Anderson 1824, 1850; Low 1850a; Earl 1853; Hunt 1861 a,b; Anonymous 1878; Maxwell 1878; Morgan 1896) and in the state of Pahang (Kelsall 1894a)

In 1906 Skeats and Blagden conducted an exhaustive search of literature pertaining to the 'Pagan Races' of Peninsular Malaysia as well as field expeditions financed by Cambridge University. The resulting work, *The Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsular* (1906), is a landmark in comparative

anthropology of the aboriginal populations of Malaysia.

In Skeats' review of the literature he divides the sources into three categories - a, b, c (Blagden p. xxv) - and identifies three main stages of development. The first of these stages, from 1800-1850, contains no name of a 'systematically trained anthropologist'. Of note are Sir Stamford Raffles, William Marsden, John Leyden, John Crawford, John Anderson, P.J. Begbie and Lieutenant Newbold. The second period, from 1850-1890, includes the writing of J. R. Logan whose work was considered as "critical, accurate and voluminous" (Blagden p. 440), Miklucho Maclay whose work is of interest to us but who essentially was a traveller and an interested amateur ethnologist, and Montano de Morgan together with P. Favre and P. Boui, two French Roman Catholic missionaries. (See Blagden xxvi.)

The third period, between 1890 and 1906, was dominated by government officials such as Clifford (1886, 1891), Leonard (1897), Wray (1894), Kelsall (1894), Machado (1902), and Cerruti (1904, 1906, 1908), as well as trained anthroplogists such as Skeat, Blagden, and Armadale. This period was characterized by Skeats as a turning point:

> "During it's course some of the most eminent anthropologists of Europe, more especially of Germany have themselves either personally or through their agents taken an active part in the work of inquiry." (1906:vxi)

The voluminous work of Vaughn-Stevens presented some problems for Skeat who doubted the veracity of his reports. Rudolf Martin published in 1905 a momentous tome on the

Orang Asli which is in many ways identical with Skeats and Blagden's two volume set. He took great pains to follow up Vaughn-Stevens' tracks but charged him with a love of exaggeration for its own sake (1905:170) but does admit that some value may lie in the 'voluminous communications' (p. 174) (see Endicott; Orang Asli Newsletter, 1985)

Skeats and Blagdens *Pagan Races* is still the most impressive collection of data on Orang Asli ethnography but is historically dated in that major concerns were the collection of word lists, physiological measurements, material culture, exotic beliefs and practices. All of the work was descriptive and suffered from a confusion of categories (tribal groups, linguistic groups, etc.). Evans, Schebesta, Noone, Kilton Stewart, forestry officials, medical anthropologists all contributed to the literature on the Orang Asli before the 2nd world war. In the 50's Williams Hunt, R.O.D. Noone, medical anthropologists (Polunin 1952, Kinzie 1953) did general studies of the Orang Asli. Since then specific work has been done on a variety of groups in Peninsular Malaysia (Carey, 1976; Denton, 1967; Benjamin, 1973; Needham, 1971; Dunn, 1973; Hood, 1974; Endicott, 1974; Rambo, 1976).

Trade

The Orang Asli in Malaysia have been trading with other groups no doubt for some thousands of years. Dunn (1975), in his monograph on rain-forest traders and collectors in

Malaysia, has argued from archaeological evidence that there was collecting and trading of forests products as far back as 20,000 B.P. Although the evidence for the period about 20,000 B.P. is speculative, Dunn assumes that trade was internal and inland. However about 10,000 B.P. reasonably firm evidence exists for trade in forest products between inland and more sedentary coastal groups. (Dunn 1975:134-135). During the period of 5,000 B.P. Dunn argues that coastal people were probably in contact with other people in insular Malaysia and that by 3,000-2500 B.P. the coastal people were trading with Chinese merchants. A great deal of Dunn's evidence is sparse (archaeological) and speculative but certainly from the beginning of this century trade with China was a growing concern (Wheatly, 1970, 1964a). The earliest records of the trading of forest products is to China in the 5th century(Wang, 1958). Wheatley (1961) lists gaharu wood, amber, ivory, rhino horns, tortoise shells, and cowries. During the period 960-1126, Chinese records list ebony, gharu wood laka wood, pandan matting, ivory, rhino horns, bee's wax, and lac as products acquired by Chinese merchants from the Malay Peninsula (Wheatly 1959). Other products, not necessarily acquired from the Malay peninsula, include products indigenous to this area such as rattans, bezoin, dammars, civet glands, bird feathers, and sapan wood. (Wheatly 1959). Arab traders list similar products from Malaysia from as early as 850 A.D. The trade in forest products has continued

to this day.

There are several important points to be made from some of this evidence of early trade. First, it is safe to assume that the Orang Asli were probably the main providers of forest products. Secondly, the trade engaged in has been going on for several millenium and that changes in the social organization, if any, happened so long ago that it would be absurd to argue that the mode of production engaged in now is in a state of transition or that what we see now is a pale imitation of the 'traditional' culture. [12] It is also safe, I believe, to assume that the production of these goods was not a full-time concern and was occasional in the sense that there was no dependence on this kind of production.

Language and Prehistory of the Orang Asli

The languages spoken by the Orang Asli (aboriginal people) are called Aslian. They belong to the Mon Khmer family which is a branch of Austroasiatic languages. [13]

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[12]Morris argues that the Hill Pandaram have changed thier social organization over the last 1500 years!!? This is the length of time he estimates that they have been engaging in commodity production. He argues that the social organization of labour was changed because of production for exchange. Now this may be true but we will never know. The argument takes Murphy and Stewarts' analysis (see below, pp. 126) as a social law , but one hardly significant 1500 years later. This is a ridiculous posture to take in an attempt to argue Murphy and Stewarts' hypothesis.

[13]Diffloth (1979) presents five structural arguments to support Schmits claim (1901, 1905, 1906) that the Malaysian Orang Asli languages are historically derived from a proto-Mon Khmer language at some remote point in the past. Diffloth argues that vowel length, that is both short and long vowels, and final palatals, display sound patterns

Aslian languages are themselves divided into three groups: Jehaic, Senoic and Semelaic. They correspond to Benjamin's (1973) classification of Northern, Central and Southern branches. Figure 3 shows the distribution and subdivisions of each branch.

Several groups (shown on map), such as Jakun, Temuan, Belandas, nd Orang Kualu, are known as Proto Malays according to the Jabatan Hal Ewal Orang Asli (Department of Aboriginal Affairs). They speak the Malay language. In vocabularies collected by Miclucho-Maclay (1878a) some words are typically Southern Aslian but whether these are loan words or part of their traditional language I am unable to tell. Descriptive analysis of individual Aslian languages has yet to make much headway, and although work has been done on Temiar (Benjamin, 1976, 1973), Semai (Diffloth 1973, 1972, 1977, 1980), Jah Hut (Diffloth 1976), and Semoq Beri (Nik Safiah 1979), the majority of the languages have not received much attention.

The Semoq Beri belong to the Southern branch of the Aslian language along with Semalai, Temoq, and Mah Meri (Figure 3). As was noted above there is a reasonable doubt as to the original language of some of these people such as the Temuan and Jakun whose language is sprinkled with

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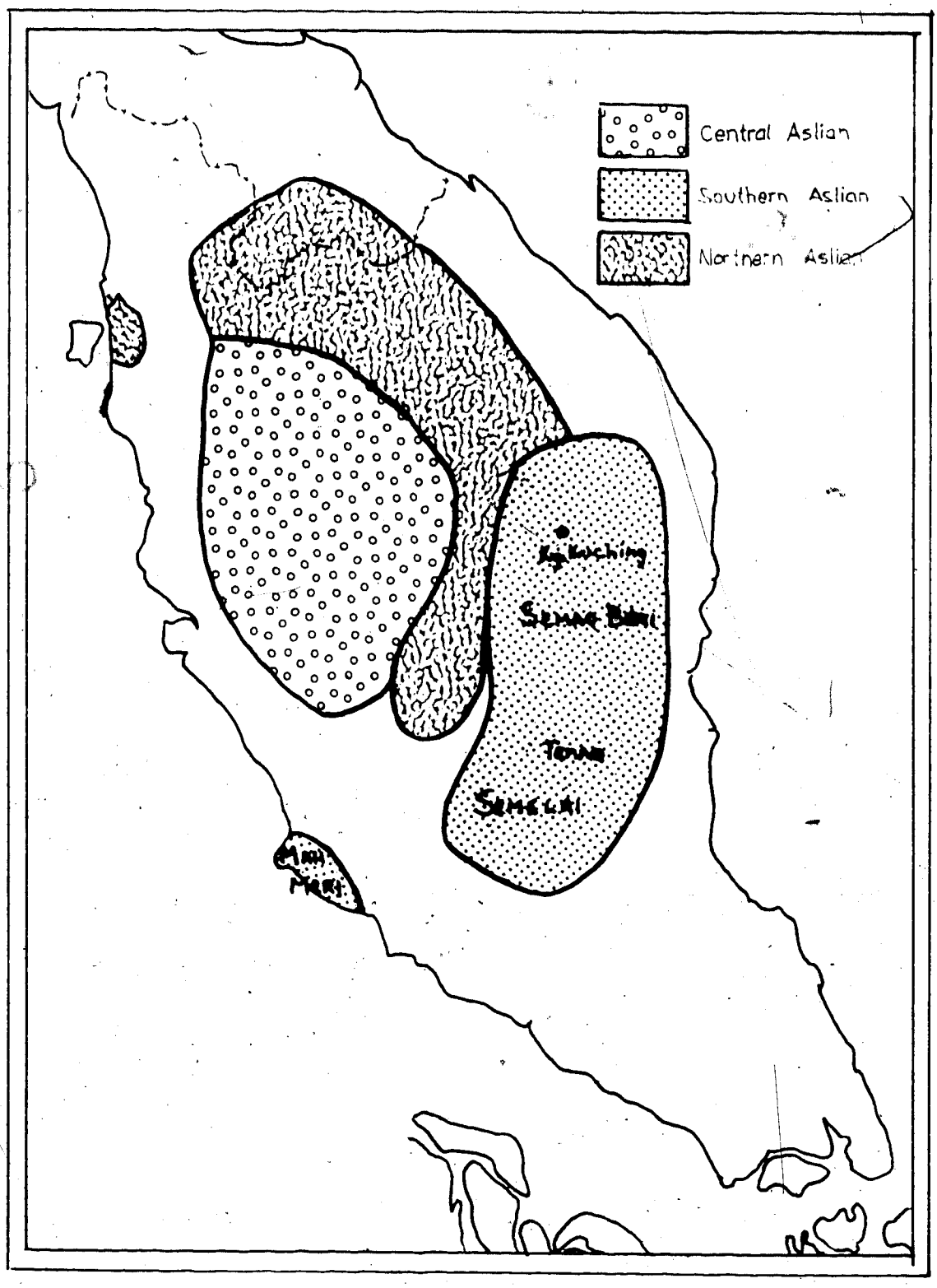
[3](cont'd) within the same words that are characteristic of Mon Khmer and that nasal infixes for Nominalization, dual character of the pronoun system, i.e. pronouns for 'I and you' singular, 'I and you', plural 'I and him or her, and I and them, and a basic word class of experiences which is as large and important as nouns and verbs are systematic features of Mon Khmer as well.

FIGURE 3
ORANG ASLI LANGUAGE GROUPS



Southern Aslian words. Others such as the Orang Kanak, Orang Laut, and Orang Selatar seem to have come to the Peninsula only in recent past (Carey, 1966:23) and many have converted to Islam.

It is not clear when Orang Asli groups began populating the Peninsula. However Benjamin, using lexical statistical techniques, has suggested that they came in three distinct waves. Northern Aslian about 25,000 years ago, Central Aslian about 6,800 years ago and Proto Malays and Southern Aslian about 4,000 years ago. This has not been verified by any archelogical evidence, particulary since evidence regarding people living in tropical climates is sparse since they occup no lasting residences and having little in the way of material goods. In view of the shaky scientific basis for lexico-statistical analysis the hypothesis remains highly speculative.

Present day populations are given in Table 1.

The Emergency

During the period from 1948-1960, the British colonial government declared what was officially known as the 'Emergency' in response to a growing communist insurgency. The communists, who were mostly of Chinese origin, had formed the only effective resistance to the Japanese occupation of Malaysia in the Second World War. The primary objective of the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP) was the expulsion of the British colonial power. During the period

TABLE 1

Population of Orang Asli Groups in Peninsular Malaysia

NORTHERN ASLIAN	
Kintak	103
Kensui	101
Jahai	769
Mendriq	121
Bateq	585
Lanoh	302
TOTAL	1,447
CENTRAL ASLIAN	
Temiar	10,586
Semai	16,497
Che Wong	215
Jah Hut	2,280
TOTAL	29,578
SOUTHERN ASLIAN	
Semaq Beri	1,699
Mah Meri	1,356
Semelai	2,874
TOTAL	5,929
PROTO MALAYS	
Temuan	8,698
Jakun	8,719
Orang Kanaq	36
Orang Selatar	374
Orang Kuala	1,612
TOTAL	19,439
TOTAL POPULATION	56,927

1942-1945, the MCP donned battle dress and was known as the Malaysian Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) and collaborated extensively with the Allied powers to defeat the Japanese. After the liberation of Malayasia the MPAJA were not prepared to welcome what they saw as a returning colonial power. The war represented a defeat of European colonialism and the triumph of Arian nationalism. The defeat of the Japanese showed showed a possibility of political independence. In the early years after the war the MCP (now Malyasian Races Liberation Army) concentrated on agitation and control of unions with much success. The British colonial government for their part hit them hard with ordinances controlling union activity. However, economic recovery began to be felt throughout the country and various internal disputes and defections caused a declining confidence in the party. For unclear reasons, the MCP turned to 'armed struggle' which began the period of the 'Emergency'.

The 'struggle' was carried out in and around population centres, police stations, and Western owned estates. The Chinese squatters, who had been displaced by the Japanese occupation, and had provided the MPAJA with intelligence and supplies during the Japanese occupation had settled on unused or state land growing vegetables, were again pressed into service. The colonial government, for their part realizing the importance of squatter communities to the communist armed struggle, sought to remove these people from

'strategic areas' and to cut off popular support which the MCP relied on. In 1951 according to the 'Briggs Plan' (General Sir Harold Briggs arrived in Kuala Lumpur as director of operations and after one month stay submitted his plan to the British Defence Co-ordination Committee), the Chinese squatter communities were relocated in 'new villages' the name given to four hundred or so resettlement areas ranging from a hundred to well over ten thousand inhabitants. The new villages were enclosed by barbed wire and guarded. Villagers were required to carry I.D. cards, a curfew (in some cases house curfews of 22 hours per day) was enforced and movements were strictly monitored. Eventually, these villages were provided with elemental facilities and houses and the occupants were able to carry on with subsistence production as they had done as squatters. This policy of resettlement was followed aggressively and was successful in pushing the MRLA into deep rainforest. By 1954, all evidence pointed to the development of safe bases deep in the rainforest throughout Malaysia.

During the Japanese occupation the MPAJA had established close contacts with many aboriginal groups in Malaysia, in particular Temiar and Senoi groups who are the most populous. Both of these groups are swidden horiticulturalists and could be counted on to supply food and information on government patrols in the area. It should be emphasized that during the Japanese occupation, many members of the MPAJA had lived among and married into

various groups. The Politburo of the MPC issued directives to rainforest resistance groups that in their relations with Orang Asli a gentle approach was to be used; coercion and violence was strictly condemned. Moreover, the aboriginies were to be taught simple medical remedies, elementary hygiene and agricultural techniques. This contrasted sharply with the government's treatment, as well as the relations in the past with the local population of Malays (see appendix on slavery in Malaysia). It was estimated that during the 'Emergency', and at least by 1953, the entire hill population, consisting of some 30,000 Orang Asli, was under the influence and control of the insurgents (Short 441, Carey 311). Prior to this the individual states were left to seek solutions to the fact that the aborigines were co-operating with the communists. This had disasterous results. In various states, in particular Kelantan, thousands of Orang Asli were rounded up by the police or military, put into trucks with little or no explanation and transported to various resettlement camps. Their houses, livestock and crops were destroyed. The resettlement camps were considered by one Protector of Aborigines (Carey) as 'miniature concentration camps' where food was inadequate and conditions deplorable. Carey estimates that hundreds died in these squalid camps while others, "in one instance a whole Resettlement Camp, crept through the wire at night, deftly avoiding the sentries and fled back to the rainforest" (Short:443). Those that escaped informed others

of the government action and conditions in the Resettlement Camps. The effect was to drive the Orang Asli deeper into the rainforest, and into the hands of the Communists.

By 1953 it became obvious that the policy of 'resettlement' was a complete failure and the colonial government allowed the Orang Asli to slip away and return to their homes. The damage had been done, however, and it was many years before meaningful contact could be established.

In 1954, the government began constructing forts in the deep rainforest and provided food and medical facilities for the Orang Asli. The Orang Asli, still deeply suspicious, rarely visited the forts. The Department for Aboriginal Affairs had been established after the Second World War and headed by Major P.D.R. William Hunt. '* The establishment of forts and the newly enlarged Dept. of Aboriginal Affairs was, in part, effective in 'winning over the Orang Asli'.

For the most part the Orang Asli were caught between a 'rock and a hard place' and in general their response, historically as well, was to remove themselves to isolated areas. Now that the struggle was taking place in their homes, so to speak, it was difficult if not impossible to take sides. The Orang Asli did what seemed to them the least dangerous and most diplomatic. They co-ooperated with both sides giving as little information as possible but providing food to those who requested it.

'*Previous to this appointments had been made to conduct research out of the Taiping Museum. The department was small and was purely advisory but it was decided to regenerate and enlarge it.

As the years wore on the communists were unable to score any significant victories and unable to overcome the stigma of belonging to an overwhelmingly Chinese organization. They were unable to attract significant support from Malays who comprised over 50% of the population. However, as late as 1957 the government was engaged in 'resettling' Oran Asli populations far away from their hereditary positions. Today the national government has abandoned the policy of resettlement but is still aggressively pursuing a policy of 'settlement' of the various nomadic groups.

Administration

There were no attempts to set up an administration of the Orang Asli prior to the state of Perak appointing an Italian by the name of Cerrutti to act as liaison officer with the Orang Asli (see *My Friends the Savages* 1908). Prior to the second world war there was no administration of the Orang Asli, but the task of research was undertaken by the Taiping Museum and its curator.

I.H.N. Evans was the first to take an active interest in the Orang Asli and studied Negrito groups from 1913-1932. Evans was succeeded by a Cambridge educated anthropologist, H.D. Noone. He became the field ethnographer in 1931 and studied Senoi speaking people particularly, the Temiar. Noone travelled extensively with the Temiar, and married a Temiar woman, but unfortunately his ethnographic work was

lost during the Japanese occupation. He was murdered by a young Temiar apparently as a result of a sexual jealousy. Noone, however, published a brief work on the Ple Temiar which described the social organization of the Temiar but more importantly offered suggestions to the government in his section of the Proposed Aboriginal Policy. Some of these suggestions were adopted by the government. He called for creation of large reserves in parts of Perak and Kelantan where the people could be left to live according to their own customs and traditions. The teaching of agricultural skills and development of aboriginal arts and crafts was seen as part of the obligation of the government.

During the Japanese occupation there existed no effective administration, although H.D. Noone and some others took to the rainforest to organize resistance to the Japanese. It was during this time that close personal ties developed between the M.P.A.J.A. and the Orang Asli which was to become a problem for the British when they re-occupied Malaysia after the war.

After the Japanese occupation and in response to growing communist insurgency (see section on the Emergency), the colonial government appointed Major P.D.R. Williams Hunt to head a small department. The administration of the Orang Asli was considered a state matter because an overaching administration was not possible (only a few states were federated and others had only 'British advisors'). Hunt made aerial surveys to get an idea of population and distribution

and he conducted field work among the Semai in PeraK.

After the accidental death of William Hunt in 1953, the High Comissioner of Malaysia, Sir Gerald Templer, appointed R.O.D. Noone as Advisor on Aborigines. Like his older brother, he was a Cambridge educated anthropologist and had considerable experience in Malaysia and a standing among Orang Asli.

The government was increasingly concerned with the Orang Asli because of the communist insurgency and the department was greatly expanded. Its mandate was to win the Orang Asli away from the communists and this remains a concern today. At this time legislation was enacted to protect the Orang Asli in 1954, amended in 1967, and again in 1974. In this document the government recognized its responsibilities for the 'protection' of aboriginal peoples, as well as recognizing a right to follow their own way of life and pursue their economic activities within traditional 'aboriginal areas'. *The Statement of Policy* regarding the *Administration of the Aboriginal Peoples of the Federation of Malaya* published in 1961 by the new Malaysian government, begins by saying that the Orang Asli must be helped and encouraged to assimilate, but it also recognizes aboriginal rights over traditional areas and that the 'aborigines will not be moved without their full consent'. The rest of the document sets out clearly the intention to assist Orang Asli in areas of medicine, education and agricultural techniques (rural development), while at the same time recognizing

their rights to their own traditional way of life.

R. D. Noone retired in 1961 and was replaced by Professor Iskander Carey, who had been a member of the department since 1955. Following independance (Merdeka) the Orang Asli were a concern of the central government only.

The Semaq Beri

The Semaq Beri (pronounced *semo' bri*) which means forest people in their own language [15], number approximately 1,700 people in the last 1974 census (Gomes,1979:77). The majority of this linguistic group lives in Pahang with smaller numbers living in Kelatan (2%) and Trengganu (13%) (Carey 1976:130).

The Semoq Beri, depending on their location in Malaysia, are variously nomadic hunters-gathers in the north, semi-nomadic, part-time farmers in the middle and settled and primarily engaged in subsistence farming/wage labour in the south. [16]

They live for the most part at the head waters of rivers in north central and north eastern Pahang including the Tembeling, Lebir, Trenggan, Dungun, Kemaman and Kuantan

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[15] *Beri* also means **outside** as in outside of the house or hearth, as well as a verb meaning to set free, let go. In general people refer to themselves as simply Semaq (people) which includes all Orang Asli.

[16] I did not visit any Semoq Beri communities accessible by road. However, I conducted four months of ethnographic research with the Semelai (a closely related people) at Kg. Sampo, Negri Sembilan, who are settled and engaged in subsistence farming/ rainforest collection/wage labour and I assume that the Semoq Beri communities (which are, in fact, mixed with Semelai people) along the lower Pahang and in the Jerantut-Maran area closely resembled Kg Sampo.

Rivers (see map for locations). In North Eastern Pahang above Kuala Tembeling the groups are nomadic to greater or lesser degree depending on the aggressiveness with which the government encourages permanent settlements. Visits by Jabatan Ehwal Orang Asli officials at these remote areas are infrequent but permanent settlements have been established at Kg. Kucing and at Kg. Tahan.

Upriver from Kg. Kuching along the Sepia river [17] (a tributary of the Tembeling) is a collection of bands traditionally from this area including, at times, several bands from Trengganu and Kelatan. At the time of the fieldwork several bands had collected in this remote area because of pressure to resettle. There existed a small permanent habitation on the river Sepia but the people prefer living semi-permanently in the forest. They visited their gardens occasionally to dig up tubers. I spent a month there during their *bansal* ceremony but visited with them on various occasions at different locations.

The literature on the Semaq Beri is very sparse. Vocabularies collected by Hugh Clifford in North Eastern Pahang and included in Sheats and Blagdens *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (1906:503, 507-764, *passim* as *U.Cher.* (Ulu Cheras) and *U Tem.* (Ulu Tembeling) dialects, ethnographic notes by I.H.N. Evans (1915:213-9, 1920:28-32)

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[17] This tributary leads to a rainforest trail into Kelantan which was used frequently during various civil wars in Pahang and is an ancient pass. Further upriver another tributary, the Lawog river, leads to another pass into Trengannu and is travelled frequently by the Semoq Beri (see Figure 4).

and Miclucho Maclay (1878a:41-2, 44) represent the only early reports on people speaking the Semoq Beri language. Recent published reports include Needham (1974), Jenson (1978), Nik Safia et al (1979) and Endicott (1975).

Research for this thesis was conducted among the Semoq Beri at Kg Kucing. These people have been 'encouraged' to settle on a bluff overlooking the Tembeling River by the Malaysian Government. In 1962 the present headman and his band settled there and since then several other bands have made Kg Kucing their base camp. The groups in this settlement come from Ulu '[8] Sat, Ulu Sepia, Ulu Kembir Ulu Relop and Ulu Lawog.

Kg Kuching is made up of approximately 135 people. The kampong (village) is divided into two distinct sections. ['9] In the main settlement four bands can be identified by fences surrounding each group. Production groups for the most part draw their members from one of the fenced sections. Two bands similarly identified live in the upriver section. Each of these sections has a different middleman merchant which they deal with exclusively.

Social Organization

There is some published information on terms of reference among the Semoq Beri but there are many confusions

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[8] 'Ulu' means headwaters

[9] A dispute between these groups caused their separation. Apparently the debate concerned traditional political structure. When the Malaysian government appointed a headman the other group felt traditional authority was being usurped.

and contradictions.[20] The main features of Semoq Beri kinship is that it is completely bilateral (as are most Orang Asli kinship, see Endicott 1975:13, Robarchek 1980:89).

Other important features include a prohibition of sexual relations between brother-in-laws and sister-in-laws even if the spouse is deceased, and a marriage prohibition between members of different generations. The latter prohibition may serve to reduce conflict and competition for women (polygamous relations are allowed) such as occurs in some agricultural societies (see Miellasoux 1978, Rey et al 1973). The former prohibition serves to force the individuals to marry out or marry in, as the case may be, but increasing the amount of kin relations to other groups, thus ensuring continued access to other groups and their resources. Residence is matrilocal at least for a few years (two years of bride service can be completed at any time but is usually discharged as soon as possible).

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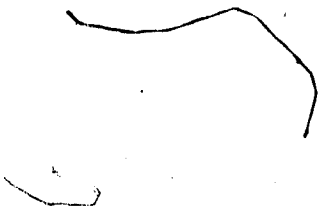
[20]Compare kin terminologies collected by Needham (1974), Endicott (1975), Jensen (1978). I do not have space here to treat these various authors but Needham has clearly confused Semelai people with Semoq Beri during his visit in 1955 to Kuala Sat a few miles downriver from the new settlement. One of the informants named was father of one of my informants in the village. He also confused address terms with kin terms. Endicott's list (1975:22) reports Semelai terms for grandparents (as does Jensen) (daughters as younger aunt (gado') and father and mother's siblings as terms used by Semelai to clarify birth order of siblings).



II. Subsistence Production

Introduction

The Semaq Beri derive a majority of their food requirements from the rainforest. Only in recent years, since the government began pursuing its resettlement program, have the Semaq Beri engaged in horticulture to any extent. Jungle foods are preferred to domesticated animals and vegetables but rice has become, with increased wealth from the collection of rainforest commodities, a regular staple. Several attempts have been made to prepare padi fields[21] but inevitably they are destroyed by wandering water buffalo. [22] Padi production requires full time attention, mending fences, guarding against predators, as well as work involved in preparation of fields, planting and harvesting. There are many reasons for the failure of the Semaq Beri to become sedentary agriculturalists and these will be discussed in a later section. Store-bought rice is preferred to garden tubers and is somewhat of a staple but, unlike their Malay neighbours who complain of hunger if rice does not accompany the meal, the Semaq Beri will complain of hunger if meat does not accompany a meal.

Although there is a small and growing herd of water buffalo (kerbau), they are never eaten by Semaq Beri

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[21] rice fields

[22] Although compensation can be collected from owners of offending buffalo, the attempt is rarely made if the buffalo have Malay owners. The government kindly donated eight female buffalo who wreak havoc on gardens as well.

(according to informants, the meat is not palatable). Rather they are raised as commodities to be sold to Malays for weddings or festivals. Animals such as chickens or various rainforest animals which have been domesticated (monkeys, birds, etc.) are not eaten very often, and animals raised in the community are almost never eaten and certainly not by their owner. They are considered pets and are treated as such. Even the eggs of chickens are hatched for their young and not eaten.

Gardens are a relatively recent enterprise and I suspect that although they offer some emergency supplies and some recreation, they are for the most part cultivated to make an impression on the government officials who are interested in the people developing a sedentary economy. [23] (More will be said later on the efforts of the government to peasantize the people and their response.) Little interest is given to gardens except for occasional flurry of activity between rainforest trips. The cultivation of plant food is not unknown, of course, because at several seasonal camps chillies and ubi keledek (a sweet potato) are frequently harvested during the short stays and replanted before leaving (some are more energetic than others about this occasional horticulture). However, around the resettlement, corn, beans, tubers, eggplant etc. are planted and

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[23] The soil in the Ulu Tembling region is unsuitable for agriculture. According to a visiting soil scientist, the land is suitable for tree crops only such as rubber, bananas, fruit tree and coffee. Small rivers flowing into the Tembling are suitable for padi cultivation but yields are low. This area is not self-sufficient in rice.

harvested. Gardens are located in close proximity to houses in contrast to other Orang Asli, who are slash and burn horticulturalists and have gardens located sometimes miles from their kampongs. Slash and burn horticulturalists often live in far more remote areas than many of the hunter-gatherers. This latter group is very often found living close to Malay kampungs (Micluycho-Maclay, 1878) whereas slash and burn horticulturalists seem to traditionally live in remoter areas. One of the reasons for this is that sedentary horticulturalists are more vulnurable to slave raiding, more so than nomadic hunters and gatherers and may have lived in more isolated areas to reduce the potential of slave raiding and harrassment by Malays.

In the kampong several species of fruit trees were planted during the original development of the kampong in 1962 to attract the Semaq Beri out of the forest and into a central area that would provide security, medical supplies and educational facilities. A grove of orange trees, as well as rambutan, lengkiang, coconut, and chempedek, trees are all producing fruit. Many other varieties of fruit trees have been planted (donated by the government) but are not yet mature enough to bear fruit. Far more important are rainforest fruits and the collection of fruit from abandoned Malay orchards, which will be discussed below.

The following sections describe the various subsistence activities engaged in by the Semaq Beri at Kg. Kucing. This subsistence activity can be generalized to the three other

groups living in the Ulu Tembling area. Minor differences are discussed in the introduction. The goal is to present a general description of subistence activities, the organization of labour, and general distribution patterns.

The Semaq Beri exploit their environment in a most efficient way. They harvest what they happen upon in the rainforest. Although they may go off in the early morning with blowpipes, they may return with mushrooms rather than monkeys. However, extended trips throughout the rainforest are usually goal-oriented, that is turtle/fish trips, honey collecting or commodity collecting trips. Though individual Semaq Beri do not forage for food every day, a small party from the kampong will generally go out each day.

Hunting

The Semaq Beri hunt with two types of blowpipes, a bamboo blowpipe similar to those produced by the Senoi and Negritos (see Endicott 1969) and a wooden blowpipe which is peculiar to these people. The bamboo blowpipes consist of an inner and outer tube cut between the nodes from two species of bamboo. The inner pipe is joined together by a sheath of palm shoot and glued with a tree resin. This inner tube, which varies in length depending on the success at finding long pieces, is from 6-8 feet. The outer tube is joined together by carving one end down to slip inside the joining tube. The joint is held together by a woven band of rattan. The outer tube has an additional section at the proximal end

to which the mouthpiece is attached.

The mouthpiece is made of moulded tree resin (several species) or the resin of the fruit of a species of rattan (traded anciently as dragons blood). They do not make wooden mouthpieces which are characteristic of Negritos and Senoi blowpipes.

Materials for the construction of bamboo blowpipes are located throughout the rainforest, as are palms for the construction of darts and trees for dart poison. People will rarely go and collect specific materials; rather they collect these items during hunting trips as part of a foraging strategy.

Once the materials are collected from the rainforest or from obliging members of the community, the bamboo is dried over the fire and rubbed with a tree resin. The bamboo is examined for flaws which often develop during the drying process and assembled. Bamboo blowpipes are made so that they can be taken apart and dried over the fire periodically (weekly) to prevent cracking or to replace broken parts. Finally, a ring of rattan is placed in the distal end, which may act to inhibit the wadding, but also produces a distinctive whistling sound (*wes*). Magical symbols are applied and the blowpipe is ready to be tested.

Long noded bamboo is highly valued and one particular species 6-7 feet between nodes which makes it unnecessary to join two shorter pieces. This long bamboo (*sarwal*) is located generally at fairly high altitudes and in isolated

areas. Evans (1925) gives a map and excellent description of some of the locations within Temiar and Negrito territory. There are two locations that the Semaq Beri exploit: Gunung Diwangsa and Gunung Dulang (see map). This rare bamboo was in the past traded as was the wooden blowpipes that they are known for, but today only two men know the location of this bamboo and have not visited them since about 1950.

The Semaq Beri of this area are known for the production and trade of wooden blowpipes which, although heavier and generally shorter, are highly prized by the various groups in the area for their durability. These blowpipes are made from the buttress of a particular tree, which is close grained and heavy. Two pieces of wood are carved to fit together to form a tube. On each piece a line down the length is drawn and with the sharpened head of a nail a groove is routed out. The two pieces are glued together and bound with rattan. The blowpipe is covered with a resin (gutta percha, jeletong) and a rounded bulbous mouthpiece moulded at the end. The bore is then reamed with a rod fashioned from the core of a palm tree until it is smooth. Both bamboo and wooden blowpipes are taper reamed to make a smooth bore as well as to produce a sort of venturi throughout the length of the blowpipe, the smaller bore being at the distal end.

Darts are fashioned from the stem of a large species of palm. The stem is split and the darts are shaved down to about 2 mm and sharpened. A small conical piece of dried

root (bloor) is glued to one end to act as a counterweight and flight stablizer. The length of the darts varies depending on the length of the blowpipe and its bore width. Various lengths of darts are tried by trial and error until an appropriate length is found. This length is then reproduced for that blowpipe. The dart is burned about an inch from the distal end so that although quite strong it will break off readily when an animal like a monkey tries to take it out the poisioned end will stay in the flesh.

Dart poison can be made from several different tree and climber saps. The sap is collected and stored in dried bamboo containers. The sap is usually heated slightly which making it thicker and easier to apply. It is then scooped from the container and the ends of the dart are spun on the poison and dried before the fire. Several applications may be necessary depending on the viscosity of the sap.

Quivers are made from large bamboo stalks, about 5 inches in diameter, and filled with very small diameter bamboo to act as holders for each individual dart. Wadding from pubescent hairs of a small tree is added to the quiver.

Blowguns are very formidable and accurate weapons and they are treated cautiously. The poison darts are capable of killing a grown man. The poison acts on the nervous system and heart with respiratory failure being the result. Blowguns are used particularly for animals living at the level of the canopy which is about 100-150 feet above ground and they are accurate to the that height. They are silent

and several members of a band of monkeys can be taken by a single hunter.

Blowpipes are produced for the most part by men although women may help in the collection and construction, and women can and do build them, according to informants. In practice, a few men in each band are considered skilled at making blowpipes and will assist others in producing them or simply make one on request. Blowpipes circulate quite freely and, although people pointed out blowpipes they said were theirs, blowguns never seemed to return to their "owners".

All members of the society are skilled at the use of blowpipes. Children of both sexes can be seen in the late afternoon hunting birds and small lizards with a discarded inner tube of a blowpipe and a few darts secreted from their fathers' quiver. Women are said to hunt with blowpipes but I never observed this. It is for the most part a male activity. Male informants said that women did not have the breath to shoot very far. Female informants demured in the presence of men.

The favoured targets for hunters with blowpipes are monkeys, gibbons and macaques. They provide a good quantity of meat, not only because of their size (about 10-25 lbs), but also because they are social animals and several members of one band can be taken at once. Birds, particularly hornbills, giant squirrels, civit cats, slow loris, pangolin and large lizards can provide a great deal of protein but they are widely dispersed throughout the rainforest and, if

any are captured, it is generally only one at a time. Small squirrels and birds are hunted as well in mid-afternoon or early evening.

The hunters believe that the best time to hunt monkeys is in the late afternoon because this is when they have finished their noonday sleep and are moving about and making noise. They can also be located in the early morning when several species of primates greet the morning with loud screams and hoots. When they are sleeping in mid-afternoon they are impossible to locate and often more on guard against predators. The men carry their bush knives, tobacco supplies, and dart quiver slung on their back in a sarong or tied at their waist when hunting.

When hunting arboreal animals, the hunters walk the ridges dividing water courses listening for the calls of animals, or the distinctive sound of them jumping from tree to tree as they move through the forest feeding. For primates such as gibbons, monkeys, and macaques, the direction that they are travelling is determined [24] and the men either proceed to that spot or attempt to sneak up on them. Once they are directly under the prey the dart is inserted into the blowpipe and with breath from deep in the diaphragm the dart is propelled toward the target. The blowpipe is fairly silent except for a popping noise as the dart leaves the blowpipe. Several shots will be taken to be sure that the animal has been hit. The animal is little

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[24] These animals are quite noisy when moving through the canopy.

disturbed by the dart and monkeys will try to pull them out as they would a thorn. The poison may take up to 45 minutes to take effect depending on the size of the animal, the speed at which it is absorbed into the blood stream, and the strength of the poison. The hunters then attempt to shoot other monkeys and in this way may kill several members of the group. Usually one or two are taken but, sometimes as many as 10 are killed. The hunters will try to kill as many as they can; their luck may not be as good the next time.

If the hunters are hungry, or even if they think they are, they will butcher the animal on the spot. The hair is always singed off the animal in the fire, transforming the animal into human food. They believe if this is not done, one will become sick. Even turtles are treated in this way. Generally, the people will eat their fill and return to camp with the remaining portions to be divided up. Often, the men will return to camp with nothing, having eaten all of the food they had obtained. They are careful to wash in the river before entering camp because the smell of cooked food is easily distinguished. This is not to hide the fact that they have eaten and that they did not bring food home, but because if people smell the cooked food, they will likely desire some and since there is none left there is no way that they might satisfy their desire. This would put them in a state which is considered extremely dangerous, that is desiring something and not being able to satisfy that desire. This state of 'punun' (kempunun) is an important

concept that determines much of the distribution of goods in the society and will be dealt with in some length later.

Blowpipe hunting is a male activity for the most part, but under exceptional circumstances, women can and do hunt with blowguns. Generally small groups of about 2-4 men set off in the early morning or late afternoon. In deep rainforest, the hunters listen for the calls of the monkeys and hornbills. Game is very plentiful in these less accessable deep rainforest areas. In and around the resettlement much more work is required to obtain game, as might be imagined. For instance, land tortoises are no longer to be found in the area surrounding the resettlement, but almost every rainforest trip produces at least one.

For possibly hundreds of years, the Semoq Beri have alternated between the isolation of the deep rainforest and the edge of Malay society. They have been trading with Malays for this long at least, and early ethnographic reports show that the hunters, including Negritos, often stay near Malay kampongs for long periods at a time. Malays and the Orang Asli have ambiguous relations both today and in the past. Malays, probably up until the early 20th century, were guilty of kidnapping the children of the Orang Asli. Slavery was repressed by the British in the late 1800s. Previous to this slave raiding occurred regularly. It does not appear that it was much of a commercial activity and reports indicate that most slaves were used for domestic help, treated well and converted to Islam. Because the

Malays became dependent on trade with the Orang Asli, it seems unlikely that they would jepordize the economic benefits by continuing to raid them. I think it more probable that leaders of kampongs offered protection to those Orang Asli who were active in commodity production. The people themselves must have been in an awkward position. Without rainforest production, they were in danger of slave raiders, yet if they did produce they were forced to live in close proximity to the Malays. This is a situation that is not favored, even today. Relations are established with particular people: merchants who provide food, tobacco, etcetera and who buy the rainforest produce from the Semaq Beri. These relations will be the subject of a discussion later.

During the late morning and the early afternoon, groups of young, generally unmarried men will hunt squirrels, civit cats, and large lizards around the village. They will range not more than two or three miles. Secondary forest (belukar) provides an excellent habitat for small game and squirrels abound in these places. Although young men are tabooed from eating various lizards, squirrels, civit cats, and mongoose, they will shoot them and bring them home for the older men to eat. In the pre-dusk hours (6:00-7:30) those that desire meat may go out and blowpipe squirrels for a late dinner. It is possible to hunt at all times, but people will not generally hunt every day. Blowpipe hunting also serves non-subsistence functions, such as providing the opportunity

for relaxation or meeting lovers in private.

It is impossible to attempt to measure the amount of food that the people consume, for much of what is caught is eaten on the spot, and a great deal that is brought home is done with great secrecy, (lest demanding relatives appear at the door).

Although one man may leave the kampong for a few hours to hunt squirrels or small birds, hunting is, for the most part, a social activity and rarely would an individual go off into the rainforest by himself. The rainforest is a dangerous place,full of tigers, panthers, jaguars, venomous snakes, centipedes, and elephants. It is true that even a group of men could not fend off a tiger or elephant, or prevent a member from being bitten by a snake or centipede but assistance is available in case an accident occurs, and it is reasonable to assume that there is greater safety in numbers.

Accidents are greatly feared by the Semaq Beri,but they know that accidents do not simply happen. Accidents are caused by other states . . . states produced by unfulfilled desires, witchcraft, or by the various ghosts, souls, etc. that inhabit the rainforest. For this reason, although hunting is done by age-mates, any young, unmarried man will not stray far from camp unless accompanied by an adult who has a repertoire of charms and cures to prevent 'accidents'.

Supernatural considerations influence the composition of groups and in a small way may restrict access to

resources that can be harvested in the rainforest. Women rarely go off into the rainforest in groups unless accompanied by a male, but women are also adept at charms, cures and they are not excluded from ritual or supernatural knowledge about the rainforest. The composition of women's production groups is more variable and cuts across generational lines. Men, in contrast, hunt with age-mates for the most part and the composition of their groups varies from a number of possible combinations of age-mates. The residential pattern, which will be discussed later, limits the composition of production groups. Since residence is matrilocal, men have few cross-generational kin with whom they work, but will likely have a few same age kin who have married into the group.

The Semaq Beri hunt several species of reptiles and amphibians including land tortoises, various water turtles, frogs, and lizards. The land tortoises are fairly rare in the areas of human habitation, but are still plentiful in the deep rainforest. Tortoises leave barely discernable trails in the forest and the discovery of a fresh trail does not necessarly guarantee supper that night. Tortoises are never hunted specifically but are discovered usually during some other activity. When a trail is discovered everyone spreads out to look for other signs and in this way they slowly track the tortoise. Tortoises may weigh up to 60 pounds and can provide a considerable amount of meat. It is not diffucult to understand why the meat is valued.

Turtles are prepared and butchered in camp. Usually they are killed by heating them on the fire and when they stick their heads out because of the heat of the fire they are clubbed to death. The bottom of the tortoise shell is cut away and the vicera removed. The meat is cut away from the shell and the blood and internal organs are boiled to make a thick soup which is eaten in a communal fashion. Those who are hungry will gather around the fire and dip their hands in the soup. Other sections will be sent off to the families of the men responsible for finding the turtle, and each of these families will in turn share with friends or relatives that did not receive any. The carapace is sometimes saved to make pendants or to be worn over the pudenda (Evans, 1915:103 for Jakun uses). The underside is heated and sections peeled off to make tops for dart quivers. Tortoise eggs are usually found inside and these are boiled up with blood or sometimes boiled separately in water.

Two other types of tortoises are hunted: mud turtles and freshwater tortoises. The mud turtles are found in low-lying swampy areas fed by a small stream. The main water course is followed when possible and the mud is probed with sticks or feet until contact is made with the hard shell of the turtle. Within selected and promising areas the hunters walk down stream randomly probing these areas. These turtles are small, much like mud turtles in North America. They are more likely to supply the noonday meal , rather than be

carried home. The area that these turtles inhabit is particularly inhospitable, and the mud conceals many sharp objects and is overgrown with rattan, which is armed with horribly prickly spines. Learning to walk with a light touch is essential.

The second type consists of several species of freshwater tortoise similar to the soft shell variety found in North America. These can grow to a considerable size (2 feet in diameter). They are searched for in the same way as mud turtles but they prefer faster flowing water and sandy areas. They are prepared for eating in the same way as land tortoise.

The eggs of these turtles are laid 3 times over a period of 6 weeks and are harvested when found. In past times, the collection of river turtle eggs was controlled by each river valley penghulu (Malay headman). It was ordered that of the 3 clutches of eggs, the last would be left to hatch. Game laws have been substituted for these methods of control, but their relative efficiency is questionable. The river terrapins are the group of tortoises that are most exploited and in and around the resettlement they are rarely found. The Semaq Beri will harvest all egg clutches.

The Semaq Beri also hunt pigs with government supplied shotguns. These guns were given to members of the 'home guard' for the purpose of national defense. The people use them for hunting. Shotgun shells are fairly expensive and so they are used judiciously. Large game is shot at close range

and kills are usually immediate.

Large game such as pigs, deer, tapir, bear, and occasionally monkeys, are taken with these shotguns. There are four of these single shot, 12 guage shot guns which are supplied to this area. They are shared on a rotating basis with several Malay families that also live in the area, but since the Semaq Beri community far outnumbers the Malay there are always at least two guns in the community. A licence is required to own a gun in Malaysia: possession of an unregistered firearm carries a mandatory death sentence. However, the government has been very genereous in supplying licenses to the Semaq Beri. Although theoretically the shotguns are to be used for the purpose of national defense, they are used exclusively for the purpose of hunting by both Malays and Semaq Beri.

Hunting pigs is very similar to other kinds of hunting. The hunters walk the ridges which divide water courses and listen for the distinctive sound of pigs crunching on roots and grunts and squeals of the young. If a fresh sign is encountered the trail may be followed or if the trail is less fresh an attempt may be made to head them off at a distant point. SSG's or homemade slugs are used and since shells are a scarce commodity, shots are usually taken at close range to ensure a kill. Pigs supply a considerable amount of meat. When pigs are killed everyone in the community eats. Pig meat is highly prized.

One fact that makes pig hunting slightly different from other forms is that pigs are not most plentiful in the deep rainforest and they are usually hunted close to inhabited areas or in abandoned gardens and rubber plantations. The rubber which was planted under a government development plan around 1940 has now reached an age where it no longer produces much rubber. The reproduction cost for rubber plantations, however small, is prohibitively expensive and the plantations are slowly being abandoned to the encroachment of the rainforest. These plantations provide a good environment for pigs. Secondary forest (belukar) is also good pig habitat, but too thick with scrub brush to hunt in effectively.

On rare occasions a bear, or even a tapir, may be killed. Similiarly, deer are fortuitously hunted. Deer are usually sold to Malays along the river for a good sum of money. [25]

When large game is caught everyone in the community eats. The pig is usually butchered back in camp and the hunters, who are generally from one kingroup, will share all of the meat with their group. The hunters are usually given the first shares. The pig is cut up in 7 pieces: head, limbs, and two back portions. While the pig is being butchered, the people will crowd around calling for specific portions of the vicera, which is cut up and shared with all

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[25] This is sometimes a cause of bad feelings when individuals sell meat to the Malays. It is often given as a gift however.

of the people who receive portions. The kin-group will generally take all the meat and then are subject to appeals from in-laws, friends, etc. who did not get any meat in the first distribution. In this way everyone receives at least a small portion of the meat. The organization of sharing will be discussed in a later section.

Portions of the meat are dried over fires and can be kept for three or four weeks. In practice, most of the meat is eaten srtaight away. Usually smaller groups of 2 to 3 men will hunt pigs. Monkeys are rarely shot with guns because, it is only possible to shoot one at a time given the noise. Blowpipes are much more productive for this purpose.

The Honey and Fruit Season

The honey and fruit season, which occurs between April and August, is looked forward to with great anticipation and ritual preparation. After the flood season, which ends in late February, a ritual (*bansal*) is held to call the bees and the flowers of fruit trees down from the heavens. The ceremony lasts about one week and several bands may participate. After the ceremony is over the group is not [illegible]ed to disperse for a period of seven days. During this [illegible]e young people get to know each other and marriages are often arranged. Following the taboo period the various bands disperse to their traditional territory to wait for the bees and the flowers to appear. Several bansals may happen in each of the traditional areas and the Semaq Beri may

participate in several ceremonies , particularly young men. This is a time of much visiting between the various groups in the area.

There are three types of bees that the Semaq Beri obtain honey from: 'lawoi' (Apis dorsta), 'percas'(Apis indica), and 'ker!tua!'(Apis florea). The first produces prodigious amounts of honey, up to fifty pounds from a single nest, and builds it's nests in the "gul" tree (Koompassia excelsia) which is one of the largest and highest trees in the rainforest. It is a large butressed tree about 250' high and branchless to about 100' with smooth bark. These bees build their nests on the under side of large branches and as many as a dozen nests may be found in one tree. The second type of bees build nests similar to the former group but they tend to nest individually on smaller trees. Although they are more easily accesible they are widely separated in the rainforest and are not subject to communal harvesting; rather they are gathered as they are found individually. The third type, Apis indica, nests in the hollows of trees and, although producing smaller quanities of honey, may be harvested well into October.

Bee trees are located during the subsistence search. The number of nests is counted and their development watched for future harvesting. Most of the 'gul' trees are known and they are watched to see if they will be good producers. The trees are not owned and access to them is not controlled. They are harvested by those who make the effort. When the

nests are ready for harvesting, a small group of men will go out in the forest and search for 'tali lang'(a type of rattan) which will be used as a rope to climb the bee tree. The outside thorny bark will be removed and the lengths of this rattan will be crushed by bending it around the trunk of a small sapling in order to remove the pith and make the rattan supple. These lengths will then be wound up and transported to the bee camp or back to the main camp. Large bark baskets that will be used to lower the bee nests from the tree will be made from the bark of the 'gaharu' tree, the outside of the bark forming the inside of the basket. Torches are made from the dried bark of house walls and rolled and tied together to form a brush-like torch.

Honey is harvested in the dark. Overcast skies or a moonless night are essential. This is because the bees will not be able to see the men who are smoking them out of the nests. The 'gul' tree is a very tall tree and because it is branchless to about 100 ft with smooth bark and huge trunk is impossible to climb straight up. The branches of the tree are reached by climbing trees surrounding the bee tree until a rattan rope can be thrown over one of its large branches. A bridge of sorts, consisting of two parallel strands of rattan, is secured to both trees and the bee hunters, usually in pairs, cross to the bee tree on all fours. This is dangerous work and only a few men attempt it.

When they arrive at the nest the gatherers lower another rattan rope and haul up the torches and knives in

the baskets. The torches are lit and one man will swat the bees off the nest. Many bees are stunned by the smoke and their wings singed by the torch. Those bees that escape follow the falling embers to the ground where they disperse into the night. Everyone, however, can expect to get stung several times. The bee hunters in the tree do not wash with soap and do not eat certain foods that they say are odorous and will attract the bees. Every precaution is taken to prevent a state of *punun* (unfulfilled desires) because one of the results of *punun*is falling out of trees! The people on the ground yell "tagoh" (which means literally 'to stick), at intervals and do not talk about food in case one of the bee hunters gets a craving.

After the bees have been dispersed the comb containing the larvae is cut away and allowed to fall to the ground. The combs containing the honey are cut away into the basket and lowered to the ground. The bee tree may contain a dozen or so nests and the bee hunters will attempt to collect as many as possible before first light. The group on the ground for their part build small lean-to shelters in which to spend the night, and to protect them from the frequent rain squalls and from the falling bees. When the basket is lowered to the ground, one person will generally pick it up and carry it some distance from the tree and from the shelters. Many bees continue to cling to the hive and fly about. Large biscuit tins are brought to collect the honey. The combs are cut up and stuffed into one tin after another.

The combs carrying the bee larvae are threaded with a rattan string to carry home or else stuffed into bamboo containers and slowly cooked over the fire. For the most part they are eaten raw dipped in honey.

The members of the group, always men - women do not collect honey, are usually from a single band (a collection of domestic units residing together over time connected by ties of kinship, reciprocity, friendship, etc.). Members of other bands may join them if there are no good climbers in their group. These people could be connected in a variety of ways: kinship (fictive or otherwise ; all Semaq Beri are in-laws), reciprocity/obligation, or friends (age-mates)., and could not be denied access without offence (one that could lead to their death). The situation is unlike small daily hunting groups that are composed of age mates. For bee harvesting several generations containing most of the male members form the group.

Honey combs are cut up and stuffed in everyone's tin. The older men can take more if they wish, but generally an equal distribution is achieved. Honey is also sold. The changing distribution patterns as the honey market increased will be discussed later at the end of the chapter on commodity production. The season of honey in 1982 was particularly bountiful and the possibility of selling large quantitites had some influence on the general form of distributions.

Honey production is a communal (band) effort and other than in commodity production, forms the largest production unit. During the honey season the Semaq Beri may for days eat only honey and bee larva, supplemented from time to time by store bought sardines and rice obtained in trade for honey.

Fruit Collecting

The fruit season lasts from July to early September and during this time the Semaq Beri eat almost excusively fruits and nuts. Fruit collection can be divided into those fruits which are cultivated and those fruits that are either wild or domesticated fruit trees in abandon gardens.

As part of the resettlement program, the government has provided rambutan, orange trees, langsat, jack fruit, durian, cempedek, nangka, and coconut palms. All but the durian are mature enough for fruiting. In the surrounding Malay kampongs there are all of these fruits as well as mangoes, mangosteens, lemon trees, mata kuching, belandas, petai, and bananas which provide fruit year long. Domesticated fruit provides a small but steady amount of food throughout the season but the rainforest fruit provides enormous supplies when it is collected.

Fruit in cultivated gardens owned by the Malays in the area are accessible to the Semaq Beri on invitation. Although fruit is valuable to the Malays as a market commodity, allowing the Semaq Beri to harvest their fruit

promotes good relations between the people. The promotion of good relations is not necessarily altruistic, although Malay hospitality plays a large part. An invitation to have your trees denuded of fruit is motivated by the desire to create a social relationship that might be exploited at a later date. As we will see, the Semaq Beri as a group collect an enormous amount of rainforest produce which Malay middlemen will sell. Relations to middlemen are more than economic , although this is the main motive. The Semaq Beri also provide various kinds of charms and medicine to the Malays which are highly valued. There is also some fear of the magical power of these people and Malays are sometimes very careful in their dealings with them. I might add that the people were often asked to come and pick the fruit from trees so that the Malays might have a chance to satisfy their curiosity about me. For the most part I was either considered a government spy or crazy for living with such dirty and uncivilized people. More than anything I was considered as a bizzare curiosity. We collected a lot of Malay fruit during the season.

The wild fruit and the fruit from abandoned gardens provide the bulk of the fruit. Abandoned orchards are exploited for the durian trees which are highly valued and can be sold for a considerable sum -as much as $4M each and twice that in towns. Orchards are abandoned for a variety of reasons but in this area during the Emercency many Malays and all of the Chinese were relocated down river and forced

to leave their orchards. Also around that time the National Park was created and land on the west side of the Tembling River was expropriated and set aside as a preserve. Durian trees take 15 to 20 years before fruiting and sometimes people have simply moved away during the time it takes for the trees to mature.

Groups of men and women will often relocate camp to be near the fruiting trees, sometimes moving far from their usual territory. One such group from the Sepia river camped in the upper reaches of the Sat river about 4 or 5 miles from the resettlement of the Kuching people. Not an incursion, the event was seen as a time for visiting by the people at Kuching and several families went off to join this small group for fruit harvesting. For the most part the men went out regularly to look for fruit and nuts. Most of the trees in the area are known to the people but often they are not fruiting. There are many trees that are in fruit, however, and collecting groups are always successful. The people walk ridges or elephant trails, peering into the rainforest every so often in order to locate the trees. They are readily seen because most fruit is usually brightly colored. Although there is much knowledge about the whereabouts of the fruit trees, they are widely scattered through the rainforest and it was my impression that Semaq Beri discovered some each time they were out. The larger trees were climbed and the branches of the tree bearing the fruit chopped down and the fruit picked off them. Some

species such as the 'tampoi' tree required ritual treatment. Some of the fruit would be thrown seven different directions for the ancestors to consume. Although the whole tree may be destroyed during the harvesting, much fruit is left on the ground for the ancestors. There was no sense of conservation and I was often startled by the single minded purpose the Semaq Beri brought to bear on harvesting of rainforest produce. Their concern was with cultural/ideological ideas and not about nature as a system itself. The ancestors provided the fruit.

Several species of fruit would be collected in 100 lb gunney sacks, sometimes fruit being discarded to make room for a more desirable variety. The collectors would eat their fill of fruit and return home with filled bags. There was always more than they could carry home. Each person would return to their own house and would send out portions of the collection to their friends, relatives, etc. Fruit would not always be ripe but if it could be eaten as, say a vegetable, it would be picked anyway rather than return when it had ripened. Green fruit would be treated as a vegetable and boiled or fried.

Several kinds of nuts are also available at this time and they are collected from the ground. One nut called 'kleb' occurs in great quantities. It must be boiled 3 times otherwise it is quite toxic. These nuts can be stored for a few months and provide a great deal of food, protein, during the fruit season.

The fruit and honey season is a time when inter-band communication is highest. Young bachelors wander in this time of plenty, marriages are arranged, friends visit and old ties are renewed.

Gathering Wild Plants

Although the gardens of the Semaq Beri produce two types of tubers, ubi kayu (*Manihot utilissima*), and ubi keladek (*Ipomoea batatas*), the people prefer wild tubers and will make long trips to acquire them. Two wild tubers are highly prized: ubi wau, and takup (*Discorea esculenta, D. orbiculata*). *Several other tubers are occaionally harvested but are not considered as tasty (eg.Discorea alata, bulbifera, laurifolia, pentaphylla, scortechinii, triphyla,* and *piscatorum* are all eaten, as well as smilax megacarpa).[2]

All of the wild tubers have alkaloids dioscorine or dioscorisene and must be boiled or roasted in order to destroy the alkaloids. Burkill describes another substance, as yet undiscovered, that causes an irritant action on throat and tongue. Some tubers when eaten raw (*D. alata*) can produce stupification. The alkaloids and their unknown substance can be either leeched or cooked away and the Semaq Beri prepare tubers in both ways. During the flood season, the rainforest is unpleasant to walk in and people avoid

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[2] I suspect it was for my benefit that we ate this last named tuber, because they are often bitter and require a great deal of preparation.

long trips preferring to collect tubers and leach them in the river. They fill bamboo containers full and smoke them over the fire. In this way plenty of starchy food is available during the 'difficult' time.

Both sexes engage in the digging up of tubers either as part of the subsistence search or for the sole purpose of getting tubers. During the hunt for game the men will invariably stop to dig tubers if they come across them and, as usual, will roast a few and eat them before returning to camp.

Tubers are dug with a sharpened stick (ceg). The soil is moist and easily dug. Today, people planning to look for tubers exclusively will carry a fencepost digger with them into the rainforest.

Tubers are generally found near streams or low lying areas. The people will walk through likely areas searching for the climbing vine and follow the vine to the ground. Usually there are several plants in the same area and the rest of the people will fan out looking for the rest of the plants. Some tubers grow near the surface (gadong, ciug) while others have roots that extend up to 6 ft into the ground (wau, takup). The latter roots require a considerable amount of digging. These tubers are not large (about 2 in in diameter) but several pounds can be harvested from one plant. Besides tubers, various fern shoots, palm cabbage, mushrooms when in season, various tree shoots and banana flowers are collected.

Fishing

Fish provide a steady supply source of protein for the Semaq Beri. There are a variety of methods that are employed, such as angling, poisoning, netting and fishing by hand. Angling is a daily activity for the most part undertaken by women and small children, but some men enjoy fishing as well and will spend easy afternoons fishing in the small rivers that flow into the Tembling. Generally small groups of women with children that are either old enough to fish on their own or young enough to be carried slung on the backs of their mothers start off early in the morning or late afternoon to fish. Those children between the ages of about four to six will be left in camp with those that are not interested in fishing that day. The fishing party travels to a prearranged place and fish back to the camp. The decision to fish on a particular day will be made individually on the basis of desire for fish or an outing. There is no pressure to accompany any person fishing. People simply state that they are interested in fishing that day and those that want to fish will accompany them. Decisions are taken individually on the basis of that individual's needs. The amount of fish caught depends on the luck that day and on the amount of effort expended. Generally they will stop fishing when they have enough food for a small meal. If more fish are caught then they will be shared with those that did not do well at fishing or those at home who didn't go that particular day . River fishing

with a rod and line provides a small but steady amount of food. People also fish with nets. Two types of nets are employed, one a circular throw net and the other a gill net of various gauges. These nets are expensive and only a few Semaq Beri had them. They are not used often but can provide a large quanity of food.

By far the most productive method of fishing is by hand in pools far upsteam. These are organized activities and are generally for several days. They are undertken in the dry season and are much like working holidays. They are for the most part undertaken by the men but in some cases several families will go off together for these activities. Fishing trips are usually combined with turtle hunting as the Semaq Beri travel upstream where the fishing is most productive. The technique of fishing by hand is to find a pool that is naturally damed so that the fish cannot escape. Most pools are well known to the Semaq Beri. Once a pool has been located, the water is muddied so that the fish are unable to see the people. When the fish are disturbed they attempt to hide in the debris on the bottom of the river bed or among the roots of the trees that line the river bank. The people then dive into the water and feel around the bottom or among the tree roots for the fish. Fish are not that easily held on to and this type of fishing requires a firm grip and a quick hand. When the fish are grasped their necks are broken with a quick bite and then are thrown on to the shore. The number of fish taken varies from pool to pool, but on the

average about 20 to 30 find their way to the shore. The fish are gutted and placed on a rack over the fire to dry. The fish are rarely dried completely but enough to transport them back to camp. The catch is divided up before heading back to camp. Fish are counted out to all those that participated in the collection but extra fish will be allocated to those with larger families.

Fishing by hand is also carried out as people wander through the rainforest on other kinds of collecting activities. A handful of fish can be caught quite readily by feeling under the overhang of the small streams happened on during the course of travelling through the rainforest. Fish poisoning is illegal in Malaysia and the Semaq Beri do not engage in this activity although they say they have in the past. They readily supplied my botanical collection with samples of Derris (tuba root) and were very familiar with this technique. As with fishing by hand a small pool is damed and the root of the tuba plant is crushed to release the toxic juices into the stream. The fish are stunned and float to the surface where they are collected.

Seasonal Round

As was noted above in the section on the flora and fauna of the Malaysian Peninsula, the rainforest environment is fairly homogeneous. Thus harvestable resources, with few exceptions, are available throughout the year. Tubers, and palm cabbage which form the bulk of the carbohydrate diet,

and all of the fauna harvested are always available. The exception to this are seasonal products such as mushrooms, certain tree leaves, fruit and honey. These products occur at different times, and when they do occur they are harvested to the exclusion of regular subsistence items. [27] This is particularly true during the fruit and honey season when the Semaq Beri subsist almost exclusively on these products.

The flood season which occurs during the months of November to January are times that the Semaq Beri engage in commodity production with greater enthusiasm. The rainforest is, at this time, particularly wet and unpleasant to travel around in. Rivers are swollen, jungle trails turn to knee high mud and are extremely difficult to travel on, and tigers come down closer to the river in search of water buffalo and wild pigs who forage there during the wet times. The Semaq Beri prefer not to travel around very much during the very rainy periods and when there is the danger of flooding. [28] Some minor flooding also occurs during the months of April and May. The flood months are considered a "famine" time and the preparation of *ohr* [29] is undertaken.

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[27] When I complained that I was tired of eating mushrooms at every meal and refused the offer of them on several occasions, I was told that I had better eat them now because they would not be available soon.

[28] December is the time of greatest reduced activity.

[29] This food is leached tubers of many varieties (however with the inovation of gardens the tubers are generally *ubi kayu* a domesticated tuber) which are grated with a spiny sheath of a rattan and stuffed into large bamboo containers and smoked over the fire. This food is refered to as famine food not so much because it is needed since they have access to store bought food, but because no-one would normally eat

The preparation of *ohr* and the harvesting of less desirable tubers is undertaken at this time because of the availability of supply. These tubers are not generally consumed during other times but when it is discovered it's place is remembered for future reference. It is important to emphasize that there are literally hundreds of edible vegetable products avilable to the Semaq Beri and only a small portion of these products are harvested and consumed regularly. As was mentioned above, pigs move down closer to the river and are hunted more vigourously during this period. Much of their meat is smoked and stored above the fire and will be consumed before going out to hunt again. This time is also considered a somewhat dangerous time to be moving about in the jungle for reasons that make sense for their belief system. However, this is also a time to collect gaharu wood and rattan.

Near the end of the flood season the Semaq Beri prepare for the coming of what we would consider spring. This time is prefaced by a ceremony descibed briefly below. The *bansal* serves more than ritual requirements for it brings together bands from other areas and gives an opportunity for young people to look each over as potential mates, renews old kinship ties and keeps the group together for a seven day taboo period [30].

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[29](cont'd) it if other food was available.

[30]A taboo period exists for seven days in which people that have participated in the ceremony are not allowed to leave the camp. This period was violated regularly. When I asked them about this they said that it is what they should do. After the basal held in March of 1982 an

During the early months and the last few months of the year the Semaq Beri engage more often in the production of commodities. From the end of March to the end of September the Semaq Beri spend most of their time in subsistence production. The main reason for this may be that it is during this time that the great quantities of honey and fruit are available. These are easily obtained and although substantial efforts are required, success is quarenteed because of the knowledge gathered during the other months about the whereabouts of either honey trees or fruit trees. The honey and fruit season have been described in some detail in an earlier section but a few points can be made here. If there is any seasonal or ecological determination of the organization of production, it lies in the fact that the Semaq Beri invariably harvest products that are available with the least effort and at the time they are available. Thus during the fruit season, for example, the people will exist almost exclusively on fruit supplemented occasionally by store bought rice and sardines. The fruit season is a time to visit relatives and to travel to known areas with wild fruit as well as abandoned gardens. [31] These areas supplied the Semaq Beri with a considerable amount of

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[30](cont'd) uncharacteristically large group of men went out for turtles and fish.

[31]In the area we lived in was bordered on the south by a national park. During the Emergency the government removed all of the settlements inside the park and after the Emergency did not allow the people return to those villages that were inside the national park (Taman Negara). Thus there were several fruit orchards that had been abandon to the encroachment of the jungle.

fruit. The fruit season ends around the end of September.

After the fruit season is over the Semaq Beri begin to engage more in the production of commodities. Rattan producing camps are set up upriver and large groups of men go off on collecting trips for several weeks at a time. The rattan collecting camps include most of the members of one of the bands with a few other relatives that have tagged along for the opportunity to make some cash from the collection of rattan. These are camps away from the resettlement and are generally occupied for several months at a time. Details of commodity production will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusions

Production groups vary in size depending on the resource harvested and the length of the trip. Short daily forays are organized *ad hoc* and group size is small. These short trips provide the majority of the subsistence. Male task groups such as these consist of age-mates while womens' task groups consist of age mates as well as women from older and younger generations. Semaq Beri social organization tends to be organized laterally rather than horizontally or hierarchically. Age mates are significant others. This is true particularly for male task groups because they generally reside with their wife's kingroup. It is less true for womens task groups since they generally still reside with their own kingroup.

Larger groups form for longer forays into the rainforest and group composition is slightly different. These groups often will include members of other bands as in honey and fish and turtle hunts. These larger groups are also composed of kin of different generations.

Each subsistence trip is a bounded event. On short notice (even for large groups) these groups form *ad hoc* and volutarily. During the hunting trip the people will act as a communal unit of production, dividing labour and organizing consumption as a group. The trip is concluded by the distribution of produce, usually before reaching the main camp. The persons involved negotiate each trip and the composition each time they go out.

The almost non-existent division of labour in production (aside from gender and age), the low level of technology, and the ready access to both resources and means of production all conspire to produce a flexible residence pattern, and an anarchistic system of production. 'Groupness' beyond the level of the individual household is based on an ideology of exchange and distribution of persons (mates) and things (food). [32]

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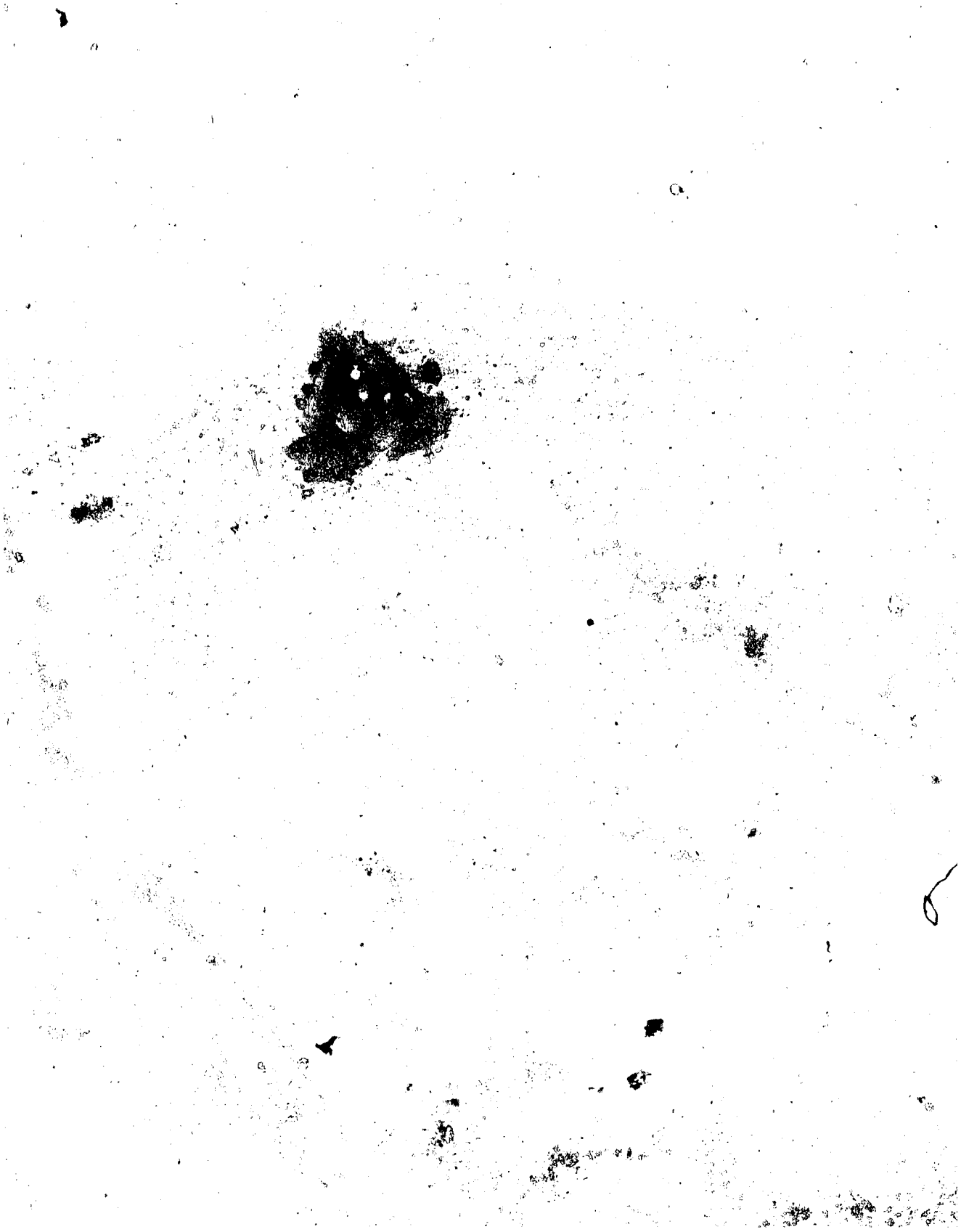
[32] These aspects also conspire to prevent the development of political authority which I would argue is necessary for the appropriation of surplus labour. It is, I believe, the evolution of political systems of domination that conditions the development of the historical transformations. However it is the disruption of the reproductive schemes that allows new modes of production to be 'born' and to dominate. These forms will necessarily rise from the structure of the indigenous mode of production.



III. Commodity Production

Introduction

The rainforests of Malaysia contain a variety of commercially exchangeable objects which provide cash to Orang Asli collectors. For the most part, groups of Orang Asli in the more inaccessible areas are the major producers of these products, although up-country Malays, traditionally middlemen, often collect some products to acquire cash to supplement their subsistence economy. Our concern here is with Orang Asli collectors and specifically the Semaq Beri who are often in competition with Malays and cannot be considered exclusive collectors of rainforest produce. The Malays, because of Islamic prohibitions on certain foods and a traditional fear of the deep rainforest generally do not remain in the rainforest for extended periods and are restricted for the most part to short forays in the forest or to areas along navigable rivers (Hood:1979) This leaves large relatively inaccesible areas free to the Orang Asli to exploit. As forest dwellers, the Orang Asli are able to remain in the forest for indefinite periods of time.

It seems reasonable in this context to assume that historically a form of division of labour existed between nomadic hunters and sedentary agriculturalists: Orang Asli as primary collectors and Malay agriculturalists as merchant middlemen. Traditionally, the deep forest was feared by Malays and they rarely ventured very far.(see Endicott:1975;

Hood:1979))

Trade of forest products has featured significantly in relations between the Orang Asli and Malays as they worked out territoriality and an economic division of labour. Dunn (1975) has convincingly argued that trade has been an important element for thousands of years in Orang Asli economic life. Wheatly (1961) provides ample evidence of trade in forest products to Chinese as early as the first century and list products exported to China in the 13th and 14th centuries as including products such as beeswax, betelnut, camphor, hornbill casques, incense, sandalwood, honey, lakawood, sapan wood, tortoise shell, ivory, lac, rhinoceros horn, ebony, and turtle carapaces.

Modern ethnologists provide much anecdotal evidence of trade (Schebesta, 1973; Alias Mohd Ali, 1976; Endicott, 1974; H. D. Noone, 1936:96-98; R.D. Noone, 1955). Skeats and Blagdon describe silent trade (1900, vol 1:27) although this information is anecdotal.

In this section products that are collected from the forest for sale will be described briefly. The products gathered by the Semaq Beri are considered as minor forest products, major products being timber and firewood. They are by no means insignificant to the national economy and are the major source of cash for Semaq Beri, and many other Orang Asli peoples.

Forest products are collected at the instigation of the merchant middleman who have either received orders from

downstream middlemen or who by monitoring prices for various commodities in demand decides that a profit might be made at specific times. More will be said later of the relation between middlemen and Semaq Beri forest collectors.

Traditionally the Semaq Beri have collected an enormous variety of forest products including rattan, gutta-percha, dammar, gums and oils, fibres, incense woods, fruits and other foods, medicinal and poisonous plants, rhinoceros horns, ivory, hornbill casques and numerous birds for plummage, bezoar stones ,turtle carapaces, honey and beeswax, dragons blood and kemenyang.

Today the largest source of revenue comes from rattan, honey and incense wood. The other above mentioned plants are occasionally harvested when available. Gums, dammars and oils are rarely harvested for exchange today. They have been replaced by petroleum products, various synthetics and cheaper oils and gums.

Rattan Collection

Rattans are spiny climbing plants which belong to the Lepidocayoid group of the Palm Family. Peninsular Malaysia is the hub of Southeast Asian rattan distribution. There are 12 genera of rattan comprising about 600 species (Dransfield). In Malaysia, of the 220 wild species of palms 123 species are rattans (Whitemore, 1979:98). These palms are ethnobotanicallly important and have been utilized, perhaps since man first entered Southeast Asia (Dransfield),

as a source of cane for basketry, binding, cordage and a wealth of other purposes. Fruits of a variety of rattans are edible but are invariably sour tasting. The fruit of the palm *Salacca glabrescens* is particularly sweet tasting and collected enthusiastically when encountered. One species of rattan *Daemonorops* (jerenang) has resin crystals in the fruit wall which can be extracted and was sold anciently as Dragon'sBlood (see Burkhill, 1935) but used locally for blowpipe mouthpieces and traditional medicine. *Calamis castineus* is used to thatch roofs.

The principal use of rattan is as a source of cane either split for binding and basketry or used whole for furniture. Almost all of the rattan is exported to Singapore where for centuries Chinese entrepeneurs have controlled and developed this industry. Malaysia, in hopes of developing a rattan industry has recently imposed a high export tariff on raw rattan but with little success. The bulk of rattan, whole or split, is exported to Singapore, where it is treated and graded and exported to distant markets. Singapore does little manufacturing of rattan products; its skill lies in the collection and skillful sorting of the raw material (Whitmore 1979).

According to Dransfield (1979), Peninsular Malaysia contributes about 4% of the world trade which in 1977 amounted to about $116 million in raw rattan exports. In terms of manufactured rattan articles, Dransfield estimates about M$2,744 million. It is by no means an insignificant

trade and although much less income accrues to the primary collector (a standard rate would be half of the market value in the nearest town), a substantial amount of money can be derived from this activity.

The process of collecting rattan for sale requires some specialized knowledge of types of rattan. There are two main grades that correspond to a variety of species. Rattans enter the world of commerce as rattan sticks, cane core and split cane. They are the raw material for the manufacture of cane furniture. They have a variety of local and national uses. A large quantity is used, for instance, to lash bamboo together for scaffolding for construction purposes. Twenty stories of scaffolding lashed together with rattan is not an uncommon sight on large city construction sites.

The rattan trade is a multi-million dollar business but, as Dransfield (1979) notes, it is often extremely loosely and chaotically organized. As in most trade in forest products it is an ancient trade and long lines of middlemen protect their interests by keeping sources and contacts secret.

Botanists have long struggled to sort out the relationship between trade names and scientific taxonomy with little success (see Foxworthy, 1922:157; Ridley, 1903; Dransfield, 1979; and Whitemore, 1979:101). Species collected have local names but once collected the rattan's name may change from hand to hand or with each sorting. Further confusion may exist because the scientific

nomenclature; as Dransfield(1979:1) notes, is probably unsound.

Burkhill (1935) classifies rattans into four main groups, *vis*:

A. *Sego*, which includes all canes that have a siliceous outer layer that cracks and springs off when the cane is bent,

B. *Lunti*, which includes the same kinds as (A) but from which the silica layer has been removed,

C. *Ayer*, which appears to cover everything that is not included in the above two classes,

D. *Sticks*, with or without rooted ends, in short straight lengths suitable for walking sticks and other purposes where stiffness and straightness are the chief consideration.

The Semaq Beri gather two classes of rattan: rattan to be split and bundled in groups of 100 of about 9m in length, and rattan cane unsplit, bundled in 10's or 12's. This latter cane is almost always "rotan manau" and is used for furniture construction. The former split cane maybe a variety of species mixed or sorted depending on the middleman's order.

The method of harvesting is similar in both cases. The rattan is dragged out of the canopy or in some cases trees are climbed and the rattan cut away from the support trees. The leaf sheaths are stripped off either by a blow from the flat of the blade of the "parang" or rainforest knife or by dragging the cane through a fork in a tree, the leaf sheaths

snapping off at their bases and the flexible stem being pulled through clean. Big stems, rotan manau, is cut up in 3m lengths and in bundles of 10 carried out to the collecting camp. Smaller stems to be split are dragged out uncut in 10 lengths of 200 ft or more. In camp the latter class is split, pared, cut into 9m lengths and bundled into 100's.

Rattan collecting is organized at the instigation of the middleman who has received orders for specific kinds of rattan. The Semaq Beri are generally in a perpetual state of debt to the middleman who uses this fact to "encourage" them to collect rainforest produce. Each band or "puaq" has its own middleman and will deal with him exclusively. This is partly because of the perpetual debt and partly because they have established fairly close although ambivilent links with him.

The Semoq Beri travel long distances to collect rattan. Rattan in the more accesible areas is monopolized by the Malay collectors. Rattan is also more plentiful in the remoter areas, areas which are not generally accessible to Malays. These are also better hunting areas.

The collection of rattan is a communal affair and often considered a kind of holiday in which the whole family, indeed an entire band, participates. There is much that the families can do since the rattan is proccesed by bundling, splitting etc. As mentioned above, each Malay middleman will deal with what is essentially a single band and will provide

much of the provisions for the collecting enteprise. This provisioning is something that is done generally only when people are out actually doing the collecting; so for the Semoq Beri it is some incentive to go out in the rainforest because it enables them to eat food that they might not ordinarily have access to, including luxury items such as candy for the children. [33]

Gaharu wood Collecting

The production of this commodity differs a little from the production of rattan. In this case the men usually go out in groups by themselves as they do when off on short fishing/turtle hunting expeditions. The gaharu collecting group is usually made up of a single band. The collection of gaharu wood gives a great deal of cash to the Semoq Beri and it is an enterprise in which all wish to engage in. [34]

There is a great deal of secrecy surrounding the collection of this commodity. This is so not only because of the fact that the larger the group the more diluted the income but also because, since the government resettled

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[33] The Semoq Beri have access to goods at other times as well. The Semoq Beri are in a constant state of debt to the middleman. These debts are for the most part kept to a minimum by the merchant for the simple reason the Semoq Beri are famous for moving to different bands. This leaves the middleman with quite a few bad debts. These debts were showed to me regularly by the merchant that I had the most contact with, to show no doubt how difficult it was dealing with the Semoq Beri.

[34] In relative terms the cash aquired from the sale of gaharu wood is greater than any other type of commodity production. Although gaharu wood production is significantly less labour, rattan and honey production is much more reliable in terms of Availability in supply and consistent sources.

these people several bands live in close proximity to each other, it is hard to conceal an organized trip. This confounded my attempts to join them, initially, but as they accepted, first, that I was not interested in the commodity itself, I was invited along as part of the kingroup with whom I was living. However when a trip was being organized, I was told who was coming and who not to inform of the expedition. Sometimes several kingroups might meet in the rainforest but they rarely went out together. The trips to search for this incense wood alternate between returning to old trees and searching for new ones. Some of the old sites were returned to year after year. In one case we were traveling through the rainforest when one of the men remembered travelling with his father to a tree nearby. Everyone went looking for the tree and it was soon discovered. The tree had been cut down years ago and there was nothing left of it save muddy rotted wood that had all but disintegrated. The Semoq Beri set to sifting through the mud for gaharu wood which because of the composition of the wood (hardened resins) did not decay like the rest of the tree. A few hundred dollars were gathered and the group moved off. The people never harvested all the gaharu wood in any tree but took as much as they felt like and then moved on.

Relations to Merchants

The relationship developed between the merchants and the people is fairly typical of relations hunter-gatherers have had with merchants. That is, the relationship is a binding economic tie. The traders in the Ulu Tembling region and, I believe, throughout Malaysia, guard carefully their position in the network of commodity movement. It was an impossible task to unravel the movement of goods past the first trader. First of all, it was considered impolite to enquire about a trader's business connections and even if the anthropologist, by definition impolite, tried to enquire further he would be met with confusing and contradictory information. However, speculation on other people's business was readily discussed through transmitted gossip.

The limitation presented by this ethnographic reality prevented tracing the movement of goods from the Orang Asli to markets in Singapore where most goods ended up. The amount of value added in each transaction was impossible to calculate accurately, but primary producers usually received about half or less of the value of the products in Singapore.

Productive activity directed at the source of goods was also guarded. The effect of this secrecy was to create a kind of division of labour or distribution of task. This ridgidness was reproduced and maintained by the fear of losing one's place in the transaction line. Merchants are particularly vulnerable to competition and competition is to

be feared.

Honey as a Commodity

Honey production has been described in a previous section as part of traditional subsistence production. It is also, when collected in large quantities, a commodity to be exchanged. There seems to be very little conflict generated by the fact of its commoditization and that it straddles the distance between the traditional and the 'modern' uses of it. Traditonally the Semaq Beri would harvest only as much as they needed but with the possibility of selling or exchanging it for items produced outside their economy they have collected it with greater enthusiasm. All of the items for exchange that the Semaq Beri collect have some use value but only in small quanities. It could be argued that the increased production necessary to produce these commodities could interfere with the traditional economy and thus be a factor in changing the economy. The question could be addressed by analysing the amount of labour necessay to produce commodities vs. subsistence items, that is how much does producing for exchange contribute to the reproduction of the band. However, when the reproduction of the band or group requires such small amounts of labour in the first place, it seems to be a moot point whether commodity production interferes or, as appears more likely, enhances the reproduction of the group. As I have been at pains to show, it is not the production that is important in

analysing the economy of the Semaq Beri but the manner in which it is produced, and the way its value is appropriated by the society. This is the the social relations of production generally defined as ownership relations- access to the means of production and access to the fruits of labour. It is these relations that dominate the organization of production and not the other way around.

Wild honey in Malaysia particularly honey collected by the Orang Asli is considered to have healing properties and its price is over-inflated in the larger towns and cities. The Orang Asli receive a higher price for the honey as a result of this. The price that the Semaq Beri recieved for all of the commodities depended generally on the price that the merchants would recieve from the merchant they dealt with. There is a great deal of competition between merchants for commodities producted by the Semaq Beri. This does not mean that the Semaq Beri are selling to the highest bidder because, as was mentioned before, the debt obligations and the relations built up between particular merchants and the Semaq Beri were generally very durable. However the threat from other merchants was very real and this was enough to keep the price relative to the market price. As was mentioned above, the price was about half of the value in the large cities. The Semaq Beri generally recieve between 5 and 10 Malaysian dollars for a kilogram of honey. In the large cities I saw some of this honey for sale at $30M per kg. but this was an exceptional price. During the honey

season of 1982 the Semaq Beri collected well over 500 kilograms of honey. This amount was collected by the group that I resided with (six households [35]) who were very productive.

The production of honey has been described in an earlier section. Here I want to briefly review the organization of production and the distribution of the honey as a commodity. The production groups are larger than the small groups of men that would form to hunt pigs or monkeys. These groups for the most part are similar to the fishing and turtle hunting groups and the commodity producing groups that stay in the rain forest for periods up to several weeks. Honey production requires larger groups than would normally form for the daily subsistence search. The larger groups are formed for longer stays in the rainforest but since the resource is stationary, part of the reason for larger groups forming is so that all people could gain access to that resource. Although access to the resource was guaranteed to all of those that made the effort to join the group, in reality the people who organized the prodution did so with some secrecy. This may reflect some of the problems with the resettlement in that several bands lived at Kg. Kucing and traditonally only members of one band would

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[35]The group that I resided with included the best climbers and often several members of the other bands would join us in the honey search. They were connected by kin links and were introduced to me as kin. They also were the last to have their tins filled with honey combs and bee larva. They were allowed, however, to eat as much of the honey gathered as they wanted to.

harvest honey. There was however no mechanism to prevent anyone from joining the harvesting group other than by simply not imforming them. Each group that formed required at least two men that were willing to climb the bee trees. This is dangerous work since it is done during overcast nights and often in the rain.

The men who climb are paid by those that sell their share of the honey. However they do not recieve any money from people that do not sell their share of the honey. The distribution of honey is at the site of the harvesting.

During the honey season that I participated in, honey was available in large quantities and the possibility of selling large amounts of it encouraged more harvesting than would be normal for subsistence purposes. The Semaq Beri realized the potential for making a little cash during a time when they would normally be harvesting honey anyway. They invested a considerable amount of their labour in the collection of honey during that year.

Conclusions

The Semaq Beri produce commodities for the world market. Production for exchange allows them to purchase commodities produced within capitalist relations of production. They are thus connected to the market by using cash to purchase capitalist commodities. The relation to the capitalist market is mediated for each band by a merchant capitalist who buys their produce and sells them objects

produced outside their economy.

Merchant capital is employed at the level of exchange. It buys commodities and sells them with added value (M-C-M'). It does not as a rule insert itself into production, that is invest its capital into the means of production, which may include tools or productive land, and rarely does it seek to reorganize production relations.

Forces of supply and demand determine price in the world market and thus determine the price of rainforest produce for primary producers. Since exchange of rainforest produce is chaotic and anarchistic, little organizational potential is possible to affect supply. However, many middlemen will not risk capital if prices are too low and for some commodities (gaharu wood) some hoarding will occur in the hope prices will rise. Rattans must be exchanged immediately because they must be processed within 10-15 days after harvest. Prices in this case are agreed to beforehand and the produce will always be special-ordered through a long line of middlemen.

The middleman takes profit from buying and selling commodities. He buys cheaply and sells dear. For the Semaq Beri, this results in a double "exploitation". The people are well aware of current prices for rainforest produce and the price of capitalist commodities but are reluctant to market their own produce for a variety of reasons. Three reasons are given. First, they are reluctant to make long trips into town (60 miles downriver) because they say they

are afraid and have no one with whom to stay (i.e. relative); second the Chinese or Malay merchants will cheat them (although probably no more than their own middleman ('towkay'); and finally, the Semaq Beri say that in order to go to town one must have enough money to buy all the things desired otherwise they may be put in the dangerous state of "punun" (see section on punun, Chapter 4).

There are two major reasons for the various primary producing groups to stick with their own middleman. First, the people are kept in constant debt to the middleman and thus are "obliged" to trade their produce to him, even at lower prices. Second, middlemen protect carfully their position, and thus bring sanctions to bear on the Semaq Beri if they were to use another middleman. These sanctions would include refusal to sell goods to the offenders or to buy their produce. In the area researched, the middlemen were in fact relatives (brother-in-laws) and acted in concert concerning prices and eliminating new competition from other people in the area. Others were unwilling or unable to raise enough capital to be able to distribute goods over the long term because the Semaq Beri are notoriously bad debt payers. The Semoq Beri do however feel some obligation to sell produce to whom they owe money. Motivating the Semaq Beri to go out for rainforest produce is often the subject of bitter dispute between the middleman and his debtors.

The middleman generally provides the necessary provisions for harvesting activities; that is, he loans on

credit rice, sugar, tea, tobacco, shotgun shells, etc. against the products that the group will harvest and sell to him. Sometimes the value of the products harvested is sufficient to pay off the debt accumulated from long stays in the settlement and sometimes not. It is often difficult for the middleman to motivate his group to collect commodities. This is the extent of the middleman's insertion into the production of commodities. He supplies food and occasionally tools (axes, and small woodworking tools), but for the most part toolsare owned by the producers.

Forest products are traded for cash and in turn converted to a variety of luxury items, as well as foods such as rice, sweets, tobacco, tea, salt, canned milk, and sugar. Knives, axes, shotgun shells, cooking pots, fishing line, hooks, nuts and plastic sheeting are also purchased. Luxury items include radios, ghetto-blasters, cassette tapes and cloth. Two boats and one 12 horsepower Envinrude had been purchased about ten years ago by the nominal leader of one group who dealt with Musa the middleman.

Traditionally the "leader" of the band dealt with outsiders.[3] The bands' relation to middlemen is mediated by a group leader who has shown some desire to make

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[3] This political organization has been institutionalized among the Semelai, a closely related group of slash and burn horticulturalists. The Semelai have a "penghulu" (leader), "jukera" (external relations) and a "bomoh" (shaman). These offices are often held by one man.

The Semoq Beri have identical "offices" but they have been replaced by government appointed leaders (i.e. with a political organization that mirrors up-country kampong (village) political organization). This is a cause of some bitterness by traditional office holders.

decisions. The group leader's friendship is cultivated by the middleman through gifts and sharing of boats, motors, etc. Musa, the middleman of kin group with whom we were living with, was at the time building a wooden house for Dollah, the government appointed leader. The kin group followed Dollah, but his authority was weak. [37] The three other bands in the resettlement followed their own leader and had their own middleman.

Debt obligations are one of the ways a middleman attaches people to him. Establishing personal relations using traditions of hospitality -sharing food, tea, etc. and visiting regularly are other ways to maintain relations. [38]

Several points should be made here about the organization of labour and the composition of groups in commodity production. The composition of the groups mirror the production groups that harvest fish and turtles and presumably the traditional honey collecting groups. By far the greatest contribution to subsistence is by smaller production groups such as monkey or pig hunting groups [39],

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[37] I was told not that Dollah was the leader but they "followed him". They implied that it was a temporary affiliation and a voluntary one.

[38] It should be noted that relations between Malays and Orang Asli as a rule are tense and distrustful. As has been noted, slave raiding occurred well into this century.

[39] Pig hunting has been made much easier with introduction of shotguns and has enabled small groups of people to harvest pigs. Traditionally that is before people had access to shotguns, pigs would be speared. The composition of these traditional groups would have been much larger and the harvesting of pigs more of a communal affair. The other traditional technique was to chase pigs into an area that would be actually fenced in, a process that could take several days. This technique required, a considerable amount of labour and all of the band members' attention.

as well as the large daily contribution small womens' groups make. These latter groups consist generally of three or four women and a few of the older children. They are generally mothers and daughters or sisters.

Rice is an important staple for the Semaq Beri and although they have made many, for the most part, disastrous efforts to grow their own rice, they generally purchase the bulk of it. In order to do this they must produce commodities for exchange. Other kinds of cash producing labour such as wage labour, garden production, or rubber production- all of which are undertaken by Malays in the area- were never engaged in during the tenure of the study. People reported engaing in these kinds of labour, occasionally in the past, but, labour for others was conducted on a voluntary, reciprocal basis or for a potion of the rice or rubber harvest. Even so, these kinds of labour are not significant for the maintainance and reproduction of the Semaq Beri or their social system. The collection of rainforest products for exchange is the prefered method of aquiring cash to purchase these items. [40]

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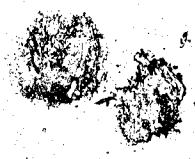
[40] Store bought goods contribute to the maintainance of the Semaq Beri. The Semaq Beri purchase the following items: rice, and tinned goods such as sardines, squid, jams, condiments and milk. Other food items include sweets and Malay "junk food". Meat is never bought.

The Semaq Beri do not consider water buffalo to be tasty although they expresse a preference for meat over other food items. Occasionally the Malays will shoot a marauding pig in their garden or rice field. Pig flesh is *haram*-forbidden and thus cannot be eaten as a rule, by the Malays who are Moslems. These pigs are offered to the Semaq Beri if they will come and get it. Malays are forbidden to touch pigs.

Clearly from their perspective this is an important way to maintain their independence and from all reports they have been doing this kind of cash producing labour for as long as anyone could remember. ''

''Earlier I argued from the historical and prehistorical evidence that the Orang Asli have since the beginning of the Christian era engaged in the trading of commodities.



IV. Distribution and Exchange of Objects in Semaq Beri Society

Introduction

The distribution of goods in Semaq Beri society is determined by an ideology of generalized reciprocity. This reciprocity allows the fairly equitable distribution of goods that have *use value*, excluding those objects that have *exchange value* only, such as commodities that are collected for exchange and money itself. As we will see below (see section on Punun), the concept of *punun* and *kioy* directs the distribution of the goods that have *use value* but does not determine the distribution of those objects that have *exchange value*.

The Determination of Distruibution- *Punun* and *Kioy*

The social obligation to share is deeply embedded in the ideology and social practice of Semoq Beri culture. But perhaps more powerful is the Semoq Beri notion that a person is responsible for his or her own welfare. In the preceeding chapters I have tried to give an idea of the anarchy in production, that people are responsible for feeding themselves. They make their own tools and , hunt and gather on an *ad hoc* basis. Even small children trap and hunt small rodents and birds in and around the camp. By the age of 9 or 10 boys and girls are supplying a good portion of their own protein needs. In practice, those people who gathered food

always consumed what they wanted before sharing it with others. Small squirrels or birds were shared only in the family unit, that is if they had not been consumed by the individual in the rainforest before returning to camp.

Sharing in practice is an onerous responsibility sometimes done in a graceful way and sometimes not. Children are taught at an early age to distribute food among their peers and in particular with those children who are younger. This is so only if people are present, within sight of the food. [42]

It is important to emphasize that more is demanded than is given. It is not clear at all that giving bestowed prestige on the giver nor did I get the impression that the receiver was at all oblilgated or put in a state of debt by anyone giving gifts. One *expected* to receive and woe to those that were suspected of hoarding. [43] As will be shown below, there are powerful incentives to give and powerful reasons for demanding things.

The Semoq Beri have simple solutions to problem of demanding relatives and friends. They secretly consume food, hide it, and when pressed simply deny they have it at all.

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[42]Larger amounts of food are distributed within camp usually on the basis of friendship/workmate relations rather than following strict kinship lines. Kinship is a weaker relation between people although it is evoked occasionally. All of the Semoq Beri consider each other as either blood relatives or in-laws but rather than exclusive categories, these relations tend to include all Semoq Beri and therefore anyone can demand food, shelter, etc.

[43]It should be noted that everyone hoarded goods for the simple reason that should they be displayed sooner or later someone would come along who wanted it.

We will see later why they are unable to simply refuse. ‘‘ You cannot - and this is without exception - refuse to give food. You may lie - and that is seen as an acceptable way of refusing - but there cannot be any evidence to contradict your denial. There were some cases where it was apparent that people were lying but for others to prove it would not only be in bad taste, but a denial of a relationship that existed.

The Semoq Beri have a keen sense of smell, particularly for cooking food. Several professed to be able to identify all species of squirrels by their cooking odour alone. I was skeptical but surprised on a number of occasions while secretly cooking food of my own. "Is that onions and gibbon you are cooking younger brother?" people would remark loudly as they walked past. Even the Semoq Beri had no snappy answers to pointed references to cooking alone. The preparation of food presents certain problems since food must be shared, especially if it is in plain view. Most houses were partitioned. This allowed members of the family to slip away and eat hidden from the view of visitors. Traditionally the Semoq Beri were nomadic and house construction in the rainforest is little more than a slightly raised platform with a lean-to roof. These dwellings afford little opportunity for concealing food.

‘‘I do not want to paint a picture of Semoq Beri as hoarding and greedy but I do want to show that in spite of a powerful ethic and moral imperative to share it is not always put into practice. The practice of hoarding is the exception that proves the rule.

However, during our stays in the rainforest, pots and baskets were always covered. It should also be noted that there is always an abundance of food in the rainforest and thus little need for concealing items with the exception of rice, sugar tobacco, etc.

Large amounts of food are impossible to conceal. Children play an important part in the dissemination of information about the activities of adults in the community. In the previous section a description of the hunt was offered. Men returning from a successful hunt will first consume a portion for themselves (if it is not too late in the afternoon) and then discuss how the particular sections might be divided up. Each will remind the other of people back in camp who might need the meat or tubers collected. The food is then divided and wrapped in leaf bundles and carried as inconspiciously as possible in a 'sarong'. The men proceed directly to their individual homes. In the rainforest, where dwellings are built facing one another in an irregular circle, the men will invariably approach the dwelling from the rear and hand the meat or food through the back wall and then walk around and through the centre of the encampment to their respective places. I was often involved in this conspiracy. All of the produce would be loaded into a bag that I carried and the majority of the party would enter one end of the village while I was instructed to walk below and around the village and into my house where people would inconspicuously as possible come and retrieve their

portions. It was often embarassing to come upon my house with most of the village sitting on my porch visiting my co-worker. Great fun was had by all but me. The interesting thing was that they all left, understanding the dilemma I had found myself in and also to retire to their respective homes to await their portion.

In the preceeding section emphasis has been placed on individual self-reliance and some of the elaborate lengths to which people go to avoid the responsity to share. These lengths seldom fool anyone. Children will notice if adults do not. Cooking food is like raising a flag or sounding an alarm. It is not hard to understand why people wander around outside their houses in the late afternoon looking for returning hunters or to notice the sudden disappearance of a family from a group of people. And everyone hears the shotgun blast if the men are out hunting pigs.

In order to understand the practice of sharing in Semoq Beri society the concepts of *punun* and *kioy* will be examined. They are similar except that the latter has to do with non-food items while the former concerns exclusively foods.

Punun and *Kioy* are states which you enter when some desire for an object remains unsatisfied. It is a dangerous state, one which makes you vulnerable. In the case of *punun*, you are suseptible to snake bites, tiger attacks, cutting yourself with an axe or parang, or falling out of trees ; in the case of *kioy*, one is vulnerable to a variety of

diseases, swollen legs, sick stomachs and fever. As can be imagined most people are interested in reducing this state. There is also a moral imperative to help others in this desire to satisfy wants.

The desire must centre on particular objects rather than particular states such as hunger, thirst, envy or greed. Before any hunting trip or travel through the rainforest away from camp, people must attempt to satisfy their wants so the danger of rainforest travel will be reduced. (I was constantly asked if I couldn't eat just a little more before rainforest trips - I was enough of a problem without adding to the danger.) During travel from camp I was told to refrain from talking about food not only to prevent *punun* myself, but so that I would not trigger a latent desire among my companions. Also, tigers may not be that discriminating.

There is then an imperative for you to look after yourself to prevent particular accidents caused by unsatisfied desires and an imperative for others to help satisfy their desires. No one can refuse a guest's desire to satisfy his/her wants. It is extremely rare to invoke the word *punun* when looking for food and, in fact, this may be considered rude to suggest that a host or friend has not satisfied any of your desires. It is a powerful ideology and I was told early on about it. I had a Western notion that it was rude to ask for anything. Food or drink or shelter cannot be refused. However, there are a variety of ways of

circumventing the sometimes onerous refrains of "*punun, punun*". Food must be kept out of sight in case someone should see it and have an incurable desire to consume it. The advantage of hiding food is that you can easily deny having any. It was a trick that was quickly learned during fieldwork. Punun is particularly dangerous during rainforest hunts or journeys where rice or some item is not available. Punun is more readily developed if you can see the object and often is disregarded if there is none in sight, i.e. if you do not see it you cannot desire it.

In some groups, particularly the Semalai, there is an elaborate language for discussing items that can produce *punun*. (see Diffloth, 1978; H.N.Evans,1920; Winstedt, 1920)

In rainforest camps food is more visible and meat is quickly distributed to relatives and friends before others can press for a share. Thus when meat is cut up in camp the hunter can be heard saying "this is for uncle, this is for brother" etc.

The fact that sharing requires no immediate return was made clear to me very early. [45]

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[45]We had learned about reciprocity from living several months among Malays at the University. We had become friends with several other students there and soon they were bringing over food items. We dutifully accepted them and returned the dish later. With our anthropological training we felt there was a need to reciprocate but when our plates were returned to us they were filled with other delicacies. A plate never returns empty (although it can among good and close friends). When we arrived at the Semoq Beri camp and had set up house we received some monkey meat on a plate and we dutifully returned the plate with some food item. In due course we provided people with food items and when we were about to leave they said wait for the plate and unceremoniously dumpted the contents in their pot and handed

Malays are extremely polite in transactions with strangers and some form of thank you always followed any sharing exchanges. The Semoq Beri, on the other hand, explicitly mocked Malays and our original politeness. 'Thank you' was unnecessary and even considered rude. There was either no thanking necessary because it was a social duty, or they felt that this was a very poor way of reciprocating. [45]

Thus the practice of reducing a state of *punun* serves to distribute a variety of items throughout the camp. It also serves as a reminder of social duty and obligation. The concept is not limited to the band itself but extends to other members of different bands who are visiting.

The concept of *punun* and *kioy*, [47] determines the distribution of goods in this society.

Exchange- Middlemen and Trade

In a earlier section the history of trade in rainforest products was briefly reviewed. It was argued that the Orang Asli were probably the main producers of rainforest products. Thus the Orang Asli as a group have been engaged in what is called "simple commodity production" for hundreds of years. [48] The Orang Asli have had a long history of

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[45](cont'd) the plate back unwashed and unfilled.
[46]One of the favourite ways of poking fun at Malays was to in fact be very grateful during transactions saying 'Thank you' and calling everyone 'sir' or 'mister'.
[47]It should be noted here that the concept of *kioy* is identical in practice as *punun*. They concern different objects as detailed above.
[48]It is a traditional ethnographic fiction that groups of

relations with their Malay neighbours which were often exploitative and sometimes downright hostile. There are reports of silent trade and slave raiding which may indicate some reticence on the part of the Orang Asli to have anything but an economic relation with the Malays. However, these kind of relations are hard to maintain and a more reasonable assumption is that groups of Orang Asli ocasionally attatched themselves to Malay kampongs under the protection of the Penghulu (village leader). There is some evidence for this in the early reports of travellers in the state of Pahang where this study took place.(see Evans, 1916, 1920; Miklucho Maclay, 1878a,b)

In the study area the relation to Malays was as a rule unfriendly. There were a variety of exceptions to this but they only highlighted the unfriendly relations.

The Semaq Beri of Sg. Kucing trade a variety of commodities collected in the rainforest. They trade with a Malay middleman who lives just up river from the resettlement. His father was the middleman for the Semaq Beri before him. His brother-in-law also acts as middleman for one of the other bands that have been moved to the resettlment. Together they have a monopoly on the trade of

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**(cont'd) non-capitalist societies are somehow pristine and untouched. Thus we examine "impacts" and assume that it is us that have the real impact. This is not true: social formations change and develop constantly in the face of a variety of forces. The force that is examined here is the clash of relations of production generated by the volunteer participation of the Semaq Beri engaging in the production of commodities for a capitalist market. There are a variety of reasons for "volunteering" as traditional options slowly dissappear.

rainforest produce collected by the bands living at Sg. Kucing. The Semaq Beri are as a rule in a constant state of debt to the middlemen. In order to discharge this obligation they collect rainforest products. [49] Relations are based on the buying and selling of goods but, more personal relations also exist. Goods that the Semaq Beri collect are sold to the middleman for cash which is subtracted from the debt owed to the middleman and the remaining cash paid to the individual. A strict accounting takes place.[50] The participation of the Semaq Beri in the market economy is structured by the market and its determinants of supply and demand. The exchange is merchant capitalist, that is, selling in order to buy. The case is very much different for the exchanges or disributions that occur within the local community. These exchanges have been examined in the section on *punun*. It was argued that notions of reciprocity have to do with objects that have use value. Objects exchanged in the market and money itself have no use value and are not

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[49] "The process of discharging debts with money is a way of severing a relationship of completing it, repaying it. Market exchange relations require equivelence or at least the appearence of an equal, voluntary exchange. Objects produced for exchange require commensurability, an equal exchange with a medium, usually money. Objects produced for exchange within the subsistence mode of production are not strictly commodities in a 'market economy' sense. They become commodities only at the point of exchange with the market economy. Whereas the exchanges of commodities are individual, momentary, and equal or unequal as the case may be, other "exchanges" or rather distributions are not based on this criterion (for example the manner in which some objects such as blowpipes or baskets are exchanged). Commensurability and equivilence describes market exchanges.

[50] Although the most of the older men are not capable of arithmetic, those that are help them keep accounts. If they feel they are being cheated they withhold their labour.

included in general sharing patterns. However, and I believe this to be a most important point, the moment that objects having exchange value are converted to a use value they immediately become objects for distribution not on the basis of commensurability, but on the basis of a Semaq Beri ideology of sharing. [51]

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[51] I once asked a group of infomants how much one could ask for, given the ideology of *kioy* (I refered to the boat that one of the band laders had purchased). They thought for a minute and discussed it and seemed genuinely puzzeled until one of them, not the owner of the boat, said "not more than 50 ringgit"

V. Impact of Commodity Production on Pre-capitalist Social Formations - Theory

Introduction

There are several debates embedded in the following review of the literature, but they all stem from debates surrounding the transformation of social fomations, and the influence of capitalism on pre-capitalist social formations. Initially the debates concerned advanced capitalism and the reasons for the export of capital from advanced capitalist societies to pre-capitalist socities. There are several reasons for the export of capital given by various Marxist theorists.

Lenin argues that in advanced capitalist societies the organic composition of capital is higher causing, as Marx argued, a decline in the rate of exploitation of surplus value. Thus the rate of return on capital is higher in pre-capitalist social formations because the organic composition of capital is lower. Thus capital has a natural tendency to flow this way. Luxembourg argues the interest that capitalists have in these other social formations concerns raw materials which are extracted and delivered to capitalist countries in order to be transformed into commodities. Bradby (1975), much later, argues that the export of capital opens up other countries to the consumption of capitalist commodities and it is the search for consumers that drives capital to pre-capitalist social

formations. [52] Finally, some have argued that capitalists required cheaper labour in order to increase profits and this labour was found in many pre-capitalist societies (Wolpe, 1972; Meillasoux, 1972). All of these reasons are strategies that capitalists employ to do what they are required to do in order to reproduce capital on an ever expanding scale. Capitalists could be looking for investments with higher return (Lenin), or raw materials (Luxembourg, 1951), or markets (Bradby, 1975; Luxembourg, 1951), or labour (Wolpe, 1972) or to my mind any combination of the above. Capital will move wherever it can make a profit.

The debate on the transformation of social formations centered on the transformation of the feudal system and the development of capitalism. (see Hilton, 1976; Baran, and Sweezy, 1976; Dobb, 1963). The transformation of the feudal system for Sweezy was a foregone conclusion as soon as the basic town/country division was achieved. Thus, the division of labour between the town and the country and the development of a merchant class, which increased the lord's desire for consumption goods, lead the lords to seek ways of increasing the volume of their production. This in itself is not an unreasonable assumption, but why the lords would choose to develop their productive forces, (i.e. appropriate relative surplus value, which is what Sweezy suggests),

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[52] This, it is argued, was the cause of the Opium Wars with China. Thus the British were after free access not only to the commodities of China but also as a market for their goods.

rather than extracting more absolute surplus value by increasing their share of the surplus product or increasing the peasants output by making them work harder is not made clear. (Brenner, 1977:42-43) For Brenner, it is wrong to assume a capitalist rationality for the lords and it is only with the development of free wage labour, which is the generalization of commodity relations (when labour-power is commoditized), that capitalism is a historical fact:

> It is only with the emergence of free wage labour, labour power as a commodity, that there is a separation of the producers from the means of subsistence and production; that production must be marketed to make possible reproduction; that there is, in a true sense, production for exchange.(Brenner, 1977:50)

Brenner argues here strongly and convincingly that production for exchange was not and could not be fully realized until there was a separation of producers from their means of production.

The articulation of Modes of Production debate

The impact of capital and capitalism with its attendent social relations and forces of production on pre-capitalist societies has been the subject of ongoing and long standing debate. The perspective of the "modernization" school and its main apologists in American social science have been soundly criticized by Frank (1970) and are not taken seriously except perhaps by the I.M.F. or AID agencies tied to development and in the business of exporting capitalism to Third World countries.

Frank was at pains to show that contrary to the previous development theorists , the so-called Third World countries are not on the way, even if painfully and in fits and starts, to becoming 'developed' societies. The relation between the centres of capital and those centres that exported labour or raw materials vs exporting capital is not a linear development of capital and productive forces, but a structural and systemic exploitation, a block to national development. Whereas previous development theorists argued the essential backward character of precapitalist relations, Frank sought to show in what ways this was a process of underdevelopment or the impact of capital on pre-capitalist societies.

For Frank there was no dual economy - the economy was capitalist plain and simple (Frank, 1967, 1969). He rejects the notion that capital's penetration is partial or not complete. It is a uniform hierarchy of metropolis and periphery where the metropolis appropriates surplus from the periphery. Others following Frank have analyzed the process of extraction of surplus value as unequal exchange (Emmanuel, 1972) and metroplis satellite polarization (Amin, 1976), i.e. that the Third World is extroverted, hence externally oriented towards export production and import consumption. Finally, for Frank, as for Wallerstein (1974), there is but a single 'world' system and and it is capitalist through and through. (Foster-Carter, 1978:79).

These underdevelopment theorists have been criticized for a lack of conceptual rigour [53], because concepts such as metropolis and periphery were no easier to pin down than Rostow's stages of growth (Taylor:85-91); for a problem of scope or scale, that is dependency models described a macro framework which was difficult to shift to the local micro level (I. Oxaal, et al. 1975:2). Nevertheless, Frank argues convincingly that the relation of capital to pre-capitalist societies is generally a destructive relation.

> "Therefore, short of liberation from this capitalist structure or the desolution of the world capitalist system as a whole, the capitalist countries, regions, localities and sectors are condemned to underdevelopment". (Frank 1967:11).

But to suggest that underdevelopment can be alleviated by a simple "removal" of penetration is "alternately as inadequately established as the assertion that implanting further elements of this penetration will create a basis for indigeneous development." (Taylor 1979:98) The most penetrating critique of Frank and development theorists is provided by Laclau (1971) in his article "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America". Although Frank argues that the "social formations" of Latin America are capitalist through and through, Laclau argues that this is true at the level of exchange only. The mode of production, particularly the relations of production associated with particular economic enterprises, were not capitalist but bound through exchange

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[53] (The Insurgent Sociologist, (Vol. VII, No. 2, Spring 1977) devoted a entire issue to this question

into an "indissolvable unity".[54] Having located the contradiction between relations of production in each sector of the economy, Laclau then theorizes the relation between what are essentialy two modes of production. For Laclau a mode of production consists of:

1. a determinate type of ownership to the means of production;

2. a determinate form of appropriation of the economic surplus;

3. a determinate degree of development of the division of labour;

4. a determinate level of development of the productive forces.

For Laclau the effect of capitalism on the traditional sector in the economic system (others call it a social formation) is to accentuate and consolidate the "subordinate" mode. Rather than capital destroying a traditional sector, it strengthens it, uses it, and extracts surplus on the basis of this mode of production.

The apparent paradox and contradictory nature of the insertion of capitalism has been noted by a variety of writers addressing the issue of capitalist penetration of

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[54]Laclau denies this is a dualist thesis. "To affirm the feudal character of relations of production in the agrarian sector does not necessarily involve maintaining a dualist thesis" (1971:32). Laclau argues that the dualist thesis implies no connection between modern and traditional sector but the reality is an *indissolvable unity*. Here he agrees with Frank, that development does generate underdevelopment but he argues this on the basis of relations of production not on exchange or the market.

pre-capitalist modes of production. Meillasoux (1972:103) describes precapitalist forms as "being undermined and perpetuated at the same time", Poulantzas suggests "complex forms of dissolution and conservation" (1974:148), Bettelhiem of "conservation/dissolution" (1972:297-8), and finally Rey discusses the inside/outside distinction:

> There are thus two distinct actions of capitalist production in some sense from the outside, which does not modify the mode of production itself; then an action "from the inside" which permits modification of the mode of production (1973:123 see also pp. 164 and pp. 70-71) (see also Foster Carter 1978:64 and Bradby 1979).

It is this paradoxical and contradictory impact of capital which is not often clearly explained by the various theorists.

Rey distinguishes three stages of the articulation of modes of production within a single social formation:

1. an initial link in the sphere of exchange where interaction with capitalism reinforces the precapitalist mode;
2. capitalism "takes root", subordinating the pre-capitalist mode but still making use of it;
3. (not yet reached in the Third World) the total disappearance of the pre-capitalist mode, even in agriculture.

For Rey the articulation of modes of production is not a static process but that 'articulation' specifies the nature of the contradiction.

> "the articulation of two modes of production, one of which establishes its domination over the other

> ...not as a static given, but as a *process* that is to say a combat between the two modes of production, with the confrontations and alliances which such a combat implies: confrontations and alliances essentially between the *classes* which these modes of production define".(Les Alliance 1973:15.

For Rey and for Marx capitalism's logic or imperative is:

> the destruction at every point on the globe of antecedent modes of production and relations of production, in order to substitute for them its own mode of production and its own relations of production. (Rey:10).

Thus capitalism's logic is constant and therefore to account for the wide variety of variation in its relation to other modes of production or other social formations, one must look at the other half of the articulation, that is, pre-capitalist modes of production and their social formations. Rey would take issue with Kay's dictum that: "capital created underdevelopment, not because it exploited the underdeveloped world, but because it did not exploit it enough (Kay, 1975:10). Although, as Foster-Carter points out, whereas feudalism in Europe acted as a "cocoon for embryonic capitalism", other pre-capitalist modes of production are fiercely resistant to it. (1978:58). So it is not that capital did not exploit other modes of production enough but that it could not (Rey) or was in fact not willing to do so, interested instead in the extraction of raw materials on the basis of other modes of production which reduced reproduction costs:

> Capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceeding modes of production, nor above all the relations of exploitation which

> characterize these modes of production. On the contrary, during an entire period it must reinforce these relations of exploitation since it is only this development which permits its own provisioning with goods coming from these modes of production and therefore compelled to sell this labour power to capitalism in order to survive. (Rey:15-16)

It is not clear how pre-capitalist societies are fiercely (excuse the reification , something of which Rey is clearly guilty) resistant or why capitalism cannot eliminate preceeding modes of production.[55]

The critical link with capitalism is at the level of exchange and this serves to *reinforce* the traditional precapitalist mode. For Rey capitalism gets raw materials, but on the basis of another set of relations of production which are in turn reinforced by the increase in exchange. Thus certain *in situ* relations are used, celebrated, maintained and reproduced and emphasized against relations that are peripheral to this exchange relationship. Relations

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[55] There is a serious problem concerning the reification of concepts in this literature, not only because it obscures the fact that only people can have relations (not capital). How do you make clear that men make their own history - not often in the ways they choose? Capital does have a life and logic all its own and although it can't be 'born', it can be (that is being and becoming). How is it possible not to lapse into a kind of volunteerism? What is being said by Rey is about people or groups of people? Are people fiercely resistant to capitalism or is the unintended consequences of a 'penetrated' system and its logic antithetical to the logic, effectivity etc., of the imperatives of capital?

What is the nature of the articulation of modes of production, that is of the whole that can capture the dialectic between modes of production? Are they compatible/antagonistic and in what ways might they exist for some time as an uneasy alliance? Is the specification of the contradiction a problem for theory or praxis? Most theorists talk about a certain heirarchy of dominance between modes of production or between sectors (Frank, Wallerstein, Emannuel) and all agree that the outflow of value follows this hierarchy.

peripheral to capitalist exchange are diminished relatively but are not necessarily diminished absolutely. However, this literature deals with class society or at least an attempt to see divisions, social divisions, reinforced and exacerbated: [56]

> At first however the capitalist mode of production only finds a labour force and agricultural provisions thanks to the action of another ruling class. (Bradby, 1975:147) The second stage is when capitalism becomes dominant and "now other modes exist on the *basis* of capitalism and are modified accordingly" (Bradby 1975:147). This stage is about alliance between classes with mutual interests of exploitation in the two modes, and the development of a transitional mode of production (Jhally, 1979:75). We have treated Rey at length here because he introduces a number of concepts which relate to the development and the process of penetration of capital. [57]. All of Rey's analysis concerns the use of class. He is at great pains to demonstrate that a kind of class, that is, a class characterized by 'relations of exploitation' (peculiar to different modes of production) exists in Guaro society. However, to define class relations or class conflict as when "one particular group controls the circulation of a surplus product in such a way that the circulation of this surplus product ensures the reproduction of relations of dependance between direct producers and this particular group" (Dupre and Rey, 1973) would include most cultures and social formations and therefore is not a useful way of distinguishing societies (Clammer, 1978:14), but it obviously is not much of an explanation for the impact of capitalism on non-class societies, or equalitarian societies as those described by Woodburn (1980).

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[56] "The Guaro may not have classes but the contradiction between elders and juniors and the flow of value is one that seems central to the transformation of social formations and flip of dominance (i.e. when elders become capitalists).

[57] "Other concepts such as the role of violence, relations of exploitations particular to an epoch, and the transitional mode of production will not be discussed at length

Stages of Articulation

It is entirely inappropriate to begin to discuss the impact of commodity production upon pre-capitalist societies without understanding the determinants of both systems. Moreover, the understanding of what is going on in the real lives of the people that are being studied is not possible until some theoretical scheme has been proposed. We have examined in cursory fashion some of the debates and theories of the articulation of economic systems.[58]

In the theory of the impact of merchant capital on precapitalist social formations, it is argued that the initial penetration is at the level of exchange and production is based on the existing mode of production. Secondly, the penetration at the level of exchange allows the flow of value to continue not only through the particular hierarchy which exists in the traditional system, but out and beyond to the capitalist system. But the capitalist system *exchanges* something. Is this an equal exchange? How does exploitation, that is the transfer of value, happen? Is it through an unequal exchange, such as outright cheating (beaverskins piled as high as a rifle), or through an exchange of value which is unequal? Is the capitalist system,or individual capitals, exploited? If we could calculate the difference in labour embedded in each commodity, is it differential and who is adding the most value? The capitalist is exchanging dead labour, surplus labour, labour that has already appropriated by the capitalist system for stored up individual labour reproduced in a pre-capitalist mode of production. This is no more than saying that the capitalist in the form of a merchant enters into exchange with these pre-capitalist societies and operates only at the level of exchange. That is, the exchange is not even a capitalist one. It is not capitaist

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[58] To describe the contact between two social formations as an articulation of modes of production narrows the debate to a form of economism that is incapable of accomadating superstrucural concerns such as kinship, ideology or religion. However, it is clear that the relation between, at least in the society that I am examining, a capitalist economy and this pre-capitalist social formation is based on an economic exchange. This may be true as far as it goes but in order to understand the effects of this relationship, we must go beyond the relationship to try to understand the effects of this relationship on the social formation that we are examining. It is a complex issue, one which is ignored by those who suggest that it is capitalism and that is the end of the analysis. Embedded in the modernization school is the insidious idea that the march of capital is inevitable and the resistance of people to the march of capital is essentially reactionary. This is the serious problem with this school first a belief that the system will march inexorably on and the resistance to capital should not be on the basis of a traditional, conservative ideology.

because it is a free exchange in the sense that the people do not have to exchange in order to survive.

The initial argument about the penetration of capital on pre-capitalist social formations suggests that the contact between two modes of production is at the level of exchange and this I think can be shown quite clearly in the description in the text (see particulaly the chapters on subsistence production and on the relations of production employed in the collection of commodities.) The second and most pressing problem is to show how relations of production are changed, or as is will be suggested, overloaded, and in this sense out of proportion with the function they served in the reproduction of relations of production of the traditional mode of production. This is the tricky part, that is to show how and what relations are being emphasized. I would argue that relations between persons and groups are based primarily on forms of exchange, a process which includes not only exchange of objects and their embedded meanings, but also the exchange of persons and of knowledge. However,

> If such social relationships are to exist they must be generated and sustained by determinate ideological practices, by ritual and ceremony, and by the social practice of reciprocal acknowledgement of relationships.(Hindess and Hirst 1975:64)

One of the functions of the ideological sphere in Orang Asli social life is to reinforce a notion of community. Rey's suggestion that it is necessary to use violence in the final transformation may not be far from the truth. There is a double action: first, the *logic* of capital, and second the *intent* of capitalists. Thus, the logic of capital in fact may support the mode of production in ways that prevent capitalist relations from forming and therefore capitalists must use some form of coercion in order to instill these relations or conversely smash pre-capitalist relations. But still I believe it is necessary to identify what is the necessity of the contact, i.e.labour, raw materials, or land, and what is exploited.

Acculturation Theory

The discusion so far has concentrated on the impact of commodity production from a Marxist perspective. This literature is most useful because because of its concern with theoretical rigour. It attempts to take a broad theoretical perspective on the relation between capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production. It attends to theoretical coherence and an epistemology that seeks to situate and relate its concepts to a whole. However, the perspective is a macro one and somtimes difficult to translate to specific social formations and micro-level studies. It is often very anti-empiricist. The theoretical nature of this debate does sometimes obscure the on-the-ground analysis of specific social formations. Other researchers have approached the problem from a hypothetical deductive perspective, attempting to move from the particular empirical evidence to a general theory of the impact of commodity production on these kinds of societies. The following discussion reviews some of this literature.

In a now classic article on the impact of commodity production on pre-capitalist social formations, Murphy and Steward hypothesize that:

> When people of an unstratified native society barter wild products found in extensive distribution and obtained through individual effort, the structure of the native society will be destroyed, and the final culmination will be a culture type characterized by individual families having delimited rights to marketable resources and linked to the larger nation through trading centres. (Murphy and Steward 1956:335)

Murphy and Steward analyse two pre-industrial societies, Northern Algonkian society as described by Leacock(1956) and Mundurucu society of South America, described by Murphy (1960) Murphy and Steward argue their position on the basis of a number of crucial points. First,both of these societies became involved with the production of commodities for the market and tied by bonds of debt and credit to particular merchants. Secondly,these growing bonds of dependancy upon traders were at the expense of colletive bonds within the respective societies. Thirdly, the commodities produced are natural products and their collection is most efficiently, exploited by one man. Finally, though different, these commodities, (i.e. rubber and furs) require persons exploiting them to live or work at some distance from one another.

A number of researchers have questioned not only the theoretical stance of Murphy and Steward, but also their interpretation of the data on a number of points. Tanner in his analysis of the Misstasini of Northern Quebec, states simply that the "economy does not exibit the tendency towards individualization" (1979:9) that Murphy and Steward hypothesize. He also suggests that Leacock's contention that production for exchange destroyed sharing and dependency between hunters and led to accumulation and individual appropriation "is questionable on both empirical and theoretical grounds" (1979:10). Although others (Hickerson 1967, Leacock 1954, and Van Stone 1963) have characterized

the influence of the fur trade as creating a replacement mode of production with production for exchange dominating over production for use, Tanner suggests that the modification is a way that enables native people to keep control over their means of production. (1979:13) Knight(1965:35) argues that the production of furs is not incompatible with subsistence production. Fur bearers provide substantial quantities of food and other species hunted for food such as deer or moose are available during in the fur production and many other species are hunted and used during times when the people are not engaged in the production of commodities. Others (Rushforth 1976, 1977; Savishinsky 1976; Smith 1976) have added empirical evidence to support the contention that country foods provide significant amounts of food to native society. Fiet (1980:380) argues with a wealth of data that fur production does not provide as much value in terms of food as does trapping and that people spend much more time in subsistence production than they do in the production of commodities. Tanner also suggests that

> ....It is the organization of subsistence production which establishes the framework within which furs must be produced, and not the other way around. (Tanner, 1979:9)

Asch argues strongly that the Dene's involement never necessitated a change in the economic orientation away from a hunting-gathering focus. (Asch 1978:363)

As for the individualization of production, Fiet explains that the Wasanapi did not pursue intensive hunting

individually without their families

> The family... is the social unit with the greatest economic cooperation and the greatest social solidarity. It is the basis of both production activities and consumption activities although it is not the only important socio-economic unit (1978:474).

In terms of ownership over resources this is only partial. Short term access is allowed for hunting and longer term access is based on a connection with the owner. Fiet concludes that

> There has not been a breakdown of effective group cooperation in these areas [trapping areas] nor has change led to the degree of individualized control of the resources predicted with the acculturation model (1982:388)

Murphy and Steward base thier hypothesis on a great deal of Leacock's work and I think it instructive to look more closely at Leacock's contention that production for exchange transforms aboriginal societies. Leacock suggests that the process of 'individualization ' of production and the dependence on traders for supplies were fundamental features of the acculturation process. Leacock's argument is based on the conception developed by Marxist anthropologists that the fundamental contradiction in a mode of production is between the relations and forces of production.(see paricularly Godelier, 1967 and Friedman, 1975) It is this contradiction that 'transforms egalitarian socio-economic structures(Leacock, 1979:15). It is not clear at all how she relates the socio-economic structure to features of the mode of production, but it appears that she is really talking

about the forces of production, that is those technical aspects of production such as the division of labour, resources and tools rather than relations of production that concern ownership and access to the means of production. In short, she poses the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production but only describes the changes in the organization of production and fails to show any other impacts on the relations of production or specify the *nature* of the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production.

The evidence presented by a variety of anthropologists working in this area does clearly indicate a change in the organization of production and to some extent the social structure. Other researchers, however, have indicated that the relations of production remain largely intact (Asch 1979; Tanner 1979; Knight 1965). That is, the production of fur remains as an appendage to the social formation, a volutary engagement in a production enterprise which may in fact require some compromises. For the most part these compromises are seen by some as fundamental, but they do not subject them to any rigourous analysis guided by theoretical coherence. The compromises that may be in some cases *technically* required in the forces of production do not demand fundamental reorientations. Fur production is well suited to continuing subsistence production(Knight 1965). Sharing networks are still retained, maintained, and

reproduced. Social organization of production, who works with whom, and who is allowed access to resources is dependant on traditional models of kinship and reciprocity. Control of access to the means of production is not used for the purpose of accumulation or as a basis for the development of inequalities. Leacock describes the contradiction between the forces of production and relations of production as the 'basic contradiction' and in this way follows Godelier's structuralist interpratation of Marxs' texts. In a debate between Lucien Seve and Godelier (Godelier, 1972), Seve argues that Godelier's structuralist theory does not correspond to what Seve feels is the fundamental contradiction in Marxist theory. For Seve the motor of social transformation is not abstractions in contradiction but contradictions between classes - real people making own history, although not often in the ways they want or expect. This interpretation does allow for Godelier's ideas but the structural contradictions (if such an idea is possible) only create the potential for people to confront the conditions and fight them out. This is not unlike Friedman's critique of cultural ecology in that structural contradiction is a form of 'negative determinism'. It does set limits on the realm of possibility but does not necessarily determine the direction that change will occur. The contradiction between the forces of production and relations of production only set up a context in which *people* resolve issues; it does not determine the

response or in fact any predetermined outcome. Consequently, [5]'the contradiction is not shown to my satisfaction by either Leacock or Murphy and Steward. '[6]

This chapter has reviewed some of the literature on the impact of merchant capital on pre-capitalist social formations. The chapter began with a brief disscussion of the history of the problem. The Frank/Laclau debate was reviewed to show the importance of an analysis of the relations of production. Laclau is important because he showed that in order to understand the penetration of capital in pre-capitalist societies an analysis of the indigenous relations of production is necessary to correctly understand the variation in of impacts of capital. The debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism showed that a full tranistion was not possible until free wage labour became a necessity. This debate emphasized that the increasing separation from the means of production and the final turfing of the peasants off the land were fundamental turning points in the transition to capitalism.

Meillassoux and Rey for thier part hinted at the complex form of dissolution and conservation that occured with the penetration of capital. For these researchers

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[5]'My theoretical sympathies lie with Seve on this issue

[6]'Murphy and Steward do not argue from a Marxist perspective but much of the above applies to them. Their error is in not analysing the significance of the change in the organization of production. They are in fact unable to do this because they argue from an empirisist position, they neither develop social organization as a concept nor do they relate this concept coherently to other features of the social formation. Their argument is, in fact teleological.

capitalism's logic was constant and if change was to be understood then we must look at the relations of production obtaining in the traditional society. Rey introduces a notion of stages of transition at this point but the seacond and third step are only theorized. The final dissolution not yet being reached in the third world. [1] Rey's work is important because he attempts to understand the tensions created by capital's penetration. Although classes do not exist in Semaq Beri society [2] it is an important theoretical point to be made. The exacerbation of tensions or contradictions in the social relations of production is an important point to be made. Finally, the effect of merchant capital on hunter-gatherer society by various researchers is discussed. The acculturationists argue that there was a significant change in the forces of production: in the division of labour, technology, and exploited resources. Other researchers have critisized the acculturationists on a number of points. The change in the forces of production does not seem upon further research to be as significant as Murphy and Stewart suggest. In the following chapter I will argue that in some ways engaging in the production of commodities allows a more stable economy and a way of resisting capitalist relation of production. [3]

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[1] I argue below that as long as the Semaq Beri have continued access to the means of production and are able to engage in tradtional subsistence production the second stage is far off.

[2] Some have argued that they do not exist in Gauro society either (see Godelier 1978).

[3] One of the interesting features of the production of commodities amung the sb compared to say fur trappers in

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[3](cont'd) North America is the fact that commodity collection is conducted generally by larger groups that often include all members of the band. The impact of commodity production on aboriginal people of North America has generally assumed to destroy communal bonds and transform the social organization, in short, to transfer dependency to the trader and through the requirements of the production of fur create small nuclear family enterprises. (Murphy and Stewart, Leacock) The Semaq Beri on the other hand form rather larger groups during their commodity producing times. In fact, it could be argued that these larger production groups are factor increasing the integration of the band.

VI. The Impact of Simple Commodity Production on the Natural Economy of Semaq Beri in Malaysia

Introduction

In the chapters on the kinds of production engaged in by the Semaq Beri, the autonomy of the domestic group was emphasized and the freedom that exists in the organization of production shown. In terms of the organization of production the domestic unit remains the most important desision making unit. It negotiates its relations in terms of production and 'political' affiliation. Production groups are formed on a daily basis and when the task is completed the task group disbands and nothing obligates them to produce together again. (see Woodburn, 1981) In the following section on the mode of production of the Semaq Beri , I will attempt to argue that it is not the forces of production that acts as an integrating force in this society. [1] The problem then, is to locate the forces that do in fact integrate the domestic groups.

An analysis of the social relations of production of the Semaq Beri is the starting point for understanding social change and assessing the impact of various kinds of

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[1] In non-hunter gatherer societies -with the possible exception of slash and burn societies- the economy is organized around continuous production which must have a structure that is able to command labour in order to produce. It is the reproduction of production and its relations of production that is crucial for the maintenence of the social formation. It is also the point at which political authority inserts itself. See Meillasoux (1972 and 1981) for an extended discussion of this.

simple commodity production. This section defines a single mode of production for the Semaq Beri, a group that relies on their natural or traditional economy for their subsistence needs. The attempt is to also show the appropriateness of particular kinds of simple commodity production, such as the collection of rainforest produce for sale, to the natural economy.

The Semaq Beri make production decisions and organize consumption at the level of the domestic unit. Appropriation of surplus labour within the natural economy occurs within the domestic unit and access to territory is guaranteed by residence and/or kinship affilliation in the band. [5]

Two simple commodity production enterprises have been examined and the role of the middleman in production and appropriation of surplus labour have been discussed. In this section the viability of this mode of production in Malaysia is discussed.

Structure of the Mode of Production of Semaq Beri

Hindess and Hirst define a mode of production as follows:

> an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of relations of production. Relations of production define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus labour. (Hindess and Hirst, 1975:25)

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[5] Bands are groups of domestic units connected generally through kin connections (given the bilateral nature of the kinship system this means that almost all members of the group called Semaq Beri are or can be related to each other); however, membership and composition is highly variable with people moving in and out frequently.

The mode of production that is being examined here is generally referred to as the natural or traditional economy.[1]

Nomadic or semi nomadic hunting and gathering is practiced by a relatively small number of Orang Asli today.[2] These people live a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence foraging for food in the rainforest. Generally small groups of 5-7 households band together, but this number is highly

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[1] "There are two types of subsistence production practiced among Orang Asli in Malaysia: hunting and gathering and slash and burn horticulture. There are also Orang Asli groups that engage in neither of these production techniques and are indistinguishable from the Malaysian peasantry at the level of production. The second type of subsistence production is slash and burn horticulture. These groups who make up the bulk of the Orang Asli population are more sedentary, clearing small sections of the rainforest by cutting primary forest and burning off the sections to plant tubers, hill rice, vegetables, tobacco, etc., for their own use. This cleared area is used for a year or so or before the soil is exhausted and new areas must be cleared. The settlements are larger but generally no more than 20 or 30 families. Depending on fertility of land, intensity of cultivation and walking distance to newly cleared fields, a particular group may occupy an area for 5 - 20 years before moving to a new location. These groups are usually associated with particular areas or territory. Social organization is also very fluid and households may choose to live with a variety of different kin/territorial groups.

These two kinds of subsistance activities are in many ways radically different. It should be noted, however, that hunters and gatherers sometimes plant occasional tubers or chili plants in areas frequently visited such as the confluence of streams and slash and burn horticulturalists rely heavily on hunting and fishing for needed protein. Some groups, notably the Semoq Beri, engage in both activities depending on the group. Nevertheless, despite differences in production, these groups exhibit remarkably similar organizations of production. The possibility of defining a mode of production that describes the structure of both these subsistence techniques is explored in another paper (Morris, 1981)

[2] "The Bateq, in the north of the Malaysian peninsula, the Semaq Beri in the central area of the country, and the Temoq to some extent all practice a foraging way of life (see map of linguistic groups for locations of the societies).

variable. The social organization is fluid and households leave the group to join other groups regularly. The domestic group exersises a great deal of autonomy. These societies can all be characterized by a low division of labour between sexes. [1] There is no division of labour by age; producers are either skillful or not yet skillful. There is a low level of specialization since all members have direct access to the means of production and skills required. There is also a low level of development of technology. The domestic unit is capable of producing its own subsistence. Both production decisions and consumption are located within the domestic unit. This unit tends its own gardens and appropriates the product itself. Tools are produced and productively consumed by the household.

These societies are also similar in the way that they distribute and appropriate surplus labour. In small scale societies such as these, appropriation is between the sexes but within the domestic unit. They are extremely egalitarian and leaders have little power and serve no redistributive function. In some cases large work groups may band together for clearing land, but land is cleared for one domestic group and the others who help generally receive some sort of compensation or acknowledgement of their contribution, but their labour does not guarantee access to the harvest which is controlled by the domestic unit. Similarly, temporary work groups in Semaq Beri society may work together

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[1] Within Semaq Beri society division between the sexes is almost non-existent.

collecting honey which requires a certain division of labour. The product is divided fairly evenly at the site of the bee trees with some extra honey or goods going to those that actually do the bulk of the work. In the case of the Semaq Beri this extra compensation is given only if the honey is to be sold, that is if it is to become a commodity. Both of these societies can be characterized as immediate return systems (see Woodburn, 1980; Meillasoux, 1981) ''

Relations between the domestic units are based on kinship which may be considered as an ideology. Community is not presupposd in production but within an ideology of kinship relations. Kinship is a weak relation in these societies; it does not bind together production units as it does in some agricultural societies (see Meillasoux, (1981,1972). Thus, production groups are drawn ad hoc from the immediate composition of the band.

One of the functions of the ideological sphere in Semaq Beri social life is to reinforce a notion of community. As Hindess and Hirst point out:

> The mere existence of geneological relationships can no more ensure the preservation of corresponding social relationships in so-called primitive societies than it can in say modern Britain. If such social relationships are to exist they must be generated and sustained by determinate ideological practices, by ritual and ceremony, and by the social practice of reciprocal acknowledgement of

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''It may in fact not be correct to characterize slash and burn societies as immediate consumption systems since they are engaged in horticulture and must wait for the harvest to ripen. Therefore they must *delay* consumption until they are able to harvest the fruits of their labour. However, they do not save the seeds of the previous harvest; most planting is done by propagation.

relationships.(1975:64)

Reciprocal sharing of food also functions to bind groups together and this is a highly valued characteristic of Semaq Beri society.

The link between domestic groups is a tenuous one and tensions within groups often results in domestic units moving out of one community to another. This centrafugal tendency of domestic units is a distinctive feature of societies that organize production around the household. But domestic groups cannot join up with any group; they must be able to establish kin links with other communities. Since most communities are exogamous (out-marrying) there is generally one other residence option open to the domestic unit, through one of the spouses. In practice, however, and because of the manner in which kin are reckoned (bilaterally), it is possible to link up with any group in the area. In the last resort fictive kin are used extensively. In some groups, notably the Batek, it is apparently possible to join groups without determining kin connection (Endicott, 1981), but in general people tend to reside with kin. Residence in a particular community, by virtue of social relations of kinship or simply by residence, guarantees access to means of production: territory and resources. If Hindess and Hirst are correct in their arguement that the mode of production is structured by the dominance of social relations of production dominant (structure-in-dominance for Althusser), we should expect to

find evidence of the kind or type of mode of production from an empirical analysis of the social relations of production.

The petty commodity mode of production engages two types of production generally subsistence production (or that production which traditionally [10] associated with the social formation that is examined) and that production engaged in to aquire goods from other social formations with different modes of production. This latter type of production, production for exchange, usually produces for sale objects that have no use value, for hunters and gatherers, at least in the quanities collected. [11] The problem is to sort out the relations of production that are dominant in both production types. Before disscussing some of the differences in production for exchange and production for use, some general features of the mode of production will be outlined. These features are as follows:

1. The collective ownership of the means of production.

2. The individual ownership of those products produced with ones own labour. This includes both commodities and subsistence items. Ownership is defined here as the right to determine the distribution of one's own labour. It does not mean the ability to restrict access to the products of your

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[10] This not to suggest that there is any such thing as 'traditional' in the sense that it is time immemorial.

[11] The sale and not the production of commodities usually reserved for subsistence will have different consequences than the group examined here. The sale of commodities reserved for subsistence characterizes peasnt production. This definition would also exclude trade relations between groups engaging in similar types of production. Although this could be seen also as production for exchange, it is excluded in this analysis.

labour. You are required to give and a failure to do so would engender much badmouthing gossip.

3.Mechanisms to promote the distribution of goods which precludes possiblities of accumulation. (see Chapter 4)

4.Generalized reciprocity. The Semaq Beri share the products of their labour before they are required to do so. However they do not share with everyone. The sharing patterns follow work-mate relations and band members. One of my informants when questioned about who one should share with replied "with relatives (both in-laws and 'blood' relatives).

5. Rights of reciprocal access to resources through residence, kinship, marriage ties, ritual relations or visiting.

6. Politically autonomous domestic units. This is a feature of most foraging societies and is generally refered to as band flexibility. (Lee and DeVore, 1968) A dominant features of this mode of production is that in production decisions consumption are organized at the level of the domestic unit. Division of labour is by sex and appropriation occurs across sexual lines within the domestic unit, and access to the means of production is by residence (some groups emphasize this more than others but as a rule access is guaranteed by residence if not kinship). Relations between domestic units are based on an a variety of relations, including an ideology of kinship, work relations, reciprocity, which are not presupposed in the forces of

production. It is necessary for a variety of reasons that domestic units be linked together. However, it is an uneasy alliance at one level and when times are rough these groups tend to fission. In this society the specific contradiction is between the domestic units within the community as a whole. These are the main features of the Semaq Beri mode of production. They are remakably similar to other foraging people. (see Leacock 1979:8) The following section discusses some of the features of commodity production and briefly the problem of development projects.

Commodity Production

The Orang Asli have for centuries been exchanging rainforest products for trade items or more recently for money. Simple commodity production has for sometime been very much a part of the natural economy. It also included in the past the exchange of items such as blowpipe bamboo between Orang Asli groups (I.H.N. Evans, 1920). It is, however, only in recent years that they have engaged in trade with greater intensity. Reports on the Orang Asli in the beginning of the century, especially among those groups in more or less remote areas, have emphasized the limited needs of these people and the ample means of securing those needs. The bulk of the trade items, such as salt, cloth, tobacco and metal for knives, were exchanged for aloe or eagle woods, a variety of rattans and several other products gathered from time to time in the rainforest. In recent

years, though development efforts of the Orang Asli Department, new kinds of commodities have been introduced. These are not naturally occuring in the environment and require certain technical knowledge (which is quite easily learned). Rubber cultivation features prominently in these development projects, but oil palm and livestock raising have also been introduced.

For our purposes, however, production for exchange (commodity production) can be divided into products occuring in the natural ecosystem and those introduced requiring different technological knowledge for production and in some cases requiring a specific organization of labour.

The first type of commodities, which can be called 'natural commodities', occurs in the ecosystem of Orang Asli. In the course of exploiting the rainforest for objects of exchange the people can also sustain themselves in a traditional way. Between hunter-gatherers and slash and burners the organization of production may differ when exploiting the environment for products for exchange. For instance, men in slash-and-burn societies usually go off in small groups collecting rattan or eaglewood while women stay near the community tending gardens. Men take supplies from the gardens and hunt animals while in the bush, while women subsist on garden products when the men are gone. However, all the men do not leave the village at once and large game brought back to the village by the men who stay behind is shared with families whose 'male provider' is absent.

Hunters and gatherers already live in the rainforest and divide their labour into production for exchange and production for use. With limited needs production for use predominates. It can be seen that the relationship between collection of rainforest produce for sale and production for use in these societies is reasonably compatible. We have, however, an economy where the production of use-values predominates. It should be noted here that labour time invested in the collection of rainforest produce is not at the expense of the natural economy. These pre-capitalist societies are capable of maintaining subsistence with three to four hours work a day leaving ample time to engage in other kinds of production or in non-productive activities. In this situation, relations of production for exchange are identical to relations of production occurring in the natural economy. That is, the money from collection of produce accrues to the household where it is consumed or in the form of purchased products used in reciprocal sharing patterns.

The situation is slightly different with those production activities introduced into the economy by well meaning government development projects. Since rubber is the crop introduced most often, some of the factors and implications of rubber production among Orang Asli will be discussed briefly in this section.

Rubber requires a sedentary existence since the trees must be tapped regularly. Production for subsistence becomes

increasingly difficult because of soil depletion and over hunting of game in one area. It also interfers with the amount of time that can be allocated to these subsistence activities and therefore produces a dependence on the market for the purchase of subsistence items which the society is no longer capable of producing itself. The people are also at the mercy of price fluctuations in the market. Rubber production requires full-time attention and reliance on the production of one commodity presents some potential hazards when compared to the variety of harvestable products for exchange in the natural environment. Finally, replacement of rubber trees after 35 years or so is often a difficult and expensive proposition and in many cases impossible without the capital investment of government agencies. Rubber production as it is practiced in Malaysia by small-holders cannot generate enough revenue to reproduce the means of production. However, in a more serious way the dependence on a market often tends to dissolve community ties. [72] Community ties are based on regular acknowledgement of relations, either by engaging in subsistence production or by sharing the products of labour, thus the individual nature of rubber production and its fulltime character prevents the group from producing its own subsistence and

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[72] If, it is true, that the specific contradiction of these types of societies is between the domestic unit and the band or group that production units draw their members from, then, other modes of organization of labour would seriously compromise the ability of the group to hold together. Thus it is not only the kind of subsistence production itself, but, the organization of labour peculiar to that subsistence production.

forces it to rely on production for exchange in order to subsist. Social life which is bound up with ritual and ceremony and intimate social relations is at risk of disintegrating.

The collection of rainforest produce, a renewable resource, on the other hand, appears to offer a viable alternative to the specific form of integration development projects are trying to promote.

Middlemen and Production

Few Orang Asli group market their goods directly, relying instead on middlemen who have access to the market. One of the most important features of the merchants or middlemen's relation to pre-capitalist society is that they operate at the level of exchange only. They make no attempt to reorganize the nature of production although they can sometimes increase the intensity of production. The middlemen represent a node between the market and the direct producers and in this capacity control the exchange of products. The middlemen's relationship to Semaq Beri is two fold. First, he sells commodities such as rice, tobacco, radios etc.; more often than not these goods are sold on credit. Secondly, he buys the rainforest produce from the Semaq Beri to be sold on the market. In this way the middlemen appropriate the surplus labour of these people in a two-fold way. The relation between the Orang Asli and the middlemen is a relatively enduring one because of the debt

relationship. In this way the middlemen forms a kind of monopoly. Since the people are generally in debt to the middlemen, there is an obligation to sell their products to him.

This relationship provides the impetus for the collection of rainforest produce or production of commodities, because the Semaq Beri are generally eager to discharge their credit obligations. However, this impetus for production is limited by the level of needs or desires for consumer goods. It is also determined by the degree to which they depend on commodity production for subsistence. Dependence on commodity production is often determined by the increased restriction to their means of production for subsistence. Resettlement schemes where land for agriculture is exhausted in the area and incapable of supporting agriculture for subsistence needs is one cause of increasing dependence on commodity production. There are many such settlements and members of the community are forced to work for wages or full time in a commodity production like rubber or oil palm.

Conclusions

Development projects are for the most part concerned with the integration of people and communities into the national economy. This process of integration can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but generally the form is the creation of wage labourers or the integration of

independent producers who produce for a market and buy subsistence items and other commodities from the market place. In short, they become part of the general division of labour in capitalist society with social relations between persons mediated by the market. Other forms of community integration become barriers to this form of development.

We saw earlier, in the description of the mode of production of the Semaq Beri, that they were organized as individual domestic units and that social relations of production were embedded in this unit. We also discussed the mechanisms of integration such as ritual and communal sharing based for the most part on an ideology of kinship. We also tried to show that the collection of rainforest produce for sale presented no contradictions within the natural economy. It was suggested that the particular subsistence mode of production, including collection of rainforest produce for sale, presented a viable way of life for the Semaq Beri.

VII. Conclusions

The conclusion of this thesis is that in the case study of the Semaq Beri commodity production, production for exchange, is well articulated with the natural economy, or more precisely, subsistence production. The compatability between what are called production enterprises - in this case production for exchange and production for use - is shown through an anlysis of the relations of production that order each enterprise. The basis of this compaability is that relations of production identified with the subsistence mode of production also order the production of commodities for exchange. The forces of production, including tools, division of labour, territory and resources, employed in the production of subsistence and commodities are identical.

In Chapter 2 the subsistence economy is described. Production for use is structured and determined, to some extent, by the relations of production which include: a determinant form of appropriation of surplus labour, that is, between the sexes within the domesic unit and through the institution of *punun* and *kʼioy* in the society at large; a determinate form of the social distribution of the means of production through residence patterns and ideological relations between persons and groups, which guarentees access to the means of production (territory and resources). This descriptive analysis of subsistence production details the organization of production, resources, technology and relations of production that obtain in that sector.

The third chapter describes commodity production, production for exchange, in terms of the organization of production, commodities produced and the specific technology required to engage in this production. The production of commodities is dependent on the ability of the Semaq Beri to engage in subsistence production. Subsistence production provides for the reproduction of the Semaq Beri, a cost not borne by the merchant. Because they provide their own subsistence, the merchant can extract that much more surplus value from them. Although money recieved from commodity production allows the Semaq Beri to purchase food, usually rice, much more of the money that they recieve is used to purchase luxury items. They do not produce commodities in order to subsist.

The fourth chapter describes the way in which goods are distributed throughout the society. It is argued that an ideology of sharing determines the distribution of objects that have use value. Exchange value that is generated by commodity production does not enter into these distributions. However, when exchange value is converted to a use value such as food stuffs etc., it is subject to the same forms of distribution as objects produced in the subsistence sector.

The fifth chapter reviews the Marxist literature on the impact of merchant capital on precapitalist social formations, as well as disscussing some of the research and theories concerning this issue in North America.

The sixth chapter describes the mode of production of the Semaq Beri concentrating on the relations of production in terms of access to the means of production and the social appropriation of surplus labour. It is argued at the level of forces of production, which includes the social organization of production, resources and tools, that both enterprises are virtually indistinguishable. Since production and relations of production are oriented to production for use, money (or the the result of exchange of commodities), because it has no use value, is not incorporated into traditional exchange, distribution, and consumption patterns. Money cannot enter these appropriation networks until converted to a use value such as rice or other food stuffs. Although it is argued that merchant capital has little impact on the mode of production of the Semaq Beri, it is not without effect. There is a high degree of compatibility between production for exchange and production for use, but, this does not mean they are always harmonious relations. On the contrary, merchant capital tends to bolsters and maintain those specific relations of production that obtain in the subsistence sector at the cost of other relations that are part of the whole social formation (ritual, kinship etc.).

In this sense there is a dual action by merchant capital on pre-capitalist societies. [73] On one hand, the

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[73]The relation of merchant capital or capitalism to peasant social formations has recieved a great deal of attention in the literature. What merchant capital maintains, for peasant society is a hierarchy based on inequalities, exploitative

exchange between merchants and producers put an increased amount of goods into the traditional exchange networks bolstering their social relations by the sheer quantity of exchanges. Mechanisms to prevent accumulation of the product such as sanctions against hording and positive rewards for re-distributing, exist to ensure a particular form of access to the surplus labour of other members of the society. Mechanisms such as punun also prevent accumulation of the product for the purpose of other forms of reproduction (specifically capitalist relations). On the other hand, *certain* relations are bolstered at the expense of other kinds of relations (ritual relations, or interband relations)[74]

Thus the effect of producing for exchange is two-fold. On one hand, it provides material for the maintenance of relations of production; not only do people exchange more, they also engage in production more and produce more. On the other hand, it sets the stage for a different form of production: exchanging with merchants in order to subsist.

It is argued that the social relations that are appropriate to the subsistence sector order and dominate the production of commodities, that is, production for exchange. Products must be exchanged, however, and the actual exchange

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[73](cont'd) relations, real contradictions that are already in a state of some tension.

[74] It is not that these relations cease to exist, they are not as much on the forefront. This has a tendency to distort the social structure and plays on contradictions in Semoq Beri society by reducing the inter-dependence between members of the society.

of the product is determined by market relations. Although the commodities collected have, at least in the quantity collected, no use value, when converted they fall into generalized patterns of reciprocity (punun,kioy). Merchant capital is indiscriminant in the sense that it will operate on the basis of other modes of production which, besides other things, reduces the necessity of capital to engage in the reproduction of labour (Wolpe, 1972; Rey, 1973). The relations of production that obtain in Semaq Beri social formation are such that there exists no structured institutionalized political order characterized by relations of inequality. [75]

The reproduction of the relations of production is crucial for the maintenance of the structure of the social formation of the Semaq Beri. It is argued that the reproduction of the relations of production is dependent on the subsistence enterprises and that the disruption of subsistence production is the place to begin an analysis of social change. The reproduction of relations of production depends on subsistence production and in the 'last instance' the destruction of subsistence production is the death nell of the system.

The logic of capitalism and capitalist penetration is to make the market the mediator of exchange and distribution, to control not only the exchange of goods but

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[75]It is the political order that arises to mediate inequalities and is seen as conditioning the transformation of various modes of production.

the production of them also, and to finally make human labour a commodity mediated by the market. The road to this domination by capitalism is resisted by the structure of many pre-capitalist social formations, that is, the structure of relations existing between persons in traditional society where capitalism and the market are not dominant. ''

We have argued that the impact of merchant capital was negligable when viewed from a mode of production perspective. Production that was geared towards exchange value was acomplished on the basis of relations of production that are associated with traditional subsistence production. However, commodity production is not without its effects. It is true that the money, or, more properly speaking, exchange value, has allowed the people to purchase capitalist commodities such as ghetto blasters, a TV, that did not ever work, foam mattresses and other notable commodities. These for the most part are luxury items which have possibly ideological effects but are not harbingers of change that some authors may think they are. It is not the commodities themselves that are disruptive but the manner in

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'' Merchant capital or the action of merchant capital (excuse the reification) based as it is on a 'traditional' mode of production is unable to transform that mode of production. It is this mode of production that must be destroyed in order to integrate people into capitalist relations. This is often done in a violent way (see Rey:1975). For the Semoq Beri attacks on subsistence production have been mounted by government agencies, first by resettlement and then forcing new subsistence techniques (rice, agriculture, animal husbandry) on them, while actively discouraging foraging activity in the rainforest.

which they are treated by the society. Their meaning is to be found in terms of the human relations that characterize their production, relations of exchange, distribution, or consumption. Thus the term commodity is a kind of misnomer because it carries a great deal of ideological baggage, principally a notion of commensurability which characterizes market relations. Commodities are treated differently in Semaq Beri society because they become incorporated into exchange, distribution, and consumption patterns that have nothing to do with commensurability or equality. However, these objects are incorporated and move through the system in, depending on the intensity of production, a traditional way. By the sheer number of exchanges or distributions relations between people are celebrated, maintained, and/or reproduced at an ever increasing rate. [7]

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[7] It is for this reason that Rey takes great pains to show, if not a class relation between elders and juniors, at least a contradiction that is exploited by the imperative of capital. Hence exchange acts on one hand to consolidate relations between elder and juniors at the same time as it pushes this contradiction. It is not any wonder that those juniors would opt for wage labour, which on the face of it seem less oppressive. It is this contradiction between elders and juniors or between lords and serfs during feudal times which were unwittingly exploited by capital. It is precisely this contradiction that is missing in hunter and gatherer society. For example, in the literature concerning the development of proprietary relations to land that developed during contact with colonial powers and the production of furs for exchange, several authours have argued that it was the impact of the fur trade that 'forced' native people to begin to exclude access to land and to develop, with the help of the colonial authority, trapping areas. What could be the relations that are being reproduced in order to allow individual groups to control access to a resource hitherto unrestricted?

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APPENDIX A

Merchant Capital and Simple Commodity Production

The penetration of capital into pre-capitalist social formations is generally achieved by merchant capital and its agents.

Marx provides the clearest statment on the nature of the penetration of merchant capital on pre-capitalist societies. He begins his chapter on the general formula for capital with the " simplest form of the circulation of commodities", which is the "starting point of capital"(vol.1:145). This form of commodity circulation is the transformation of commodities into money and of money back into commodities. 'Selling in order to buy' is described as the circuit C-M-C (vol.:146). This form of the circulation of capital is the general form of the circulation of commodities.The circuit of **merchants capital** is M-C-M where money becomes the commodity (buying in order to sell dearer). Whereas C-M-C ends with a use-value, something to be consumed, M-C-M ends with an exchange-value which forms the basis for a continual exchange and the reproduction of exchange-values. The merchant makes his money by inserting himself into the circulation of commodities. He exchanges his money for a commodity and exchanges that commodity for a larger sum of money where the original money advanced M'=M+*M, that is, the original money advanced (M') becomes the original money including reproduction costs plus *M which is extra money which Marx calls surplus value. For Marx buying in order to sell is a form peculiar to one kind of capital only, *merchant's capital*(Vol.1:153).

What then is the impact of this kind of exchange, for Marx, on other modes of production and in what direction will the social formation take in its accommodation to exchange of this kind? In the third volume of Capital Marx discusses the effect of merchant capital on pre-capitalist modes of production. He is at pains to show that merchant capital is dependent on the mode of production that produces the goods for exchange.

> "The extent to which products enter and go through the merchants hands depends on the mode of production, and reaches its maximum in the ultimate development of capitalist production, where the product is produced solely as a commodity, and not as a direct means of subsistence. On the other hand on the basis of every mode of production, trade facilitates the production of surplus-product destined for exchange, in order to increase the enjoyments, or the wealth of the producers (here meant are the owners of the products). Hence commerce imparts to the production a character

directed more and more towards exchange-value". (Marx, vol.3:328)

Further, merchant capital, because it is dependent on one mode of production but stands at the node between two modes of production, can only mediate between the two systems and only at the level of exchange.

> "Yet its development [merchant capital], as we shall presently see, is incapable by itself of promoting and explaining the transition from one mode of production to another" (Marx, vol.3:327)

Although Marx makes it clear that production is based on a traditional mode of production he believed that the orientation of the economy to the production of exchange values would have a dissolving influence on the traditional modes of production oriented to the production of use values.

> "The development of commerce and merchant capital gives rise everywhere to the tendancy towards production of exchange-values, increases it's volume multiplies it , makes it cosmopolitan and develops money into world economy. Commerce, therefore has more or less dissolving influence everywher e on the producing organization, which it finds at hand and whose different forms are mainly carried on with a view to use-value. To what extent it brings about a dissolution of the old mode of production depends on it's solidity and internal structure. And whether this process of dissolution will lead, in other words, what new mode of production will replace the old **does not depend on commerce, but on the character of the old mode of production.** (Marx, vol. 3.:332)

Finally he believed that merchant capital formed a bulwark to the development of the productive forces.

> The independant development of merchants capital, therefore, stands in inverse proportion to the general economic development of the society. (Marx, vol. 3.:328)