A sense of space: land struggles of the Semai of peninsular Malaysia
Chai, M.

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A SENSE OF SPACE
Land Struggles of the Semai of Peninsular Malaysia

Michael Chai
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ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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Michael Chai

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promotores

Prof. dr P. Kloos
Prof. dr J. C. Breman

Faculteit der Maatschappij-
en Gedragswetenschappen
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Glossary of Sengoi Terms

a-bor       to be careful
cha' halior to eat alone
cha' samak  to eat together
cip a-bor   be careful as you walk (a greeting)
dangga    an aged python turned dragon
deuk       house/home
Gob         Malay
gu         a demographic unit comprising all the Semai born and raised in a given major watershed. Semai say that the people in one such watershed have the same great-great-great...grandparent, a metaphor indicating that they are akin to each other
gunik      good spirit
halaa'      the ability to communicate with the 'spirits' in dreams and songs; mai halaa' - one who has that ability
hiit        to grow or cultivate
inseep      to forget
jah         having lost one's halaa' powers
jenang      ancestor, also used in reference to the elder of ancestral lands
kaloog      a "spirit" which maintains life
kerjak kampok "kampok work": referring to the range of productive activities the Semai engage around their customary lands
kampok      fruit orchard
ki'muut    ghost
kutmoid     the "spirit" connected to death and burial sites
lengriik    country or territory of belonging
lengriik pasak "original country"
lineit      the collections of Semai beliefs and religious practices
mai         1. They-more-than-two.
            2. People who have certain characteristics, for example Mai Biung or Mai Biyag, "pale people" (Europeans) or mai darat (hinterland people).
            3. Other people, hence
            4. Outgroupers: people toward whom one has few obligations, if any, and in whose affairs one has little or no interest or, conversely,
            5. distinguishing ingroupers, mai pasak (they of the original territory) in contrast to mai numpuk (they resident in another's original territory).
mairaknak elder of the lengriik-community
mpo         dream; pipu'ui - casual or usual dreams not to be taken seriously); menakei' - valid dreams of communication with the spirits and learning/remembering of songs in the dreams
muit ugamma to enter into religion
ngkahu/jenong deity
nya'n'i'    "spirit"
palahi'      an action which is taboo at all times and the effects of such an action
persusah    derived from the Malay causative prefix per- and the word susah (difficulty) thus meaning "to make difficult or cause distress or trouble"
pitak the sub-group of the lengriik-community or band
punak a specific taboo
raknak elder
ruai a "spirit" place located just behind the forehead. It is a miniature replica of the body it inhabits, the sense of personal identity in dreams which are the experiences of one's wandering ruai. It is a bird for only a bird can fly in dreams to far away people and places. It is a timid child and can be lost when frightened. It is an animal...
sakao' inheritance
selai (nyeng) literally "garden" or "farm" used previously in reference to swidden plots but now to household garden plots
Senoi Praaq "Fighting Senoi", a special Orang Asli military unit set up by the British Special Air Service (S.A.S.) to assist the British forces in their war against the Communists in the deep jungle. Soon after the Emergency, the Senoi Praak was incorporated into the Police Field Force whose duties are still confined to rural-jungle areas.
Sengoi persons/people coming/originating from; this is the term by which the Semai refer to themselves in their own language
serlo' to put in the right place
serenglok the right/proper location to be
seringih to agree to go somewhere
setin assistant to the Mairaknak/headman
Shewang a sing/dance/trance session
terlaid performing an action that brings about a natural disaster
tew river
tmpaat a "place", also used to refer to the Semai settlement site
wal fireplace or kitchen

Glossary of Malay Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation/Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>adat</td>
<td>custom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asal</td>
<td>from the Arabic meaning &quot;original&quot;, a term first used by the communists to refer to the Orang Asli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bumiputera</td>
<td>prince or son of the soil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daerah</td>
<td>Administrative District</td>
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<tr>
<td>dusun</td>
<td>an orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halal</td>
<td>from the Arabic, meaning that which is permitted by Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haram</td>
<td>from the Arabic, meaning forbidden by Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hutan</td>
<td>forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampung</td>
<td>Administrative Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kati</td>
<td>local weight measurement equivalent to about 0.5 kilogramme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kebun getah</td>
<td>rubber smallholding</td>
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<tr>
<td>kenduri</td>
<td>feast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masalah tanah</td>
<td>land problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mukim</td>
<td>administrative sub-district</td>
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<tr>
<td>orang bandar</td>
<td>town/city folks</td>
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</table>
**penghulu** the official head of a *mukim*, but also used in reference to the headman of a Malay or Orang Asli village

**pindah-randah** constantly shifting or moving about

**Pos** settlement post

**Sakai** originally a Malay legal term denoting a category of slaves but used as a derogatory term to describe some groups of the Orang Asli such as the Semai

**Tanah pusaka** hereditary/inherited land

**ummah** the universal Islamic community

**Abbreviations**

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<td>BMA</td>
<td>British Military Administration</td>
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<td>COAC</td>
<td>Centre for Orang Asli Concerns, a non-governmental organization assisting Orang Asli groups in their land-rights campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIC</td>
<td>(British) East India Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exco</td>
<td>Executive Committee (state legislative assembly)</td>
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<td>FELDA</td>
<td>Federal Land Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>FELCRA</td>
<td>Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHEOA or JOA</td>
<td>Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli (The Department of Orang Asli Affairs), commonly referred to as JOA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEMAS</td>
<td>Kemajuan Masyarakat (Community Development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kg.</td>
<td>Kampung (the Village of...)</td>
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<td>MCP</td>
<td>Malayan Communist Party</td>
</tr>
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<td>MPAJA</td>
<td>Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army</td>
</tr>
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<td>NEP</td>
<td>New Economic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POASM</td>
<td>Persatuan Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (The Orang Asli Association of Peninsular Malaysia), a national organization of Orang Asli peoples established in 1984 and currently recognized by the state as representative of the Orang Asli peoples.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISDA</td>
<td>Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority</td>
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<td>SEMANGAT 46</td>
<td>the breakaway faction of UMNO now a political party in party in opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
<td>Sungai or River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOL</td>
<td>Temporary Occupation Licence</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organization (the dominant Malay political party in the Barisan Nasional - National Front - coalition ruling-government)</td>
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Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of the support, energy, commitment and criticism of many friends and colleagues in the intellectual and political community.

My first thanks go to the many women and men of the Semai localities I did my field work in, whose names I cannot mention. I owe them a personal and professional debt of gratitude. And an apology, if I have misrepresented them and their struggles in the writing up of my research.

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the Netherlands Centre for Indigenous peoples, Colin Nicholas of the Centre for Orang Asli Concerns. And I want to remember Ken Saro-Wiwa and the struggle he died for.

"Fearful odds? Hardly. The men who ordain and supervise this show of shame, this tragic charade, are frightened by the word, the power of ideas, the power of the pen; by the demands of social justice and the rights of man [and women]. Nor do they have a sense of history. They are so scared of the power of the word, that they do not read. And that is their funeral." (Ken Saro-Wiwa)

I wish to thank Janet for putting aside her own work to help me edit the manuscript, prepare the maps and tables and while doing this provide me with many useful comments on how to make my writing clearer. I am also deeply appreciative of her encouragement to complete this thesis.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Basic Issue, Central Questions and Main Objectives of this Research

In April of 1995, a representative from an Orang Asli (original or aboriginal people) village invited the State Assemblyman of their constituency to visit their village and campaign for voter support in the up-coming general elections in Malaysia. At the same time, the village representative also invited some journalists of a Malaysian daily newspaper to report on their meeting with the State Assemblyman. The journalists were invited to report another happening which the Orang Asli villagers had planned for this occasion. In the previous eleven months this Orang Asli group had laboured to prepare a memorandum regarding their *masalah tanah* (Malay for "land problem") they were experiencing. The memorandum, which outlined the history of this Orang Asli group's relations to their traditional land, was also a request to the state and federal governments to gazette the specified territory as an Orang Asli Reserve Land. The villagers had specifically planned to present this memorandum to the government on the eve of the general elections in the hope that it would help them put forward their land issues effectively. To this end they organized this meeting with the incumbent state representative who himself was running as a candidate for re-elections. In the newspaper, the journalists explained the event:

It was an opportunity for the village to impress upon the candidate the urgency and magnitude of their plight. "The land title, which will be held collectively and which cannot be sold by any one of us, will assure our livelihood and the continuance of our culture," said Tijah as spokesperson of the village. "We have a subsistence economy. We trap and hunt for small animals, fish, and tend to our *kebun getah* (rubber smallholding). To get more income, we collect petai, durian, rattan, bamboo and firewood to sell in town," she said in explaining how her people's livelihood is dependent on the forest eco-system. The land referred to in the memorandum is their *tanah pusaka* (traditional land). "Every child in this village, when they come of age, is taken by the village elders through the jungle and shown the boundaries of our village with adjacent orang asli villages. We regard the land as ours. Our ancestors named the rivers and the hills. When the *orang putih* (white people) came to map the area, our forefathers told them the *asli* (original) names for the places which survive until today," Tijah said emphatically. The villagers are realistic enough to recognise that their hold over their traditional lands is tenous. They have been helpless against encroachment of their land by loggers, TOL (temporary occupation licence) farmers, and large development projects like FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) and FELCRA (Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority) schemes. "We are not against development. We want development but all the projects that have gone up around our *kampung* (village) have not involved us. Even if we find work in the oil palm plantations or factories, it is only as coolies. Who has the development been for?" Tijah asked rhetorically. The village only has TOL status on the land that their houses and
rubber smallholdings occupy. They have been waiting since 1969 for their land to be gazetted as Orang Asli Reserve Land, which they will hold as trust as a community. This recognition of their land rights is the singular request they are making to the candidate. It gave them a glimmer of hope when Veerasingam [the state assembly member] put his name in support of the memorandum. He said: "I cannot promise to give 20 acres of land to the people, but I will promise to berjuang (campaign) for them." (Sunday Star, April 23 1995, p. 15)

Since the 1970s, many different groups of indigenous peoples across Asia have become caught up in what is usually termed the "land rights" struggle (Bose, 1995). The above-mentioned example of an Orang Asli village in Malaysia is but one case in point. Land rights have become a unifying theme for indigenous groups across Asia and their movements have rapidly gathered momentum in the 1980s - indicative by, inter alia, their linking up with similar movements earlier established in other continents such as Australia, and more recently with "first nations" networks in Europe and North America. The primary objective of these varied land rights movements is the actual legal ownership and title of all lands and reserves on which these indigenous groups live coupled with the acquisition of lands still held by the state. More specifically these indigenous movements seek for a reinstatement of their traditional political, economic and cultural rights over their ancestral/hereditary land and resources therein (AIPP, 1993). According to their leaders their land rights struggle is not merely a striving for legal ownership over a specific piece of land nor is it seeking for rights of access alone. These groups seek for their rights in land to be recognised and enforced by the legitimized authorities as claims based on the former's special identity as indigenous peoples, or "first peoples" of the land (Ibid.).

One such land rights movement is that of the Orang Asli in West Malaysia. "Orang Asli" literally means "original" or "aboriginal people" and is the formal referent for these groups of indigenous peoples ethnologists have commonly categorized as belonging to 3 distinct ethnic groups and consisting 19 different sub-ethnic or sub-tribal groups (Map...). Together they number about 85 000 or 0.7% of the national population of Malaysia. The Orang Asli movement first emerged in organizational form in the early 1980s. A Orang Asli youth conference was organized in 1980 followed up by a headmen's conference a year and a half later. In the latter, a joint memorandum was issued to the government outlining the grievances
and concerns of the Orang Asli population (Appendix I). In 1984 a national Orang Asli organization was set up and since then its leaders have maintained negotiations with the state and federal governments on behalf of the Orang Asli population. Meanwhile Orang Asli groups at the village and regional level have also staged campaigns of sorts to highlight their predicament. Apart from a few incidents of militant action, on the whole the local Orang Asli groups resort to a non-violent means of petition-campaigns, lobbying, negotiation, litigation, direct-actions of sorts and "passive" resistance to achieve their goals.

In recent years there have been significant efforts by leaders of the Orang Asli movement in establishing alliances with inter-state indigenous networks, examples of which are the Southeast Asian Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and the Peoples' Plan for the 21st Century, etc. The global dimension to their struggles is also evident in their communication, financial and solidarity links with trans-national human-rights, tribal, developmental, environmental movements and other NGOs and inter-state agencies. At the local level Orang Asli groups have also forged organizational links with cultural workers and social activists of different NGOs, religion-based movements, and, more recently, social researchers. For instance, the Orang Asli Studies Group at the National University of Malaysia is actively working with POASM leaders in joint campaigns directed at the state authorities. There is also an Orang Asli senator, in the upper house of Parliament, who has recently involved himself with POASM activities as well. Thus, while the Orang Asli movement seems to have emerged from inter-village initiatives they demonstrate at the same time regional, national and global links.

In expressing their masalah tanah, as their predicament is commonly referred to, the social idioms employed by the Orang Asli hark back to a history of struggles, a "first peoples" consciousness and a characteristically ecological culture underpinning their life-style, community organization and economy. This is explicitly demonstrated in the example of the Orang Asli group mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. In expressing their claims a distinct asli (original) history, a set of traditions, and ancestral heritage are called upon to establish their distinct identity as Orang Asli. And it is this special identity which underscores their relationship with the land and the basis of the rights in land they are striving for. Therefore, although the land rights or masalah tanah is the primary issue around which the contemporary
struggles of the Orang Asli is organized the question of a social identity is also an integral part of these politics.

While the land rights struggle has been an on going and an apparently everyday-issue for the Orang Asli for many years now, there is a notable lack of attention to this masalah tanah in Orang Asli studies. Most Orang Asli studies do acknowledge that the land problem is a major issue for these people. Most of these studies are also concerned with the changing social relations of the Orang Asli. What is lacking in these studies, however, is an indepth analysis on the changing social relations of the Orang Asli and the linkages with the broader social processes such as that of their land rights struggle. Anthropological scholarship, by far the major contributor of knowledge on Orang Asli social relations, while concerned with the articulation and the transformation of identities in the field, fail to contextualize the processes or relate them to the land problem (Dentan, 1978; Carey, 1976; Hood, 1975; Robarchek, Clayton, 1977; Robarchek, Carole, 1980; Jimin, 1983; Baharon, 1972, 1982; Liow, 1982; Roseman, 1982; Benjamin, 1980, 1985; Ave' 1985). Other studies which do contextualize the social transformations in wider historical and social processes limit themselves to interpretations of Orang Asli social change in terms of Malay history and the political economy of the state (Tan, 1976; Means, 1977, 1984, 1985; Rambo, 1982; Hood, 1990; Jackson & Rudner, 1979; Endicott, 1979, 1983; McLellan, 1983; Walker, 1983; Nicholas et. al., 1989; Gomes, 1986; Rachagan, 1990; Thalalla, 1984; Nicholas, 1985). Moreover, what cursory references made to the "response...[and] protest" of the Orang Asli (Nicholas, 1990:81), or their "political awakening" (Means, 1985:649) are framed within the context of the state-dominated political economy. The indigenous "resistance of direct actions" is thus interpreted as the cost of "social modernisation", a reaction to the political economy of development, and its attendant theme - the expansion and consolidation of state power - all of which have resulted in their low social status, appalling poverty and powerlessness (Ibid.).

While these commentaries are enlightening to certain socio-economic changes of the Orang Asli situation they do not address adequately the significant social-cultural relations that transcend the state, cut across the economy and differentiate the indigenous themselves, as indicated in their current land rights movement. More importantly, an analysis of social changes need to consider both the forces of change "from above", as it were, as well as the sources and
direction of change posed by "counter-movements". Otherwise, to borrow a criticism from another field, it may be said of these studies that they represent the Orang Asli merely as "victims" in a "social-darwinist climate" but nothing of their own agency in the process of social change (Breman, 1985:34-5).

The central issue in my research is the contemporary land rights struggles of indigenous peoples, the Orang Asli in particular. I wish to argue that these struggles are initiatives originating from and generated by circumstances within as well as beyond specific and concrete indigenous localities. The complex interplay of cultural-political dynamics surrounding the land rights struggle are significantly constituting and changing indigenous relations and social identity. Local Orang Asli groups are reclaiming their history and tradition as current political strategies in their everyday struggle over the rights to land, resources and meanings. Their land rights movement has also generated a call for special citizenship privileges within the nation-state (Memorandum, 1982). In other words, the indigenous land rights movement is about a cultural-political struggle that is shaping and is being shaped by indigenous social relations.

In order to pursue this issue of the indigenous' land rights a number of specific questions need to be addressed:

1. What rights in land have the Orang Asli historically enjoyed? How and why did these change over time and what implications did these changes have for the Orang Asli?
2. How should we describe contemporary Orang Asli relations and what role does land rights struggle play in constituting and transforming those relations?
3. How are the contemporary transformations of Orang Asli social identity and relations linked to such agencies as the state, the Orang Asli movement, other indigenous movements in the region, trans-national organizational networks and non-governmental organizations involved in indigenous peoples' land rights issues etc.?
4. What does the contemporary land rights struggle mean for the more extensive cultural-political struggles of the Orang Asli?

These questions are addressed in the context of the Orang Asli of West Malaysia. They are questions that have not been asked before nor adequately answered with regard to the Orang Asli. The primary objective of this research, therefore, is to write up an adequate story of the Orang Asli land rights struggle. But how we tell the story of the Orang Asli land rights struggle
is an integral component of the story itself. In other words, how we conceptualize and represent the changing social relations of the Orang Asli vis-a-vis the land rights struggle need to be scrutinized as much as the "raw data" of their situation. Moreover, the Orang Asli are not the only indigenous people involved in these types of struggle concerning land. Thus, while this research concentrates on the experiences of the Orang Asli there is a wider ambition. The more far-reaching aim of this study is to contribute to developing a methodology to study the processes of contemporary political struggles of indigenous peoples.

Methods and Data Base of the Research

The questions raised in the foregoing section require a study of the specific history, sociology and cultural experiences of the Orang Asli in the context of changing social relations, external as well as internal. This implies two things. First, in order to answer the questions an interdisciplinary approach in research methodology is necessary. Second, the research has to be grounded in a concrete and specific empirical base. In other words, what is required is an adequate database of information pertaining to a specific locality with which to address the questions posed in this research.

The first task before fieldwork, was to collect information regarding the research questions from extant documentation regarding specific Orang Asli units. This was a difficult task. In terms of official historical information, there is almost no available data on land occupation and land-use regarding specific Orang Asli population-units until the 1960s. As the Malaysian state began to re-settle and re-organize Orang Asli groups into village-administrative units in the 1960s, some such data were then collected for the first time. The currently available data collected since the 1960s provide information about the land claims, land occupation and land-use of specific Orang Asli villages but only in terms of the state's intended plans and programmes for those Orang Asli villages rather than data on the actual practices.

Most ethnographies produced on the Orang Asli since early this century do acknowledge, no matter how briefly, the land problems of these people. With rare exceptions, however, their concern is not with Orang Asli land rights much less the question of land rights and the wider social relations of a specific group of Orang Asli. They are preoccupied variously
with kinship and ritual practices structures of social organization, land tenure and economic systems of different Orang Asli groups. There is much information on the changing relations between the state and the Orang Asli and the changing economies of Orang Asli units as a result of expansionist capitalist and market forces. Thus, in terms of research methods, there was a need for much gleaning, probing and sifting through the much official, historical and ethnographic documentation currently available on the Orang Asli. Through this process, some information was gathered which proved useful in addressing some of the questions posed in this research. Basically, the information gathered were on the changing norms and structures governing Orang Asli relations to land rather than the actual dynamics of the changes.

A similar process of sifting through a vast body of documentation was also necessary to gather preliminary information regarding the question of the linkages between the Orang Asli movement and trans-national, inter-state or extra-village agencies. This body of literature were mainly human-rights documentation, reports and minutes of meetings of indigenous networks and not least of which were e-mail records of communication between Orang Asli networks and other agencies abroad. Again, the information gathered in this area were of limited usefulness for this research in that they focused more on the highlights and outcomes of communication, financial, ideological and solidarity linkages rather than on the actual dynamics of the relations between different specific agencies.

Given that most of the information I require could not be found in the extant ethnographies and village accounts on the Orang Asli, I had to bring my research questions to the field in order to produce an adequate database for analysis. There were problems in the field as well. The matter of conducting fieldwork in Malaysia especially concerning political movements is a sensitive issue and therefore has to be treated with care. In the case of fieldwork among the Orang Asli there are even more obstacles. The Orang Asli population inhabit settlement areas which were restricted zones until 1990 to all but specified state agencies such as the JHEOA (the Department of Orang Asli Affairs), the State Islamic Religious Department and the security forces. Although the police curfew is now lifted, specific legislation and other measures restricting the interactions between Orang Asli and "outsiders" are still in force. State surveillance and control over Orang Asli areas were stepped up in recent years given the increased activities of Orang Asli groups following the "International Year of Indigenous
Peoples" and the general elections which were scheduled for 1994 (the elections were subsequently postponed to 1995). In 1993, for instance, Orang Asli representatives and indigenous leaders from the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak entered, for the first time, into a joint campaign to make their claims to the Malaysian government. This and other activities linking the Orang Asli with trans-national activist networks brought severe criticism from the Malaysian government. The latter accused western nationals and organizations of being "neo-imperialistic" and "eco-imperialistic" agitators influencing the Malaysian indigenous' land struggles. This charge had the effect, among other things, of making Orang Asli informants and other related activists cautious in speaking of their relations with extra-village non-governmental agencies.

Given these state-impositions, but also because of their own wariness of "newcomer-outsiders" to their villages, the Orang Asli themselves posed some obstacles of their own in the process of my fieldwork. When I finally secured the permission of one village in which to stay and conduct my fieldwork, certain conditions were laid down as to how I should go about my business. Among other things, I was not to bring with me any writing or recording equipment during my interactions with the villagers. Wah Kawat, the "gatekeeper" who facilitated my entry into the village was bluntly clear from the outset that I should not behave towards the villagers as if the latter were "laboratory specimens" for my research. The rule forbidding me the use of recording equipment was waived after about three months from my first arrival to the village. All the villagers were aware that I was pursuing my research but I was requested not to "act like a researcher". As a mai pesuek (visitor-inhabitant) I was expected to cultivate cordial ties with the villagers, participate in certain village affairs and show an interest in the concerns of my "adopted" family. Thus my methods of data collection at least in those first few months in the village can be described as participatory-observation and informal conversations during the course of daily/seasonal activities of my informants. In all, my stay in the village was about seven months.

Prior to my stay in this village I had conducted a survey of the 61 Orang Asli villages in the District of Batang Padang (Map...). The survey was intended as part of sampling procedures for community and informant selection. It was necessary to first define all the relevant and operational units of the Orang Asli population vis-a-vis the research questions and then to select
one ethnographic community for participant observation and data-collection. The main reason for choosing this district was that the first "public" activities of the Orang Asli movement - the Orang Asli Youth Conference of 1980 and the Orang Asli Headmen's Conference of 1982 - were organized primarily by Semai villagers from this district.

In November 1993, I began visiting various Orang Asli villages in different geographical parts of Batang Padang. I introduced myself to the village headman in some villages while in others I was introduced by local researchers, Christian workers, NGO members and a Special Branch Police Officer, all of whom were working in some capacity with Orang Asli in those villages. Preliminary information about the villages was gathered using the following three criteria:

1. the extent of the linkages with POASM or any other NGOs: did village representatives attend any meetings, participate in any POASM/NGO-related campaigns/activities, and if so how often and who represented the community?;
2. the status of the community: are there any discrepancies or conflicts between the administrative principles/boundaries of the formal village community and their own traditional boundaries/principles of community; if so what is the nature of the discrepancy/conflict?; and
3. the food supply system: do they procure their food by way of the traditional subsistence type, the non-traditional market-dependant-, or mixed-type system?

These criteria were chosen following the working hypotheses of this research:

1. that socio-cultural and historical processes specific to Orang Asli identity and social relations are at play in their political movement and struggles; and
2. that tradition was reclaimed and employed as current strategies.

Thus, while the first criterion indicates the political participation in the movement, the second and third criteria indicate two basic "traditional" features of Orang Asli community life. At the same time, the use of these three criteria will indicate the conflict-areas allowing for more insights into the processes of socio-economic, cultural and political changes. In this preliminary survey, I also wished to know the general terms the Orang Asli villagers use to define and describe changes they were experiencing and to identify Orang Asli communities on the basis of these definitions as to the range and extent of changes. And to identify the Orang Asli
perceptions on community boundaries in lieu of the formal boundaries such as *Daerah* (District), *Mukim* (Sub-District), *kampung* (village), *pos* (post) etc. - these features themselves representing indicators of change. Finally, this survey could bring insights not anticipated in the original research design.

By the end of December 1993 I had visited a total of twenty-seven villages. As for those villages not visited (there are sixty-one villages in all in this District) due to constraints of resources in terms of time, funds, transport or assisting personnel, various NGO workers, Christian missionaries, researchers, security personnel and JHEOA Field Officers who are familiar with the Orang Asli villages were consulted to provide information about the latter. In this way preliminary information of all the sixty-one villages in the District was gathered vis-a-vis their linkages with POASM/NGOs, the community-status and their food supply system.

Despite all my methodologically informed selection process to find an ethnographic community I had to settle for the one village that was willing to accept my presence in their midst. From this village base, however, I had free access to two other villages in the vicinity, one situated just beside the village I stayed in and the other about thirty minutes walk away. I also had to abide by certain rules of interaction, which in a sense dictated the methods I used in data collection with the villages. As mentioned earlier, the method can be described as informal conversations in the course of some joint activity. Working through the many conversations I would then seek out specific individuals and groups to pursue further interactions with them to make up for the in-depth interviews which I had originally planned but could not carry out. These "interviews" include the ones I had with the headmen of the villages, village committees members, the core group members of the women's network, representatives of the Catholic, Methodist and Baha'i religious networks as well as some villagers who have "left the faith", the village lay-leader of the Catholic group, the ex-lay leaders of all three religious groups, the *tok halaa* (one who communicates with the world of the "spirits"); the *raknak* (elders) of two descent groups; two men who had served in the *Senoi Praaq* (fighting Senoi) and the oldest husband-wife couple in the village. Apart from seeking out these individuals for the unstructured conversation-type interviews, I also repeatedly visited seven more cooperative households to talk about their household incomes. These included the household I was a part of.
As for the various extra-village networks I conducted interviews with one Special Branch Officer who had previously overseen security arrangements in Orang Asli villages, a Special Branch officer who is currently assigned Orang Asli surveillance duties, two representatives from POASM, a researcher actively involved with POASM campaigns, two full-time activists of the NGO that works on Orang Asli concerns, three church workers, a JHEOA field assistant and a retired JHEOA officer, and five village leaders from other Orang Asli villagers in the district who are active in the movement, a businessman who had previously carried out logging operations in Orang Asli areas and two middle-men traders in Orang Asli products. The method of interviewing these contributors was informal and unstructured. All these contributors were aware that I was conducting a research on the "problems" of the Orang Asli and they were willing to share their ideas on how the Orang Asli can and should enjoy the fruits of development and modernization.

The process of compiling the database for this research was also greatly helped by participant-observations especially in some unexpected happenings during the course of my fieldwork. First, in the context of the UN International Year of Indigenous Peoples various governmental and non-governmental were organizing meetings and campaigns of sorts at different times and places. Representatives from the village I was researching participated in the aforementioned events in various ways. As such, these happenings were opportunities to observe and gather information regarding the processual linkages between village and extra-village agencies. Another significant event during my period of fieldwork was the Malaysian state and federal general elections scheduled for the end of 1994. The prospect of the general elections prompted the members of the research-villages to organize a special campaign to highlight their land problem to the government. The campaign involved the writing-up of a special memorandum that the villagers intended to submit to the government on the eve of the general elections. I shall elaborate more fully on the details of this memorandum campaign in the subsequent chapters. For now, suffice to say that the processes and dynamics surrounding this long-drawn out campaign as well as the memorandum-text itself provided the most invaluable information in terms of the questions of this research. Wah Kawat, who eventually became the main scribe of the memorandum and leader of the campaign, borrowed my tape-recorder and conducted oral-history interviews with different villagers. These tape-recordings as
well as the un-edited version of the memorandum, which were made available to me, provided a rich source of information regarding the history of the social relations of these particular villages, vis-a-vis the land issue. The production of this memorandum also brought to light other issues related to the research. Information regarding the specific dynamics with regard to the material and ideational flows between the ethnographic community and other agencies, the gender dimensions of the land struggle, intra- and inter-village conflicts and cooperations etc. were explicitated in many forms.

If observation was necessary and extremely helpful, the collection of oral narratives/histories was a deliberate strategy in data collection. Oral interviews are especially valuable and necessary for uncovering indigenous people's perspectives. Many researchers have observed how the expression of the indigenous unique experience as indigenous is often muted, particularly in any situation where their interests are at variance with the dominant society. An indigenous person's narration of her/his life may combine two separate, often conflicting, perspectives one framed in concepts and values that reflect the dominant society's position in society and one more informed by the more immediate realities of their personal experience. Where experience does fit dominant meanings alternative concepts will often reveal the indigenous life-world views. Inadvertently, indigenous persons often mute their own thoughts and feelings when they try to describe their lives in the familiar and publicly accepted terms of prevailing concepts and conventions. To hear indigenous peoples' perspectives accurately, we have to listen and listen again, receiving both the dominant and muted messages clearly and hoping to differentiate the two. Researchers experienced in oral history methods, especially feminist scholars (Gluck & Patai, 1991) realizing the many possibilities of the oral history method have argued for a necessary shift in methodology from merely information gathering, where the focus is on the right questions, to interaction where the focus is on the dynamic unfolding of the subject's viewpoint:

It is the interactive nature of the interview that allows us to ask for clarification, to notice what questions the subject formulates about her own life, to go behind conventional, expected answers to the woman's personal construction of her own experience. This shift of focus from data gathering to interactive process affects what the researcher regards as valuable information... (Anderson & Jack, 1994:23)

During the first three months, I could not take notes or tape recordings in the presence of villagers. However, all conversations/observations were written down as soon as possible and as
accurately as I could remember them. As such there are quotations in this study which are not verbatim translations. In this text I have, following Caunce (1994) opted to use the term "contributor" rather than the "informant" when referring to the "interviewee". As for the language used during the fieldwork, I began with Bahasa Malaysia (the Malay language) which all the villagers are not only proficient in but the vocabulary of which is mixed with the Sengoi language they speak. But in the course of my stay in the village I found a Sengoi language teacher in Wah Kawat. The Sengoi language varies in dialect from one river-basin settlement to another. As Wah Kawat put it *asik teow asik basa* (different river different language). As such she suggested that I use the "standardized" Sengoi dictionary published in 1986 in my language lessons. The work on the dictionary was begun by Paul Means in 1930, a Methodist missionary who worked with the Sengoi of Batang Padang. He continued working on the dictionary after he became a professor at the University of Oregon with the assistance of his wife Nathalie Means, a Sorbonne trained linguist. They worked with several Sengoi contributors from the Batang Padang District and when Paul Means died in 1980 Nathalie continued the work with 4 Sengoi contributors. In this text, therefore, I shall follow the orthography of this Sengoi dictionary (Means, 1986).

A word about the style of writing in this text. Like other authors (cfr. Tsing, 1993) who had wished to write a "politically correct" ethnography of the "other" I had the problem of, among other things, choosing the tense of my account. Do I write in the "ethnographic present" and convey a picture of the "timeless" Orang Asli or use the past tense which may represent the Orang Asli as "museum pieces"? My way out of this dilemma is to clarify the time frameworks of the events and processes I am referring to in the hope that, whichever tense I choose to use, the reader will recognize the time-situatedness of whatever ethnographic stories I tell.

Finally, to respect the requests from the villagers as well as to follow what I had planned anyway in line with oral interview methods, I shall use fictitious names for all persons and places except for the major towns and "public" figures.
Basic Descriptions of the Semai Villages and their Environment

Although I gathered much information from several villages, the three Semai villages particularly dealt with in this study are Canu, Pendue and Ini. They are located in the District of Batang Padang, one of nine administrative Districts in the state of Perak (Map...). As Map... shows the settlement sites as well as the villagers' customary lands are all situated on portions of the Legep River drainage area. The villages and the Semai rubber-smallholdings occupy three of several clearings in the area which forms the lower slopes of forest-covered hills that rise into the Central Mountain Range. Canu and Ini are situated next to each other with a two-metre tarred road serving as a boundary between them, while Pendue is located about two and a half kilometres upstream the Legep. Other clearings in the area are occupied by several Chinese small-farms, a private cattle rearing project on disused tin-mining land, a quarrying operation and a private-owned oil palm plantation. The road which divides Canu and Ini is also the only access road leading to the small town of Kota some eight kilometers to the west of the Canu. As one travels down the road to Kota the first kilometre or so of the road after leaving Canu is flanked by rubber trees of a private plantation. The road then passes through a disused tin-mining land for another kilometre and a half before it passes through two Malay villages and their rubber smallholdings. A kilometre away from these villages is a small housing estate situated just off the road. From there on the road is flanked by more rubber trees until about a kilometre from the fringe of the town where another housing estate is situated. The road itself is marked with many potholes caused by heavy lorries regularly ferrying rocks from the quarry located a kilometre and half to the northeast of Canu. A major portion of the Semai customary lands is located within the confines of the State Forest Reserves, the boundaries of which lie some two kilometres east of Canu. In terms of Malaysian land laws, the Semai villages as well as the private-owned farms and quarrying operations are occupying land that is classified as TOL (temporary occupation licence) land. But at the same time the land on which the Semai villages and their rubber smallholdings are located are also designated, in terms of Aboriginal Peoples' Act 1954 (revised 1974), as an Aboriginal Area.

The Semai villagers' houses are built on stilts and constructed from wood, bamboo and attap (dried palm tree leaves) roofs, materials gathered from the forest. In the 1960s, the JHEOA (Department of Aboriginal Affairs) provided the villagers with processed timber wood and zinc
roofing material that was used to enlarge their houses. Typical to these villages are therefore
houses that are constructed from processed timber and zinc in the front portion of the house and
wood, bamboo and attap in the back portion.

All three villagers have piped water leading to their houses. The system was constructed
by the villagers themselves but with material and know-how provided by the Federal Ministry
of Health. It consists of an about two-kilometre long PVC piping, of about 15 centimetres in
diameter, channeling water from a nearby waterfall, about 10 metres higher than the site of the
villagers. As the main pipe reaches the kampungs, water is rechanneled into some two hundred
smaller pipes leading to various households, each of the households having a single tap placed
outside the house. Given that there is no electrical pump-system, the water flows on its own
force of gravity. Even during periods of heavy rains, each household is able to collect only
sufficient water to supply their daily cooking and drinking needs. Moreover, the main piping,
given that it is about a decade old and exposed to the weathering effects of the natural elements,
is punctured at different points in its length, which further adversely affects the water pressure.
Therefore, the villagers still rely heavily on the water supply from the rivers, located between
one to two kilometres away depending on the different villages.

Only two of the three villages i.e. Canu and Ini, have electricity supply to their homes.
Pendue villagers could not afford the money needed to install the necessary cable lines, a
requirement by the National Electricity Board for electricity to be supplied.

In terms of other social infrastructure, there was a school set up by the state in the 1960s
catering for primary grade school children but it was discontinued some years later because of a
shortage of teaching staff. Currently, school-going children travel to the town of Kota for their
primary education. Of the schooling-aged children, about 55% of them do attend school. Of this
number, about 75% drop out of school by the age of 15. Of those who continue, only 2%
succeed in passing the final examinations of high school.

In the 1950s-1960s, mobile health services were regularly made accessible to these
villagers but they were discontinued by the end of that decade. Villagers who need medical
services for minor ailments travel to a public clinic located in the town of Kota. For more
serious ailments and in-patient treatment, they travel to the public hospital in the town of Tapah
which is about 35 kilometres away. Often, however, given their reluctance to visit general
public hospitals, the villagers travel to Kuala Lumpur (about 150 kilometres away) to receive medical service at the Orang Asli Hospital run by the JHEOA.

The population of the kampungs are as follows. In Canu there are 89 households comprising 456 persons, in Pendue 21 households of 209 persons and I'ni 61 households of 343 persons. Of the total 726 inhabitants of the three kampungs there are 412 persons above the age of 18 (211 male and 201 female) and 314 below the age of 18 (169 males and 145 males). 87 adults are salariat, 59 with the public sector (all males) and 28 in the private (15 women and 13 men). The others are engaged in village/forest related economic activities including occasional contract-waged employment with plantations or in construction.

In terms of religion, 30% of the population in Canu have embraced Christianity (Catholic and Methodist), 9% Baha'i, 2% Muslim and the rest adhere to their collection of traditional beliefs and practices which are referred to as the *adat*, a Malay term meaning "custom". In Pendue, 3% of the villagers have embraced Islam while the rest adhere to the *adat*. In I'ni, 76% have embraced the Baha'i religion, 5% Islam, 2% Christianity and the rest adhere to the *adat*. Moreover, except for a handful of devout Baha'i followers in I'ni all the villagers of whatever religious persuasion continue to adhere to the *adat* as well.

**On the Structure of the Thesis**

In the chapters that follow, Chapter Two is theoretical and outlines some basic concepts which were employed to organize and interpret the data collected. In this chapter I suggest that some key notions and social practices of this specific Orang Asli group provide a useful framework for conceptualising the land rights struggle as well as its implications on the changing social relations of the Orang Asli. These notions and practices, however, need to be articulated in a more analytic fashion and to this end I draw from recent discussions on similar themes in the field of human/cultural/feminist geography. Chapters Three and Four examines the changing nature and extent of land rights enjoyed by the Orang Asli from the period of colonial rule to the present day. In Chapter Three I look at colonial politics, the British land practices in particular, and the effects of these on Orang Asli land rights. Chapter Four analyses how and why Orang Asli land rights were more significantly transformed during and after the
period of the Communists armed struggle in Malaya. In both chapters particular attention is given to the interplay between norms and social practices surrounding the specific Orang Asli group of this study. Chapters Five and Six describe contemporary Orang Asli relations and the role the land rights struggle play in constituting and transforming those relations. Chapter Five looks at the economics of their land struggle while Chapter Six is on the political realignments in the villages as a result of the emerging Orang Asli movement. Finally, in Chapter Seven I return to some of the questions of theoretical constructions and concept formation. Drawing upon the findings in Chapters Three to Six I shall accordingly summarise the conceptual framework and examine the possibilities in explaining other indigenous land rights struggles with a similar approach.
Chapter Two: Conceptualizing Indigenous Relations and Land Struggles: A Place-Making Approach

Before suggesting a conceptual framework to examine the issue of indigenous relations and indigenous land rights, I wish to clarify the term "indigenous" or "indigenous peoples" as it is used in this text. One major difficulty in defining this term is that it is still a matter of debate between the researcher (most notably the advocacy anthropologist) and the activist (Bose, 1995). The debate is further complicated in that it is mediated by inter-state policy-makers in terms of international law definitions (Brolmann & Zieck, 1993). As such, to this day there is not a universally accepted definition of the term - not among indigenous groups, not among their advocacy organizations, not among academics and not among national or inter-state policy-makers (Bose, 1995)). However the term "indigenous peoples" is a designation commonly accepted by the peoples themselves and is adopted by the United Nations and other international organizations (World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development, 1992; Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 1995). There is a common opinion in these discussions as to what is the contradistinctive feature of "indigenous peoples" in contrast to other social groups. This distinguishing feature is the special relationship indigenous peoples have with the land (Brolmann & Zieck, 1993; Nettheim, 1988; Pathy, 1988; Moody, 1988; Burger, 1987; van der Vlist, 1994; Swepston & Plant, 1985). Even policy-makers at the international level recognize that the enjoyment of a full-fledged relationship with the land takes a prominent position because threats to that relationship seem to be the primary source of the indigenous peoples' problems (Leckie, 1986; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; ILO 1989; UN, 1995). And indigenous peoples' organizations themselves are asserting this primary element of their social identity (World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development, 1992)).

I would suggest therefore that similarly with the terms such as "woman" in feminist studies, "blacks" in black studies, "class" in social studies etc. the term "indigenous" needs to be understood as a social category within the multi-disciplinarity of cultural studies. As with all social categories its constituents cannot be defined in a priori, essential, objective or universal
terms. At best a working definition may be employed but with the qualification that the term must be more specifically grounded and continually interrogated. It is in this sense that I use the term "indigenous" in this text. Therefore, I suggest a provisional definition of the term "indigenous peoples", an emic category borrowed from the indigenous-rights discourse.

Indigenous peoples refer to those who possess some or all of the following elements:

1. They are descendants of the original inhabitants of a territory which has been overcome by conquest;
2. They are nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, such as shifting cultivators, herders and hunters and gatherers, and practise a labour-intensive form of agriculture which produces little surplus and has low energy needs;
3. They do not have centralised political institutions and organise at the level of the community and make decisions on a consensus basis;
4. They have all the characteristics of a national minority: they share a common language, religion, culture and other identifying characteristics and a relationship to a particular territory, but are subjugated by a dominant culture and society;
5. They have a different world view, consisting of a custodial and non-materialist attitude to land and natural resources, and want to pursure a separate development to that proffered by the dominant society;
6. They consist of individuals who subjectively consider themselves indigenous, and are accepted by the group as such.

(Burger, 1987:6)

Now I turn to the term "indigenous relations". The term as it is used in this text refers to relations of power specific to indigenous localities. These relations of power are evident in an array of actions, ideas, habits, customs, representations, modes and so on. These relations of power are also revealed in economic relations, institutional arrangements, cultural patterns and psychological-behavioral modes between indigenous peoples and the dominant society. These relations also assign the indigenous peoples' attitudes, abilities, personality traits, behavioral patterns, personality traits etc. different from the dominant society. Like gender relations, black relations or ethnic/race relations, indigenous relations are social constructs, which in its historical constitution was informed strongly by an equally constructed genetic or biological determinism. As with all social relations of power, indigenous relations vary over time and place. Indigenous relations also interplay with class, gender, and other structures of social hierarchy to produce specific configurations of power in different localities. Moreover, indigenous relations differentiate, structure and shape relations between indigenous individuals and groups.
Domination, subjugation, exploitation, resistance and protest characterize indigenous relations. Through these processes the hierarchical nature of indigenous relations are maintained and changed in different contexts. More specifically, it is suggested here, that the hierarchical character of indigenous relations is maintained or changed through a process of struggle at making specific social places for indigenous peoples. These places have a material-geographical specificity about them for example Aboriginal Reserves, indigenous dwelling places, ancestral or customary land, governmental and non-governmental offices and departments for indigenous affairs and so on. In geographical terms, these places have a specific location, a fixed point in space and can be topographically referred to by some abstract coordinate system such as latitude and longitude. But these indigenous places also have specific meanings assigned to them. To take the example of Aboriginal Reserves for instance - who may or may not inhabit this place, what rights the inhabitants enjoy therein, how the inhabitants go about their business of everyday social relations etc. are spelt out by a mix of ideologies, material-ecological conditions and social practices. This process of making indigenous places is, moreover, both implicit and explicit. It involves different agencies, located at different spatial scales (from local to global) with differential access to economic, political and social power.

In the following sections I shall elaborate on this conceptual framework and discuss how it was derived and how it can be a useful framework to analyse the data in this research. However, it should be noted that this framework is not intended to explain the origins of the hierarchical nature of indigenous relations. Rather I wish to argue that it is a useful way to conceptualize how domination, subordination and exploitation of indigenous peoples are currently structured and perpetuated and how/where they are changed. In particular, this framework enables an analysis of how the land rights struggles structure, maintain and change indigenous relations.

**Semai Notions of Places and Practices of "Place-Making"**

The particular group of indigenous peoples studied in this research is known as Semai, the largest of the nineteen different groups that constitute the Orang Asli or aboriginal people of Malaysia. The "ethnographic community" I worked with consists of several Semai villages,
details of which I shall elaborate as I go on. While the term "Semai" is another ethnological term which is widely used by "outsiders" as well as by these peoples themselves, the word they use to refer to themselves in their own language is "Sengoi" which means "persons/people coming from or originating from". In this study, I shall employ the word "Semai" because the villagers I worked with used this term to distinguish themselves from other Sengoi groups in the country. The conceptual framework suggested in this chapter section is derived, in part, from certain key notions and social practices of this Semai group. More specifically, these are notions and social practices by which, as I shall argue, members of this group perceive their "society" to be, and how it is organised or "reorganised", or changed.

This way of conceptualizing indigenous social relations, therefore, is from the "actor's" point of view as it were:

The analysis of the way an actor gives meaning to and orders the social world involves the study of the core symbols, or what others have called the central terms or the key notions, which she or he uses and shares with other actors (Eickelman 1981:189). Especially Geertz has stressed the need to study vocabulary and see words and values as two aspects of the same thing (1979:199). These central symbols are situated within the particular social and historical conditions, and are "highly ambiguous, expressive, and inherently susceptible to many interpretations; this is what makes them central".

(Rabinow 1975:3, as quoted from Jansen, 1987:13)

There are many significant notions, symbols and social practices which the Semai adhere to and share among themselves in different scales of their lived world. As the above-mentioned quote suggests these central frames of meaning are historically and socially specific and are therefore open to many interpretations. More specifically, different persons holding different positions of power within the group, as well as outside the group, experience and interpret these meanings differently. The Semai notions that are considered central and the way they are interpreted in this text as a conceptual framework were determined by my communication with the main contributors and how I listened and re-told their stories.

Perhaps a key notion or concept to start with in Semai social relations lies in their very name itself. As I mentioned earlier the term "Semai" is an ethnological term which is widely used by "outsiders" as well as by the indigenous peoples themselves but the word they use to refer to themselves in their own language is "Sengoi" which means "persons/people coming from or originating from". In fact it is believed that the name "Semai" was derived from a designation given these peoples by their northern-located neighbours - the Temiars who speak a
variant dialect of the common Austroasiatic language shared by both these groups (Green, 1949:130). In the Sengo dialect of the Temiars *seman* means "people from the southern hills", referring to the Semai-Sengo (Ibid.) though Dentan (1975:51) suggests that it could also have been used to refer to another Orang Asli group called the Semang. However, for the Semai in general, individuals and groups are primarily represented in terms of the places-they-come-from or places-they-belong-to. When talking to a Semai about society or the world in general people are divided into two broad groups: *sengoi bandar* (people of/from the town/city) or *sengoi darat* (people of/from the interior). The Semai would also frequently use the Malay terms *orang bandar* (town/city people) and *orang ulu* (interior people) to represent these two broad social worlds. In representing the differentiation among the *sengoi darat* (interior people), the Semai would classify the *sengoi darat* and themselves in terms of the places a group/individual belongs to or comes from. Even about their more immediate Semai neighbours, whether kin or non-kin, people are identified with place: *mai cenan* (they of the mountains), *mai kui teow* (they of the headwaters), *mai baruh* (they of the plains), *mai pungkal cenan* (they of the foothills) and so on. Groups of Semai are also represented in terms of *gu* (watersheds), *tmpaat* (settlement places), or the towns where they are proximately settled, for example *mai Tapah* (they of/from Tapah town), *mai Sungkai* (they of/from Sungkai town) and so on. The list of "people-places" is endless. As the very term "sengoi" implies people are defined in terms of the place they come from or the place they belong to.

Representing people in terms of places is not merely a habit of Semai semantics. Places are integral constituents of Semai shared meanings and social relations. To demonstrate the significance of this Semai association of people and place, social activities/practices and place, I examine what is perhaps the single most important place for the Semai - the *lengriik*. *Lengriik* translates literally into "country" and it is one of the central Semai notions in the organizing of their everyday life. It is in fact this *lengriik* land that the Semai are claiming in their current land struggles to be recognized as their rightful communal heritage. The *lengriik* is a specific geographical location marked by landscape features such as ridges, rivers and hills. According to Beh Tani, whose great-grandfather is recognized as the pioneer and first *Mairaknak* (elder of the people) of this Darat Legep *lengriik* (Map...), the original geography of their country was much larger than the area now commonly accepted by the villagers. I shall elaborate on the
particular history of this *lengriik* in Chapter Three. For now, the point I wish to make is that the Semai of the villages studied in this research can identify the physical markers of their common *lengriik* and all the different places within this territory. The significance of the *lengriik*-place and how it impinges on the social relations of the Semai can be demonstrated in the ways, for instance, the three villages of Canu, Pendue and Tni are organized. These three villages were established in the 1960s as state-administrative village-units within the boundaries of the Batang Padang District in the state of Perak (Map ...). During the period of Japanese Occupation (1940 - 1945) and the subsequent Communist Insurgency (1948 - 1960), some Semai settlements belonging to a common territorial (*lengriik*-based) group had centralized their settlement sites in this area. With the end of the Emergency era, as the communist insurgency period was referred to, these Semai settlements were organized by the state into two neighbouring village-units of Canu and Pendue. A few years later a third Semai village, Tni, was relocated as another neighbouring village to Canu and Pendue. Tni was also a collection of Semai settlements but from another territorial group. It was initially established as a village unit at a location about thirty kilometres away from the Canu-Pendue site. While the three villages are organized as village-administrative units they also adhere to certain Semai practices of kinship and territoriality in terms of the *lengriik*. This is demonstrated, for instance, in their jural system governing land-ownership, the inheritance of usufruct rights in territory and inheritance of fruit trees. One way to begin to understand the particular practices of kinship and territoriality vis-a-vis the *lengriik* is to see the Semai as what anthropologists would call an ambilineal cognatic descent type society. Ambilineal societies are characterized by:

1. ambilineal rameges where "affiliation in each successive generation is acquired through either parent and depends, not on filiation links radiating outward from an individual as in the case of a bilateral kindred, but on chains of filiation links converging upon a common ancestor, from whom land rights are derived...",
2. extended families,
3. ambilocal residence,
4. affiliation not ordinarily maintained with the natal groups of a parent who has changed residence, and
5. membership in a descent group usually determined by parents' choice of marital residence. Occasionally present are bilateral kindreds, kinship groups that are ego-centred and consist of ego's relatives on both mother's and father's side. In addition, ambilineal descent groups characteristically practise monogamy, extend marriage prohibitions to all second as well as first cousins, apply sibling terms to first cousins,
and employ avuncular terminology of the generational type, extending the term for both father's brother and mother's brother.

(Murdock, 1960:10-11)

There is, however, one major qualification that needs to be stressed about the Semai cognatic system. For the Semai a non-member of a descent group, whether Semai or otherwise, can cultivate (hiit) consanguineal relationships and earn membership into a ramage group. Consequently, the non-member becomes "kin" or is socially recognized as such and thus enjoys similar usufruct and inheritance rights in the descent group. It was in this manner of cultivating consanguineal or fictive relationships that Ini villagers earned their membership into the Canu-Pendue lengriik-community. Any individual or group who migrates into the river basin of another band, as the Ini villagers had done, can inhabit a certain area with the permission of the rakanak (elders) of that particular lengriik. Thus when the Ini villagers were evicted from their previous settlement site their headman-rakanak approached the elders-headmen of Canu and Pendue and requested permission for Ini villagers to migrate to the Canu-Pendue territory. Only after acquiring the necessary permission from the Canu-Pendue elders did the Ini headman inform the Department of Orang Asli Affairs who then assisted them in the movement and construction of their houses. However, being non-members to any of the Canu-Pendue descent groups Ini villagers were not entitled to use the territory except for building their houses and selai nyeng (house gardens). More importantly, Ini villagers could not plant fruit trees anywhere in the territory because fruit trees are a marker of a ramage member's usufruct and inheritance rights over that territory and the fruit trees. Ini villagers could seek permission to acquire rights of access to the produce of a ramage's area but no planting of fruit trees was allowed. The giving of non-ramage members permission to plant fruit trees in ramage territory has implications for future generations and therefore not acceded to lightly. There was, therefore, a basic differentiation in membership and rights to the lengriik between the Canu-Pendue and the Ini villages. For the Canu-Pendue Semai their territory was recognized as their lengriik pasak or "original country" and their claims in land were based on their membership in the mai pasak or "they of the original country" group. Ini villagers, on the other hand, only had territorial rights in accordance with their relations to the land as their lengriik numpuk (residential country). Over the months and years, however, since the Ini villagers first migrated to Canu-Pendue territory the former were able to cultivate "consanguineal" ties with various Canu-Pendue descent groups
whose members then granted them permission to plant fruit trees on portions of ramage territory. In this way, therefore, the Ini villagers had to negotiate their full membership into the lengriik community and earn their rights in the territory lands.

The way a non-member cultivates consanguineal ties into a descent group in order to earn rights in land follows the same procedures that a ramage member has to observe to gain social recognition of his/her already existing land rights. Ramage members as well as newcomers must demonstrate their interest in the affairs of the group, maintain constant and close ties and interact with others and show an interest as well as work on the maintenance and reproduction of the kampok (orchards). This is how ramage members may re-activate their rights when they migrate or return to another lengriik in which they have usufruct and inheritance rights based on ambilocal residency. As I will illustrate with more examples later, the Semai in these three villages recognize themselves as belonging to a common lengriik-space or lengriik-community and adhere to certain rules or customs of this place in their social practices. An important tenet of these land customs is the practice of cultivating or reproducing lengriik relations. A member, who does not show his/her interest in reproducing the lengriik, by observing the necessary land practices, is said to have "forgotten" (inseep) his/her lengriik and thereby may lose his/her rights in lands therein.

This manner of cultivating or growing into relationships around a specific spatial context is a significant feature of Semai social relations in general. A Semai individual or group identity and relations with each other is not only represented but constructed in terms of places. Within the space of their lengriik, for instance, the Semai would further differentiate themselves in terms of tmpaat (settlement place), kampung (administrative village); or as belonging to the lengriik pasak (original country) dimension of their lengriik or lengriik numpuk (residential country) dimension of the lengriik and so on. Different Semai in one lengriik also belong to other lengriiks in the locality, by way of kinship and marriage. The nature of their relations and extent of rights to the other lengriik depend on their participation and interaction in the latter place. This is the process that I refer to as the Semai practices of "place-making". In subsequent chapters I shall examine other people-places beyond the lengriik which the Semai identify with and construct relations around, for example the gu (watershed) of another group of Semai, the bandar (town), and so on. For now I wish to elaborate another notion and level of Semai "place-
Central to Semai (religious/metaphysical) thought is the concept of the *ruai*, the closest translation of which is "soul" or "psyche". Interestingly, this Semai term resonates with the Hebrew *ruah* or the Australian-Aboriginal *rai*, both the latter terms also refer to the life-force or life-breath of the soul/person. For the Semai, the *ruai* is a *tmpaat* (place) located just behind the center of the forehead. As Beh Panei, a *mai halaa* (one who has the ability to communicate with the world of "spirits") explains it, however, the identity and location of the *ruai* are seen as always shifting:

...this *tmpaat* looks like the shape of the body of the person, but much smaller, about the size of my small finger... this is how the Semai believe... the *ruai* is also a bird. At night the *ruai-terek* (*ruai*-bird) will leave the body and travels and in these travels dreams will happen as the *ruai* meets other *ruai*, the *ruai* of other peoples, the *ruai* of animals, the *ruai* of mountains, winds and rivers... if in these dreams we hear a song from another *ruai* we must listen carefully so as to remember the music the next morning... our way is very different then the *orang bandar*, but that *ruai* will come again in our dreams and teach us the song but if we keep *inseep* (forgetting) the song we will not meet that *ruai* again. If we remember the song, the music and the words then we can have *halaa* (the ability to communicate with the "spirits") and the *ruai* who has taught us the song will become our *gunig* (a *ruai* with whom/which one forms an intimate relationship with)... my *gunig* is a tiger that guards the gharu tree... that's why I must not collect gharu from the forests or eat what the tiger does not eat... the Semai are so strange, ah? ... but its true, if a person's *gunig* is a *ruai* of a Malay then s/he must not eat food which is *haram* (an Arabic-Malay term meaning "forbidden") to the Malays... The *ruai* is also a little child and little children can be easily frigliened so the *ruai* can be easily frigliened... sometimes *ruai* can be lost... Sometimes *ruai* can be captured or made ill by a bad *nyani'* (spirit). If that happens we must call for a *shewang* (dance-sing sessions)... those who have *halaa* like myself sing the songs they we have learnt from our *gunig*. The *gunig* comes to us and the I ask what *nyani' has caused this illness, if the sick person's *ruai* has been captured the *mai halaa* (the person who has the ability to communicate with the "spirits") will send his/her *gunig* to rescue the *ruai*... this is why we Semai take the name of our first child... Semai are not like the *orang bandar*... when the Semai has a child they take the child's name... so different... but there is a reason, we must protect the *ruai* of the child. When it is a girl people will call the parents Beh Baleh and Ken Baleh, when it is a boy people will call the parents Beh Yok and Ken Yok when you see the Semai they are so different, different *adat* (custom)... the grandparents also follow the same. My eldest child's name is Panei so my parents are called Jenang Panei... only when the *orang bandar* like yourself come to stay with us then you can understand our way, it will be familiar to you, you get used to it... but there is meaning. It doesn't matter when you have no children but when you do you must protect the child's *ruai* because everyone's *ruai* is a child. With regard to *lineit* (the collections of Semai
beliefs and religious practices) the Semai are still strong, other matters, well that's another story with regard to *lineit* still strong. When you *muat ugamma* (to enter into religion) and take Christian, Muslim or Bahá’í names that is no problem but once you have a child you must take the child's name even if you want to give the child a christian name... the *lineit* is still strong... if we don't protect the *ruai* then when it becomes a bird and travels into dreams a bad *nyani* may frighten it, even capture it and the child will fall ill... the Semai believe this. But some people don't follow this *lineit* anymore, they are *jah* [having lost the ability of the *ruai]*... but most Semai still follow this way... but the *ruai* can also become an animal...

There are several other aspects of the *ruai*, the central component or process of the human person as the Semai express it, as well as its implications in terms of social practice centred around places. What is of significance here is the notion of the *ruai* as a place that has neither fixed identity nor boundaries. The *ruai* is both inside and outside the person, and its identity is defined not in counterposition to another *ruai* but through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections with other *ruai* (places). Moreover, given the "traveling" nature of the *ruai* any attempts to fix the meaning of the space it inhabits or enclose it with a fixed identity will in itself distort the uniqueness of the *ruai*. These unique features of the *ruai*, the different places of its identity, the different identities of its place and its underlying mobility is characteristic of Semai place-making at other levels of their lived world as well. I have already discussed the Semai notion of the *lengriik* and how within this place relationships can be forged in such a way as to change both the natures of the place as well as its inhabitants. There are other Semai-constructed places both within the *lengriik* and beyond it, which the Semai identify with and relate to in terms which demonstrate the features of the *ruai*-place, as far as the Semai perceive and express them. They include places in the *lengriik* such as the different villages/*tmpaat*; other places such as the home, the *deuk penghulu* (headman's house), the *kampok* (orchard), the *wal* (fireplace) etc.; or certain places situated beyond the villages such as the forests beyond their *lengriik*-territory, Bahá’í/Christian urban meeting-centres, the towns/cities etc. These places are all perceived as "people-places" which contain specific identities, yet the containment is not so fixed as to disallow a forging of new identities in those places.

The nature of the Semai movements and relations to these places, the ways they organize their relations around these places reflect an openness, flexibility and mobility with regard to the Semai approach to place-making. The practice of cultivating consanguinity between descent
group members and outgroupers vis-a-vis the lengriik is but one illustration. In later chapters I shall discuss how in different historical contexts of their social relations, there were many instances whence the Semai forged different identities in one place or multiplied the places of their various interactions through various means of mobility and extension. The ruai features are also mirrored in the unique manner and mix of Semai religious practices/beliefs and why/what/where cultural relations are changing. The pragmatism of the ruai concept is also evident in the many flexible and mobile combinations of Semai economic strategies in the contested geography of the forest. But there are certain places the Semai are averse to. These are places where they are disinclined to forge relationships with others thus demonstrating the conditions attached to their openness, flexibility and mobility. The Semai frequently speak of certain people and places to which they adopt an attitude of a-bor (caution or guardedness). A-bor is also the term used when greeting someone goodbye which then means cip a-bor (be careful or take care as you walk). There are two types of people and places the Semai consider with the attitude of a-bor. First, people who are newcomers, whether migrants such as the Ini villagers were to the Canu-Pendue Semai when the former first arrived or visitors as I was to them. Therefore places associated with the newcomers, or when newcomers are present in Semai places, these places are treated with a-bor until "consanguineal" ties are forged. The initiatives, however, must come from the newcomers. Second, the Semai also take great pains to avoid places of people who have caused persusah to them. The term persusah is derived from the Malay causative prefix per- and the word susah (to make difficult, to cause distress or trouble). The Semai employ this term to define the action of a person who causes another to slide into an unpleasant emotional state. It is used to refer to the actions of a person who interferes in the affairs of another. For example, a headman who gets involved in a matter which does not concern him or an issue that is not a formal quarrel settlement. It is also used to describe the actions of the Gob (Malay) who want to impose their religion on the Semai or who, in previous times were raiding Semai settlements in their hunt for slaves. Persusah is also used on the orang bandar (urban people), the orang kerajaan (government people) more specifically the orang JOA (the JHEOA or "Department of Orang Asli Affairs" people). In the past, especially during their internment in a military camp during the emergency years, but also currently the Semai have experienced many unpleasant encounters with these groups of people.
There are also instances, in the past as well as currently, when *persusah* experiences among the Semai if not adequately resolved in a formal quarrel settlement will result in an individual, a family or a group of families moving out of the settlement to join another elsewhere. Therefore, the Semai would also avoid frequenting places of those people among themselves who have been the cause of *persusah* feelings.

As much as the Semai are cautious or avoid certain people-places their underlying attitude remains one of openness to other or different places. We can see this in two examples of place-making demonstrated at two levels of their lived world. First, at the level of the *ruai*. We already saw what Beh Panei had said about a Semai *ruai* meeting up with a Malay *ruai*. Despite their aversion towards the Malays the Semai would adopt Malay customs of eating if s/he had encountered a Malay *ruai* in their dream travels. A further example, at the level of the *ruai* is the Semai belief that a *nyani* (bad spirit) has the potential to become a *gunik* (good spirit). In fact, *gunik* were once *nyani* but they had encountered a Semai-*ruai* in dreams and had asked to be "kin" and had given their songs to their Semai "kin". In this process, then the *nyani* becomes a *gunik* and is called "son" or "daughter" by its Semai "father" or "mother" and becomes sibling to their children. Just as an outgrouper in-marries or migrates into a *lengriik* and grows into the network of kin relations (to become *hii*) so a *nyani* can become a *gunig*. The Semai openness to a people-place despite their aversion to it may be seen at another level as well. In the Semai's general social division of the world into *orang bandar* and *orang ulu* the *bandar* (town/city) is a place infused with meanings of suspicion, fear, etc. The town/city and the folks there are also places the Semai are often humiliated or looked down upon. Many Semai were also detained in internment camps in the towns during the Emergency period, an experience still talked with anguish among the Semai. Yet, despite these strong reservations or identifying against the town/city place and its peoples, the Semai remain open to the possibilities of forging relations in town/city people-places. Some writers have explained these Semai relations with the urban as part of a socio-economic dependence (Cerruti, 1908: 48; Endicott, 1983:232; Dentan, 1968). Certainly, there is an element of socio-economic dependence of the Semai in their urban relations just as there is a dependence of the urban, for instance, on the Semai for the latter's seasonal labour or for the Semai-gathered products of the forest. But the nature of the Semai relations with the urban cannot be simply reduced to one of dependence. The Semai "sense of
places" (this is also a conceptual term which I shall elaborate later) do configure in their making of places with the urban. An example may suffice to illustrate this point. For the villagers of Canu, Pendue and Ini, Beh/Wah Keneng's house serves as the recruiting center for urban employers seeking Semai contract-labour from these villages. Beh Keneng organizes the male labourers when they are required and Wah Keneng the female labour. The reason for Beh/Wah Keneng's house becoming the recruiting place and they assuming this mediating role in recruiting Semai labour for the urban is in no less measure due to the location of their house. Their house is situated at the entrance of the path leading into the access road connecting the villages to the town. Depending on the nature of the work and the requirements of the employers Beh/Wah Keneng would recruit Semai from the different villages and negotiate the terms of the work with the employers. When the Semai engage themselves as contract-labour in the towns they always do so as groups not only because the type of work generally requires it but as Beh/Wah Keneng explains, the Semai are apprehensive of the town places and will never venture alone in "orang bandar places". Even when in the case of the restaurant owner, from a nearby town, who was seeking only one Semai kitchen-helper from their village, Beh/Wah Keneng insisted that he employ at least two persons. But there is yet another way the Semai senses of place shape their relations with their urban employers. Semai contract-work teams, whether they travel daily from the village to the urban work-sites or are housed in workers quarters in the town, will not report for work on a particular day should any member of their team is "not feeling up to it". A member of the work team may have fallen ill or just does not have a good feeling about the "work-place" that particular day. The Semai use two terms to explain these events. One is serenglok which translates as "the right/proper location to place something/someone in" and the other is serengih which means a "pre-arranged agreement/understanding among a group of persons to go somewhere at a particular time". These terms are also applied to those occasions when a group of Semai decides to meet at a certain time and place to make a hunting/gathering/fishing trip into the forests but one or more members of that team does not show up at the pre-arranged time and place. On these occasions, just as in the case of contract-work at the urban work-sites, the group will abandon their plans to go where they had agreed to. The arrangement to go somewhere (serengih) or that place itself is not serenglok (the right/proper location to be placed in). There have been many instances of
Sema contract-work teams not turning up at work-sites due to these reasons. And the effect of this pattern on the urban employers, according to Beh/Wah Keneng is that only those employers who have come to understand and accept these "Sema ways" are the ones who continue to return to their house seeking out Sema labour. There are other aspects to the relations between the Sema and the urban people-places which I shall attend to in the next section, most notably the unequal relations between them, but the point here is to underscore the significance of place-making in Sema social relations in general.

This Sema way of identifying themselves and other collectives in terms of places have been pointed out in previous Orang Asli studies (Dentan, 1975; Fix, 1971; Robarchek, 1977). But the significance of place to Sema social relations has not been pursued in these studies. Their descriptions of Sema-perceived places are almost ideographic - describing in some length the many places the Sema identify with/against and move within or away from. These studies, however, fail to interrogate the connections between Sema places and their social relations. They also do not look into how these places are represented and constructed out of Sema social relations which in turn shape their social relations. For example, in his discussion of the Sema and their social divisions, Dentan (1975) quite elaborately classifies the groups he studied in the terms provided by his informants - i.e. in terms of the places identified with particular groups. He notes how the Sema represent the world at large in terms of sengoi pekan (marketplace folk) and sengoi darat (hinterland folk); how they represent the communist insurgents as "really" "market people" who turned into "they of the primary forests", other Sema groups in terms of various locations and so on (Ibid. pp. 51f). Interestingly, even Dentan and his wife were represented, by a Sema, in the characteristic Sema style but the significance of place seemed to have gone unnoticed: "...my wife and myself were, as one man told a shy spirit, "really our people", even though we were born elsewhere and looked different" (Ibid.).

Dentan's as well as other research on Sema social relations have provided a wealth of information and insights into the world of the Sema. The Sengoi, in general, are best known from the many Orang Asli studies for their peaceful and non-violent nature because of their highly developed dream-based system of interpersonal relations (Dentan, 1983; Braunlein, 1984; Domhoff, 1985). And the Sema sub-group of the Sengoi are especially well known from these anthropological studies as a "non-violent people of Malaysia" (Dentan, 1968), virtually
free of interpersonal violence (Robarchek, 1977). Some scholars have even referred to the Semai example to counter arguments for human's innate aggressiveness (Alland, 1972) or explain how human conflicts need not result in violence and war (Robarchek, 1990). And there is much more that studies on the Semai have contributed to understanding the social relations of this indigenous group (Benjamin, 1989). But in terms of the interplay between Semai social relations and their system of shared meanings (culture), however, there is still much to be learnt about the significance of place and place-making in Semai thought and social practices.

Interestingly, many Orang Asli scholars have continued to classify the Semai in general, following Dentan's pioneering ethnography of this group - in terms of their geographical location. Dentan distinguished this Orang Asli group in terms of the West Semai and the East Semai arguing that the latter have preserved more of their traditional culture than the former due to their varying geographical-cultural distance from the Malay/Chinese and urban centres (Dentan, 1968). But this seems to be as far as he goes in examining the linkages between place and Semai social relations. One reason, perhaps, of this oversight or neglect of the significance of place in these Semai studies is a projection of a "commonsense" and conventional social-science sense of place onto an understanding of Semai social relations. By this I mean that there is a unquestioned tendency in these studies to accept "places" either as ideographic backdrops across which social processes happen or a set of fixed containers at particular scales for cultures and social relations. That this is a commonsense and conventional social-science sense of place is well-argued in recent scholarship (Agnew, 1993). What this sense of place implies for social relations, culture and identity is that "places make people" rather than "people make places". And this is precisely not the case with the Semai, as I have demonstrated. They make places even if in circumstances not of their own choosing. But this is not to say that Semai social relations are not shaped by the physical and social landscapes of the places they live and move in.

**Semai Place-making in the wider social context**

Locality studies are an effective way to reveal the complex interactions that connect the spheres of politics, culture and economy in the process of social change. This research is a study
on one locality - that of the Semai. The notions such as lengriik, ruai, a-bor, etc. can contribute to this type of study in clarifying how certain places in their locality are made or constituted by Semai subjects who perceive, represent and over time construct them even though in circumstances not of their own choosing. In terms of the ruai, as mentioned earlier, neither places or identities within a particular locality are to be understood in terms of bounded, fixed, unproblematic and singular meanings. There is an on-going process of producing places in the locality. It is a process in where the relations between ideologies, material conditions and practices are thoroughly interconnected. But there is a range of different scales of the locality at which these operations of place-making are happening. In the previous section I focused on the Semai subjects and their perspectives at reproducing certain people-places such as the ruai, lengriik, bandar, etc. One way to understand the scales of Semai place-making is to see the places in their locality as a series of "locales". The "locale" is a term suggested by Giddens (1983:79) to describe the physical settings in which social relations are constituted. According to Giddens, locales are social constructs - sites or areas which have become such because subjects have acquired the knowledge necessary to recognize the particularity of their attributes to grasp the potential "modes of realization" which they represent to draw upon their features in order to perform (Giddens, 1985:271f). Locales are nested within locales, which are hierarchically differentiated and may range in scale from the spatiality of the body to the nation state. But as others have pointed out (Massey, 1994; Pred, 1986) Gidden's locale needs to be expanded in its conceptualization to include the fact that places are also the medium and outcome of human agency and social relations operating at various spatial scales.

Notions of the lengriik and the ruai also serve as ideologies in the every-day Semai process of place-making. These notions can be described as a way of Semai feeling and thinking about particular places whether it is their individual bodies or specific social places within or beyond their locale. Geographers would call this a "sense of place" (Rose, 1995:88; Agnew, 1993:263), referring to the manner in which a person/group identifies with or against a place. But this sense of place is not to be seen only as an individual's or group's emotional sentiments about places. Rather it needs to be understood as a "structure of feeling", to use the phrase from Williams (1977), which has emerged from every aspect of the individual's/group's life experiences and pervades their everyday life, social practices and experience. This Semai sense
of place reinforces the social-spatial definition of place from "inside" so to speak whether the "inside" locale is that of the body or the lengriik. Thus, in terms of the range of spatial scales of social relations this "sense of place" or "structure of feeling" represents relations at the subjective and inter-personal scales of their locality. In other words, this sense of place or "subjective territorial identity" (Agnew, 1992:263) of the social self is a key tenet which needs to be considered in understanding the process of place-making. This sense of place is not merely a "natural" territorial instinct, a desire to "belong somewhere" (Rose, 1995). As much as place is constructed, a sense of place is also constructed by underlying socio-economic structures of power by systems of shared meaning embedded in those structures of power and by a politics of identity generated by contestation over different claims over place (Ibid.). What this means, therefore, is that a "sense of place" is not a fixed or rigid framework of understanding and ordering of social relations within a particular spatial realm. In fact, the nature of the Semai sense of place in itself militates against an absolute fixing of ideas. Perhaps in this sense Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" (1977) can also serve to clarify this understanding of "sense of place". Bourdieu explains "habitus" as:

...systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (Bordieu, 1977)

However, in adopting Bourdieu's term I do so with the qualification that the habitus is also produced/reproduced/changed in the context of structures and processes operating at various spatial scales beyond the immediately lived micro-world of individuals/groups.

Semai places, such as the lengriik, overlap with and are divided up by larger socially organized spaces such as State Forests Reserves and Orang Asli Reserves/Areas. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the lengriik is nested within or beside other locales in a hierarchical social arrangement. In Semai interactions within these larger social networks, the agencies which hold positions of dominance in the wider territorial society have contrasting designs vis-a-vis Semai places and identities. In contrast to Semai notions, these State-, capital-, bureaucratic-, etc. principles of organizing places express themselves as exclusivist claims to
places, attempts to fix the meaning of particular Semai places and claim them for one's own. Different state agencies at different historical contexts have imposed various and specific spatial means of control over Semai places and identities which the latter had to negotiate and struggle with. Currently, however, the spatialization of cultural politics has taken new twists especially since the emergence of the Orang Asli movement. While state strategies of spatial control has changed little over time, the Semai are taking their struggles to new places. They are indigenizing resources and inputs from local to global places and reconfiguring their political identity vis-a-vis the state at the same time reconstituting the notion of the lengriik. At the same time, they are also struggling to articulate their claims over land and identity in terms understandable/acceptable to the state authorities yet consonant with their own particular ways of relating to certain places. In this regard, the state networks are not the only arenas within which the Semai have to struggle with to resist the fixing of singular boundaries and identities over their places and identities. Their places are a part of a larger space of accumulation and the Semai are faced with capitalist and bureaucratic networks who see the forests and the trees from quite a different discourse than the Semai. The latter are also struggling with non-governmental agencies that they have collaborated with in their land struggles.

The Semai lengriik, therefore, is not merely a locale isolated from other locales or a social place to be reproduced and changed only in terms of a Semai sense of place. In fact, this idea is consonant with Semai thought on how the ruai is constituted. Different ruai (places) are interconnected and the interactions of one ruai with another influence and changes both of them. In terms of the ruai perspective the Semai "sense of place" or "structure of feeling", and therefore the making of places is not simply a question of Semai experience of their own "micro" world. The ruai, thus the making of places, according to Semai thought cannot be isolated from senses of place or structures of feeling located in sites beyond the personal/social self. These interconnections of Semai places, the flows between them and their effects on each other may be also seen at another spatial scale than the psychic ruai. Consider the Semai practices of the lengriik, persusah and a-bor which I mentioned in the previous section. There are certain people-places around which the Semai would create kinship relations such as the lengriik. There are other places they would be physically cautious of or distance themselves from altogether. In other words, at the different scales of their locality the Semai identify with
certain places and not with others. Seen in this way, the way the Semai perceive their sense of place or making of places at the scale of the local is also informed by their relations in a wider context.

At this point in the discussion, it is necessary to address directly the relationship between social inequality and senses of place. Whose sense of place is more powerful in terms of Semai social relations? Whose sense of place has to struggle to be expressed? Why are some senses of place negative for the Semai? To answer these questions we need to understand that the interconnections and flows between places are not only uneven but also unequal. The Semai sense of place is not only different to that of other dominant groups in society but is part of unequal social relations. As I shall examine in subsequent chapters the idea that the forests occupied by the Orang Asli were perceived as "empty no-man's land" or vast tracks of "wastelands" to be opened up for development legitimated colonial and postcolonial economic exploitation of the area. The sense of place Malay territorial regimes and later the British authorities conveyed about Orang Asli places - as less than civilized - justified a colonizing of these places by refusing to recognize the difference of culture and peoples of the forest. Sense of place, then, should also be seen as part of underlying structures of power (Rose, 1995).

Many commentators have linked the claim to belong to a particular place to the dynamics of power relations. Robert Sack is quite clear about this: "Territoriality is a primary geographical expression of social power. It is the means by which society and space are related" (Sack, 1986:5). He argues that territoriality is nothing more or less than a claim to control people by controlling an area. Those who belong to a particular place are distinguished from those who do not; and while the latter may be excluded from that place, the former is expected to conform to its conventions. Sack's description of territoriality corresponds to that which has been described as the Semai sense of place that is, identifying with somewhere. However, his argument about senses of place and social power is also relevant to all senses of place.

The most obvious example of the way power relations can structure senses of place is cases where one sense of place becomes so dominant that it obscures other, perhaps more important, understandings about that same place. I have already mentioned the examples of how Semai-occupied lands were perceived as "no man's land" or "wastelands" to dominant colonizing regimes in the 19th and early twentieth centuries. In the 1940s to the 1960s Orang
Asli inhabited areas were literally battle-grounds, first for the Japanese and the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army, and then for the Communist guerillas and British-Malayan military forces. Whichever warring party controlled these areas was assured the stability and strength of their territorial regime. In these warring parties' attempts to establish their sense of place in order to assert control over these areas, all other alternative interpretations of those places were erased. By the 1960s Semai places of habitation were converted into administrative villages and whatever lengriik principles of Semai social relations became clearly subordinate to the organizing principles of a state, bent on securing their control over those "communist-infested jungle areas".

There are other examples of how the Semai senses of place and their specific locale were subjected to structures of power with clearly contrasting senses of the same place. Caught in a system of unequal social relations, the persistent effect of the structural power of the state, capital etc. are those, which dominates the senses of place through which the Semai places are understood and represented. In terms of the range of scales of the place-making process, therefore, we need to see that the Semai locale is also a "location" within a wider territorial society. John Agnew defines "location" as the "effects upon locales of social and economic processes operating at wider scales" (Agnew, 1993:263). Seen this way, therefore, both the Semai locale or lengriik and their "structure of feeling" about that place are located according to the demands of a spatially extensive division of labour, the global system of material production and distribution and variable patterns of political authority and control. But the attempts at fixing the meaning of particular social spaces, to enclose them with fixed identities and to claim them for one's own does not mean that places are necessarily fixed and bounded. If anything, these exclusivist claims to places only generates contestation. Seen from the perspective of the Semai notions mentioned earlier, places are not merely given topographical points on the map. They are articulations of social relations continually produced, reproduced and changed. Semai land struggles, therefore, are such articulations of place-making happening in one locale but interconnected to processes at wider spatial scales. In the following chapters I shall examine the specific practices of different agencies at particular places to illustrate what has been discussed thus far in rather abstract terms.
Chapter Three: Orang Asli Land Rights in History (1800s to 1930s)

What rights in land have the Orang Asli historically enjoyed, how and why did these change over time and what implications did these changes have for the Orang Asli? This is the central question I wish to examine in this chapter.

Difficulties in Characterizing Orang Asli Land Rights in History

Where and how does one begin a historical examination of Orang Asli land rights? This question is tied in with another - "how do we define land rights?". If rights in land are "defined as claims that are legally and socially recognized by an external legitimized authority" (Argawal, 1994:19) then in the case of the Orang Asli it must be said that they enjoyed no land rights for most of their history. In the period of Malay and subsequent British rule in Perak the Orang Asli were able to occupy a certain land area but only until the land was appropriated for other purposes. In other words, the Orang Asli only enjoyed temporary access-rights to land during the Malay and British periods of rule. For the purposes of this chapter, therefore, it is more appropriate to understand land rights as claims that were legally and socially recognized and enforceable by the Orang Asli group itself.

How do we go about examining the historical land rights of this Semai group? As I mentioned in Chapter One, in terms of historical information from either primary or secondary sources, there are almost no available data on land occupation or land use regarding any Orang Asli group prior to the 1960s. What available official data (for much of it is still under a security embargo dating from the Emergency years) provides information regarding the land claims/occupation/use but in terms of the state's intended plans for those Orang Asli villages. And what secondary sources there are which do examine the land situation of the Orang Asli the focus in these works is on the period during and after the Emergency years (1948 - 1960). For it was during this period when the Malayan state first began to intervene directly and intensely into the Orang Asli situation. Given this paucity of historical documentation, therefore, regarding the land rights situation of the Orang Asli (in particular the Semai groups studied in this research) I have had to rely heavily on the oral-history narratives of the Semai villagers.
Working from these oral narratives I have attempted to bring together what information they provide of their historical land practices with what we know of the wider socio-economic forces operating around that time and place.

Given my reliance on the Semai oral-history narratives, it is necessary to say something about them and how they impinge on the analyses provided in this chapter. First, these oral narratives address the land practices of the Semai, which span a period between the early nineteenth century to the present time. As such, and given the fact that there are no data of their land practices in earlier periods, the periodization adopted in this chapter follows that of the Semai narratives. A second point is that most of these Semai oral-history accounts were not collected as part of this research. They were collected by village leaders as part of a land-rights campaign-project directed at the Malaysian state-authorities. Over a period of several months in 1994, a committee of village representatives from Canu, Pendue and Γni collected oral-history accounts, regarding the history of their settlements, from senior members of their villages as well as elders from nearby Semai villages. These narratives were then edited and written up as part of a memorandum which the villagers of Canu then submitted to the Malaysian government requesting that the lands they are occupying/using be gazetted as an Aboriginal Reserve. The Semai oral-history narratives were collected with the specific intention to substantiate the Semai claims to the land they are presently occupying and using. They reconstruct a history of their relations to the land, tracing the movements of their forebears from the latter's settlement in the first lengriik or "country" of Darat Legep to the setting up of the present villages of Canu, Pendue and Γni. However, there is a particular tenor to their narration that should be explicated in order to appreciate them for their analytical imports. To begin with the example of Wah Kawat, for instance, who was the main scribe behind the memorandum project. As we were walking through the town of Kota, one day, Wah Kawat pointed in the direction of the wet-market and remarked:

There was a Semai impaat (settlement) situated exactly where that market now stands...Our lengriik (country), Darat Legep, once stretched from where is now the Kota Railway station all the way to where our kampungs (villages) are now located and even further into the hills... when Atuk Canu and his followers first arrived here this town did not exist, there were no Malays or Chinese, the whole place was covered with forests and swamps...
Wah Kawat was 25 years old and lives in Canu. She is also actively involved in the Semai's land rights struggle. Like all the other adult Semai she is well acquainted with the landscape features, natural boundary-markers and different places of their lengriik territory. Semai elders pass on this knowledge of lengriik places to the children of the village when the latter come of age. Every young Semai adult is taken through the forests and familiarised with particular streams, ridges, hills and other landscape features which serve as markers of the lengriik as a whole but also of specific places located within the territory. The Semai villagers know where one lengriik ends and another begins or what marks off one kampok (orchard) from another, which set of fruit trees belong to whom, where various pabel (ancestral burial grounds) are sited, etc. However, it is more than lessons in contemporary Semai geography that is passed on by the elders to younger members of the village. In these "adult-initiation" trips into the forest, but also on other occasions, Semai children are told by their parents and grandparents of other locations that had constituted places within their lengriik in previous times. For instance, Wah Kawat explained that on different occasions when as a teenager she accompanied her parents to the town of Kota the latter had pointed out the various sites they passed and explained what those locations had represented for the Semai in previous times.

...all the places we passed from our village to the town were once a part of our first lengriik, Darat Legep...the rubber plantations just outside the village was a part of Atuk Pendue's rubber farm... the Chinese cemetery, kampung Melayu (a Malay village), the Chinese pig and vegetable farms, the Indian cattle farm... when we were in the town of Kota my parents pointed out to me where different tmpaat of our ancestors were located... they moved here when Malay settlers occupied their previous tmpaat area and they moved again when the mai biyaeg (white men) came to rule the Malays... my parents told me how all the Semai of Canu were interned in a camp here for two years during the Emergency...

Cultural geographers speak of a peoples' "territorial identity of a sense of place" which they project onto their political struggles (Massey, 1994:146; Agnew, 1993:263; Agnew & Duncan, 1989:2; Rose, 1995) or, to use William's (1977) phrase, a "structure of feeling" constituted from experiences of historical and everyday, placed-based practices. These are useful concepts to explain an important aspect of the Semai's contemporary land rights campaigns. This subjective territorial identity of sense of place comes out strongly in the oral narratives of the Semai villagers as they recount the history of their land practices. Places such as particular rivers, mountains and the like have deep, historical and even religious significance for the Semai. They
are potent elements of the Semai's historical landscape, reminders of the role of conspicuous places in marking and delimiting their social space that was known as their country of Darat Legep. These places also express what were harrowing historical experiences of the Semai persisting in the struggle with ecological and hostile competitors for territory and its resources. Moreover, these land struggles of the Semai have continued and taken different shapes in the contemporary period. For example, the Semai land campaigns are linked to similar campaigns being staged in various parts of the world. In fact, the idea of writing-up the history of indigenous settlements and mapping out traditional indigenous lands was first mooted in the 1992 General Assembly of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), held in Chiangmai, in which the Orang Asli were represented and participated (AIPP, 1992). Following up on these AIPP proposals several Orang Asli leaders were trained in the skills of surveying and mapping with the purpose to assist Orang Asli villages in their land campaigns. Wah Kawat was one such person to attend these training sessions. What all this implies is that this Semai sense of place is not only generated from shared local experiences of land struggles. In other words, a "local structure of feeling" about place is not simply a social-spatial definition of place "from the inside, so to speak" or limited to the scale of the personal as some authors have suggested (Goffman, 1961; Sommer, 1969).

However, it is easy to overemphasize this Semai sense of place as the major element informing their oral narratives abstracting from the broader historical context in which such sentiments arose and were reproduced or changed. For most of their history, for instance, Semai-occupied lands were located according to the demands of the political authority and control of, first, dominant Malay then British regimes in the region of Perak. Within the politico-legal schemes of the Malay regimes the "Sakai" (Orang Asli) had no rights whatsoever, let alone land rights. In terms of Malay law, for instance, which applied to these territorial regimes "Sakai" was a legal category of slaves to be owned as chattels without any rights, legal protections or possibility of manumission (Liaw, 1976). "[N]one but a Muslim had legal rights..." in Perak...The Aborigines, as infidels, were hunted down and enslaved and... not the slightest notice was taken of the murder of a Sakai" (Winstedt and Wilkinson, 1974:91). Even after the institution of slavery was abolished at the end of the nineteenth century, to the Malay the Orang Asli were a sub-human race, little more than animals, and, therefore not entitled to
normal human rights (Maxwell, 1880:50; Annandale and Robinson, 1903:9). In the 1880s, when the British took over the government of Perak and began restructuring the land system in Perak, the land rights situation of the Orang Asli did not change appreciably from previous times. Although the Semai were not hunted down as slaves anymore, the lands they occupied became part of the forests which the British designated as "no man's land", "the vast and uncleared waste and forest land to be opened up and cultivated by bona fide settlers" (Acting Sec. to Gov., Perak to Colonial Sec., 2nd Oct. 1891, enclosure in Smith to Knutsford, 28th Oct. 1891, CO 273/176, British Resident, Perak to Colonial Sec., 7th Oct. 1891). Thus, just as it was during the period of Malay rule so also during the colonial period the Semai-occupied lands were appropriated each time the ruling regime alienated those lands for their own development projects.

What can be discerned from the Semai oral narratives, therefore, are more than just a "sense of place" or "structure of feeling" with regard to their historical land rights. The narratives also recall how the Semai ancestors used the land, organized themselves therein and gave meaning to different places. These Semai land practices, however, rested on two major premises especially during the 19th century but also well into the 20th century. First, what practices they enjoyed were only recognized and enforced by Semai customs and institutions. Second, the reproduction of their land practices depended necessarily on the Semai relocating their settlements, deeper and further into the forests, each time the lands they were occupying were threatened with appropriation. During the period of Malay rule, moreover, the Semai had to maintain a safe physical-geographical distance between them and Malay settlements to avoid the risk of being captured as slaves. In addition, during the colonial period the Semai could only practice their land system within those areas of the forests that were not alienated for other purposes.

Some other concepts may be helpful at this point to explain how the historical land rights of the Semai may be examined. First, the Semai, Malay and British land norms/practices may be usefully understood as systems of territoriality. According to Sack (1986:19), "territoriality" is defined as the "attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area". However, the dynamics of power relations between different groups claiming control over
social space are unequal. This is clear in the case of the Semai vis-a-vis the Malay and British territorial society. Therefore, territorial strategies - to affect control over a certain area - also varies with groups with differentiated access to socio-economic resources. As I will demonstrate later, in the Semai case their main territorial strategy in the face of the Malay/British territorial expansion was very specific. Each time the Semai-occupied land were threatened with appropriation they proceeded to carve out another social space for themselves in the more inaccessible parts of the forests of the Central Mountain Range. It was within this social space, which the Semai call their lengriik or country, that they were able to practice their customary land system. To use the concept from Giddens (1983:79), it is appropriate to describe these Semai land norms and practices, in the context of their territorial strategy, as "locale" specific. A "locale", according to Giddens, is a physically bounded area that provides a setting for a group's institutionally embedded social actions and practices. However, this Semai locale was also constantly shifting because it was, at the same time, a "location" within a wider territorial society. A "location", in this sense, may be defined as the effects upon "locales" of social and economic processes operating at wider spatial scales (Agnew, 1993:263). For example, during the period of Malay rule what was the Semai locale or Darat Legep land area was first encroached by Malays when new tin-mines were discovered in the vicinity in the 1850s. In subsequent times the lands which the Semai had relocated their settlements to were further alienated/appropriated by the British regime for Malay, Chinese and European settlements, mines, plantations, etc. In this sense, therefore, the Semai locale was not only located within the immediate and wider Malay/Colonial territory but affected also by socio-economic processes elsewhere in the 19th/20th-century world. "Push" factors in India, China, Indonesia and Europe and "pull" factors in Malaya were bringing in numerous migrants and their land projects into the Semai forests.

In the light of these explanations, therefore, I approach the question of the Semai's historical land rights, or practices, in terms of these three elements of "sense of place", "locale" and "location". A final point - these different scales of spatiality are not independent of each other. Semai land rights cannot be simply "read off" from just one of these scales. Social process happening at these different scales, over time, need to be brought together at specific junctures in order to arrive at an understanding of what land rights the Semai did or did not enjoy.
Dominant Territorial Regimes in 19th-Century Perak

For most of the 19th century the dominant polities in the region of Perak were Malay chiefdoms organized around strategic military-commercial locations along the Perak River and its major tributaries (Andaya & Andaya, 1982; Khoo 1983; Sullivan, 1982). The history of these chieftaincies may be traced back to the sixteenth century when the Malay-Islamic kingdom of Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511. Following this event Melakan tributaries relocated their power bases and what ensued was a competition among these elite groups to re-establish Malay kingdoms of their own in various parts of the Malayan peninsula (Andaya & Andaya, 1985). In retrospect, it may be said that these fractions of the Melakan ruling class attempted to reproduce the royal-political structures of Melaka in their new kingdoms (Ibid.). But in Perak, as well as other places in the peninsula, these attempts at establishing a kingdom in the fashion of Melaka were to result, by the 19th century, in a state of affairs whence the so-called negeri Melayu (Malay state) of Perak was more an ideological construct than actual practice (Chai, 1993). Although nominally there was a sultan at the apex of its political system the so-called negeri (state) was in fact divided and ruled by powerful local territorial chiefs acting independently of any central political or economic regulation (Andaya & Andaya, 1985). In terms of territorial practices, Malay statecraft, settlements and trade in 19th century Perak revolved around the peculiar social geography of the region. In Perak the river-system which flows from the interior highlands into the Straits of Melaka served as the main means of inter-settlement communication and transport (Khoo, 1983). Malay settlements, their agriculture and trading activities were concentrated at river-mouths and the surrounding coastal plains on both sides of the major rivers (Map...). The Perak waterways also facilitated a form of military governance to emanate from several political centres and fan out to control trade and populations centred on the river system. The Malay chiefs of Perak and their entourages were located at strategic river confluences from where they could control trade passing through their domains as well as mobilize their armies to control populations settled along the rivers (Andaya, 1979; Andaya & Andaya, 1982). As for the political nature of these Malay territorial regimes, they were basically despotic in character and oriented towards maintaining intensive local power relations. Thus, in
terms of territorial boundaries they tended to correspond geographically to those of the Perak River basin (Jomo, 1988:5).

Among the major factors which enabled these territorial chiefs to maintain their political position were, first, their claiming the right of surplus appropriation from the rakyat population settled proximate to the formers' center of power. There were at least two primary modes of surplus appropriation practised by the Malay ruling class i.e. the tribute-paying mode and the kerah (corvée) (Jomo, 1988). Tribute paying included the exaction of taxes on trade passing through the district as well as direct exaction of surplus from peasant production. The exaction of tribute was especially lucrative to the chieftains in Perak because of the trading, especially in tin, which passed through the Perak rivers (Wong, 1965). For instance, in the period immediately prior to the British takeover of government in Perak the taxation of and control over trade passing through the Perak rivers constituted the single most important source of income for the ruling elite of these chieftaincies (Jomo, 1988:15). In addition, both the exaction of tribute as well as corvée labour were demanded with the threat of coercive force actual as well as potential. A story from a 19th-century observer, of this area in question, perhaps best illustrates this coercive situation:

Some 15 years ago there was a Malay kampung (village) on the banks of this stream [of the Batang Padang River] and the inhabitants subsisted principally by mining, but as they refused to pay blackmail to Sheik Mahomed of Lower Perak, he came up with some fighting men and burned the houses down and drove the inhabitants away (Wray, 1890:151)

Apart from corvée labour and exaction of commercial tribute, the Malay ruling class also relied on slavery and debt-slavery to maintain their socio-economic position. Slave labour, especially in agriculture and mining in the case of Perak, provided the surplus necessary to maintain the ruling class in a "non-productive military and political role" (Gullick, 1958:102). Slave labour was also mobilised to provide domestic, military and administrative services for their masters (Gullick, 1958:97f; Maxwell, 1890:249; Swettenham, 1882:10; Mahmud bin Mat, 1954:9; Aminuddin bin Baki, 1966:9, Birch, 1882:7). Young female slaves were also "kept as a means of satisfying the sexual appetites of the young, unmarried men who formed the chief's armed following" (Gullick, 1958:103). Some slaves and debtors were also used as chattel to earn an income for their owners by working for others and could be transferred to another for a price (Gullick, 1958:103). Slaves were also mobilised in the tin mines of the Perak Malay chiefs.
As for their supply of slaves, the Malay ruling class imported many slaves from Mecca, Sumatra and Bali but their greatest source of slaves was local (Endicott, 1983). Among the locals there were, first, the Malay *rakyat* (subjects). The Malay ruling class created socio-economic conditions for debt-bondage, most importantly by confiscating excess production of the Malay peasants thus making the latter very vulnerable to becoming indebted to the former (Ibid.). Debt-slaves were, therefore, mainly Malay commoners who had become indebted to Malay aristocrats by borrowing money or being fined for some real or alleged offence. In theory debt-slaves could redeem themselves by repayment of the debt but in practice this was virtually impossible because work performed by the debt-slave did not count for toward the reduction of the original debt (Ibid. p. 217). In theory, too, debt-slaves being Muslims were technically free persons but this did not count for much to the ruling class Muslims (Maxwell, 1890:248; Swettenham, 1882:10). The most abundant source of slaves for the Malay ruling class, however, was the Orang Asli population. (Ironically, in the legends of the founding of the Perak negeri the Malay ruling class legitimated their political claims to sovereignty by linking their genealogies with those of the Orang Asli, see Maxwell, 1882). And, among the Orang Asli population whom were targets of Malay slave-raiding, it is known that the Semai in the Batang Padang District especially suffered from these slave-raids more than any other Orang Asli group (Wray, 1903:180; Cerruti, 1908:141).

Although these territorial chiefs wielded despotic power over the subject populations in their domains, the former's political position and extent of effective control were not without their limitations. In terms of effective control over local populations the chiefs' power was limited first by military logistics and second by geography. For instance, the form of military governance emanating from the chief's power base could not be extended into the vast tracts of forestlands straddled along the Central Mountain Range. This is indicated, for instance, in the fact that the main strategy of subject populations, in the face of these oppressions such as corvée labour and slavery, was flight into the more inaccessible parts of the forests of the Central Mountain Range (Gullick, 1958:29). The organizational reach of the standing armies of these territorial chiefs were limited such that rewards had to be offered to members of the *rakyat* for the capture of run-a-way debtor-*rakyat* and slaves (Maxwell, 1890:289). The geographical extent of the chiefs' control over subject populations is also indicated in the rate of rewards
meted out for the capture of run-a-way slaves (Ibid.). For example, in the case of the Malay chief who was based in Durian Sebatang - he paid an increasing rate of rewards for a captured slave according to the distance away from his base where the slave was captured. In other words, a higher reward was offered for the slave captured further east away from the chief's base. The organizational reach of the chiefs' control was also limited in that military power was concentrated around the chiefs' bases because of the constant, externally mounted threats to their position. In fact the history of the Perak region spanning the 16th to the 19th centuries can be characterized as a series of inter-territorial conflicts, succession disputes, and military invasions mobilized by external powers (Chai, 1993). These external powers were not only neighbouring states of Aceh, Thailand, Kedah and Selangor but also Portuguese, Dutch and British forces all vying especially for exclusive control over the lucrative tin trade centred in the Perak region (Andaya, 1979; Andaya & Andaya, 1982). The territorial chiefs who succeeded in retaining their political position through each of these conflicts were ultimately those who managed to muster sufficient military support from other chiefs in the region as well ally themselves with one or other of the foreign forces (Ibid.).

Perhaps more than anything else it was the presence of large deposits of tin in the 19th-century Perak region which made it an attractive location for territorial contests and expansionism. Perak tin was sought by traders from Coromandel, Java, China, Cambodia and many other places since the fifteenth century (Wilkinson & Winstedt, 1919:25ff). From the 16th to the 18th centuries, first the Portuguese and then the Dutch tried to enforce monopoly rights over the tin trade in Perak but they failed (Ibid.; Andaya, 1979:85). In the 19th century, the British entered the scene to secure favourable tin-trading terms with the Malay chiefs. Initially the British authorities were content for their merchants to be but one of several parties in the tin trade. But by the mid-nineteenth century there was increasing pressure from mercantile community, based in the Straits Settlement colony, on the British authorities to annex Perak because the supply of tin was being hampered by a "state of chaos" in that country (Sadka, 1968). Something of this process needs to be examined in order to understand the territorial effects in Perak because of wider socio-economic forces. In Britain the protective tariffs on foreign tin were repealed in 1853 and the import of tin, especially from the Straits Settlements, increased about six-fold between 1816-1820 and mid-19th century (Wong, 1965:17). In 1860,
the canning industry in Britain caused the expansion of tin plate manufacture and this further increased the demand of tin from the British Eastern Possessions (Ibid.). Concurrent with these developments large numbers of Chinese immigrants began moving into the tin industry in Perak. Rebellions in mid-19th century China were "push" factors while new and rich tin mines being discovered in the Larut area of Perak in the 1840s were pull factors for this pattern of Chinese migration. By mid-19th century, tin-production was also passing from the control of Malay territorial chiefs to Chinese management and labour (Ibid.). In terms of population, the Chinese numbers rose from a few hundred, when they first arrived in the 1830s (Wilkinson, 1923), to 26,000 by 1874 (Asst. Resident's Report, C1320: 132). Politically, the Chinese were organized along clan, dialect and China-based regional lines and by the 1850s these kongsis, hui (brotherhood) societies were controlling different tin concessions in Perak (Wong, 1965). There was also increasing competition among these groups for the tin concessions bringing earlier regional hostilities to intensify their mining disputes. By the 1870s, the hostilities became increasingly violent and complex first, because various Chinese merchants in the Straits Settlements were funding each Chinese group and, second, each group was militarily allied with different factions of rival Malay chiefs. It were these hostilities over the control of tin production in Perak, which the British called the "Larat Wars" of 1870-73, which prompted the British authorities to intervene into the affairs of government in Perak (Sadka, 1968). Initially the British brokered the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 by which they appointed themselves, in the form of a Resident, to "advice" the sultan on proper government of Perak. But less than a year later the Resident was killed in a rebellion staged by several territorial chiefs. This led to a British military conquest of Perak in 1876 and the forced removal, by exile and execution, of all the territorial chiefs. Although Perak was not formally made a British colony till after the Japanese invasion in 1945 (Emerson, 1937) in effect the British assumed government of the state in 1876 while maintaining the fiction of nominal Malay rule (Sadka, 1968).

Territorial and Tenurial Practices of the Semai in their 19th Century Darat Locales

...the earliest settlement of our ancestors was a place called Cangkat Dulu...Atuk Canu and several families moved from Cangkat Dulu to a place below the hills which they called Darat Legep. When Atuk Canu and his followers first came to Darat Legep... each pitak spread out and opened up their tampaat in the territory of Darat Legep...these
tmpaat were Tanggo, Canang, Kemik, Panyag and Tamut... each tmpaat appointed their own raknak. They were Atuk Canu, Yok Nar, Atuk Nek, Atuk Mpat and Atuk Lima [respectively]... and around their tmpaat they cultivated paddy, yam, tapioca, corn and Semai vegetables... Darat Legep became our lengriik or 'country'. Today this land area stretches from where is now the 5th Mile of the Teluk Intan Road to where the Kota Railway Station is currently located.....the rakyat [Malay subjects] were under the rule of the Malay Raja who was based at where is now Teluk Intan... the nearest Malay kampung (village) was located at where is near the Kuala Kota area... their population was not very big then. Several years after they were at Darat Legep...Atuk Canu and members of his tmpaat heard news that the Malays were planning to settle nearby their tmpaat. When they heard this news Atuk Canu urged his followers to relocate their tmpaat to Teow Mahang and Teow Panggang further east into the Darat Legep territory. Today, this place is where the Kota wet-market is located. At that time, however, the town of Kota did not exist. There were no Malays nor Chinese settled there. The place was covered with forests and swamps. It was there that Atuk Canu and his followers decided to move to when they heard of the Malays moving into their lengriik.

According to historical records, tin mining and the setting up of Malay settlements around the Kota River first took place around the 1850s (Wong, 1965). These mines were closed soon after only to be revived in the 1870s, during which time the town of Kota emerged (Ibid.). The Malay territorial chief governing this region was based at Durian Sebatang, the place now called Teluk Intan. Therefore, the Darat Legep lengriik, referred to in the oral history narrative above, must have been pioneered sometime before the 1850s and it was situated on the forest-covered plains between the Kota and Batang Padang Rivers (Map...). If the town of Kota only sprung up in the 1870s, then the boundaries of Darat Legep and the location of the Semai tmpaat would have existed, as narrated by the Semai, up to the 1870s.

The current Semai inhabitants of Canu and Pendue trace their land rights to the tenurial/territorial practices of their ancestors in their 19th-century lengriik or "country" of Darat Legep. The term lengriik may be more appropriately translated as a "band territory", i.e. a combination of land relations with particular emphasis on lineage and ancestry within a spatial realm. According to the Semai oral narratives, there were other Semai bands located in the same region but they did not possess a central political organization. The Semai who occupied Darat Legep, for instance, belonged to a common descent group whose members shared an ancestry to a common founder of the group. Organisationally, the Darat Legep descent group was divided into five sub-groups or pitak each overseered by a raknak (elder) appointed by members of each pitak. While the descent group was the core of each of the sub-groups or settlements yet
relations between the five sub-groups were not dominated by a central authority. Atuk Canu was recognized as the founder/pioneer of the Darat Legep lengriik, the most senior member of the descent group and was therefore appointed as the mairaknak or "elder-of-the-lengriik-community" known as the mai pasak. However, the mairaknak did not exercise overall authority over the individual pitak scattered over the lengriik territory. Each pitak was an autonomous social unit, overseered by their respective raknak, and each occupied a specific land area within the lengriik that centred on their settlement site or tmpaat. The tmpaats, marked by specific landscape features, were situated within the drainage area of smaller teouw (rivers) from which they derived their names. Bah Tani, who is in his eighties and a great-grandson of Atuk Canu explained that the nature of Semai authority as practised in Darat Legep was very much centred within each of the tmpaat:

...the mairaknak was not our king and the raknak was not our chief, they were raknak (elders) who were wise and fluent in Semai customs... but they could not interfere in the affairs of the mai (people) unless they were requested to or if a Semai brings a problem to them to be settled. If the raknak interfered without being asked to then people would leave that tmpaat and join up with another tmpaat...

If authority is the socially-legitimated control exercised by one or several individuals over the actions of others then in the case of the Darat Legep Semai the authority of the Mai/raknak were temporary or limited to specific occasions. In terms of their land practices, for instance, the Darat Legep Semai were guided not so much by hierarchical authority structures as by Semai custom concerning lengriik relations. Each raknak mediated in land matters only when one or both of the quarreling parties brought the problem to him. The raknak's permission was also sought when a Semai from another tmpaat wished to migrate to the settlement area overseered by the former. Otherwise, as Bah Tani explained

...every member of the lengriik knew where their own and others' kampok (orchard) were located, which tmpaat they belonged to and what are the lengriik laws they must observe as they go about their daily life...

Although the Semai practised shifting agriculture, among other economic activities, their settlement site was relatively fixed. They would move their homesteads only if a series of deaths have occurred in a particular settlement. However, thrice during the course of the 19th century, all the Darat Legep Semai moved the locations of their tmpaat further eastwards into the forests of the Central Mountain Range. When it was first established as a Semai "country" its land area,
according to Semai oral history, stretched from "...where is now the 5th Mile of the Teluk Intan Road to where the Kota Railway Station is currently located..." (Map...). This would have been before the 1850s. But by the end of the century, because of the relocating of their tmpaat, the Darat Legep lengriik covered the area between Atuk Pendue's tmpaat and Bukit Balang (Map...). The reasons for the Semai relocating of the tmpaat were the same on each occasion. On each occasion their decision to move the lengriik was prompted "by news that Malays were going to settle nearby the Semai tmpaat".

The Darat Legep Semai were not alone in resorting to this strategy of flight in the face of Malay encroachment upon their lands. In fact, even at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century this strategy of flight was common to the Batang Padang Semai in general (Wray, 1890:163f; Cerruti, 1908:141). It was not merely the migration of Malays into Semai-occupied areas that prompted the latter to move deeper and higher into the forested hills. As was mentioned earlier, the Semai of Perak were especially targeted in Malay slave raiding more than any other Orang Asli group during the 19th century (Wray, 1903:180). In addition, these slave raiding parties were usually organized from Malay villages located closest to the fringe of the forests. These Malay raiding parties were quite large, armed, well-organized and often used tactics of surprise and ambush in their hunting of Orang Asli slaves (Endicott, 1983:239f). Thus, in addition to re-locating their settlements the Semai would adopt added measures such as never camping near navigable rivers, walking in streams whenever possible and setting man-traps on the paths leading to their settlements (Wilkinson, 1910:49). It is therefore not surprising that the Darat Legep Semai relocated their tmpaat each time they heard that Malay settlements were to move into the former's territory.

The Darat Legep Semai were not, however, completely isolated from Malay society. On one spatial scale, that of their lengriik they practised their tenurial/territorial relations as a closed or internal network of pitak. Of course, the maintenance of this land system depended on the Semai capability to keep a safe physical distance from the Malays. However, on another scale there were limited interactions between the Semai and "outsiders". These interactions were at the level of trade. Thus, despite the re-locating of their tmpaats further and deeper into the forests of the Central Mountain Range, the Darat Legep Semai kept up a certain amount of intercourse with Chinese and Malay traders. The trade was in the shape of a traffic in jungle
produce on the one part and knives, axes, cooking pots, salt, cloth, etc. on the other. These trading relations can best be understood in its spatial arrangements. All trade between the Darat Legep Semai and Malay/Chinese traders were mediated by the mairaknak. Even his tmpaat was strategically located in accordance with his specific task. As Bah Tani explained:

...each time the Semai had to move their tmpaat, his [the mairaknak's] tmpaat will always be located furthest downstream so that he can meet the people who come from the coasts... we give him the things we want to sell and he is the one who deals with the traders... he also warns us when he hears that the Gob is going to enter our lengriik

Semai oral history further underscores this role of the mairaknak in explaining the criteria used in appointing him - the mairaknak "...must represent an elderly, experienced, knowledgeable person who is fluent in the customs of the Semai and not afraid to speak".

Seen in the context of their 19th-century land rights, therefore, this relocating of their lengriik and the strategic role of the mairaknak enabled the Semai to reproduce their territorial/tenurial system in new locales. In terms of their actual land relations Semai customary laws outline a traditional system which, according to the Semai informants, is still observed in many ways by the present-day generation of Semai in the villages under study. Thus, at the risk of presenting a static view of the their land relations in the 19th century what follows is an explanation of the Semai land practices in terms of their customary laws.

According to the Semai oral-history narratives, apart from hunting-gathering activities on their land their forebears in Darat Legep had practised two kinds of cultivation - swidden cultivation and sedentary or permanent cultivation. Swidden cultivation was an agricultural practice that the Semai only discontinued in the 1970s due to governmental intervention. In the swidden system of agriculture, lands in the forest were cleared for the cultivation of a variety of seasonal crops and vegetables such as corn, yam, cassava etc. (see Table I). These swidden plots were then left to revert to secondary forests after a few harvests and new sites elsewhere were opened up for cultivation. The Semai would return to previous swidden sites when the soil had regenerated, a period usually between three to four years. The second form of agriculture, still typical of present-day Semai, was a permanent form of cultivation. It consisted of the planting of fruit trees such as durian, petai, rambutan etc. (see Table II). These fruit trees were grown in clearings within the forest that the Semai refer to as kampok (orchards). Most of the kampok of the 19th-century Darat Legep territory, however, do not exist anymore due to the appropriation
of Semai land. What Canu-Pendue villagers' kampok there are today (Map...) were all set up in
the beginning of this century.

In the economic activities of the Semai the basic unit which "owned" or used lengriik
lands was/is the descent group or ramage. In this sense, therefore, it may be said that land
usage/ownership was individualised in that it was used/owned by a single descent group for
their own livelihood. If the Darat Legep-Semai relations to land were to be translated in terms of
western juridical notions of landed property, then it is possible to distinguish three different
modes of land-use or land-ownership in the Semai tenural system. One mode of Semai land
relations may be termed usufructuary. More specifically, this mode of land relations applied to
swidden land. According to Semai customary law a member of the descent group could as a
simple matter of fact clear forestland within the lengriik for swidden cultivation provided others
were not already using the land. Once a cultivator had discontinued working on a particular
swidden plot then others who wished to may exercise their usufructuary rights over that piece of
land. It was, however, expected by Semai custom that the new cultivator who intended to
cultivate an "abandoned" swidden should ask the permission of the previous cultivator who
used that land. This asking of permission was also required of a Semai if she or he wished to use
an "abandoned" or "unused" property of another such as fish-traps, animal-traps etc.
Usufructuary rights to land were also observed in hunting and gathering activities. In this case, if
a western juridical notion is applied, one can describe this use of land as a grant in perpetuity
based on the user's membership in the lengriik-community. Another mode of Semai land
relations applied to kampok or fruit-orchard land. This Semai mode of land relations comes
closest to the western juridical notion of private land holding. In this instance, a Semai descent-
group member has a plot of land within the lengriik that is meant for the exclusive and perpetual
use of that person and his/her heirs. These are the kampok or orchard plots of land, which
constitute the sedentary form of Semai agriculture. As with all other types of Semai land area
the geographical markers of each kampok are certain distinguishable landscape features such as
streams, ridges etc. which members of the group recognize among themselves. In these
kampoks, fruit trees are a marker of a ramage member's "ownership" rights over this type of
land. It is a custom still adhered to by the Semai. It is this type of land, moreover, which is
handed down as part of the inheritance (sakaa) from one generation to another within the descent group.

In terms of "land dealings", to employ yet another western juridical term in land practice, Semai customary law outlines what these are and their terms of execution. There are two types of land dealings provided for in Semai custom. First, is an arrangement whereby a descent group may grant usufructuary rights to a non-member over the former's agricultural land. These usufructuary rights enabled the non-member to have access to a particular piece of a descent-group's landed property for the purposes of hunting, gathering and the planting of seasonal crops and vegetables which includes the clearing of swiddens. In this arrangement, however, the non-member is not entitled to plant any fruit trees. As mentioned earlier, fruit trees are a legal marker of a descent-group member's inherited property and therefore the giving of non-ramage members permission to plant fruit trees in ramage territory is not acceded to lightly. In a sense, this land-dealing arrangement may be likened to a form of leasehold although no rent is exacted by the landholder, in this case the member of the descent-group.

The second form of Semai land dealing is an arrangement whereby ownership rights over a descent-group's landed property can be extended to a non-member of that descent-group. One way to begin to understand this form of "land dealing" is to see the Semai as what anthropologists would call an ambilineal cognatic descent type society. Ambilineal societies are characterized by:

1) ambilineal ramines where "affiliation in each successive generation is acquired through either parent and depends, not on filiation links radiating outward from an individual as in the case of a bilateral kindred, but on chains of filiation links converging upon a common ancestor, from whom land rights are derived..." 2) extended families, 3) ambilocal residence, 4) affiliation not ordinarily maintained with the natal groups of a parent who has changed residence, and 5) membership in a descent group usually determined by parents' choice of marital residence. Occasionally present are bilateral kindreds, kinship groups that are ego-centred and consist of ego's relatives on both mother's and father's side. In addition, ambilineal descent groups characteristically practise monogamy, extend marriage prohibitions to all second as well as first cousins, apply sibling terms to first cousins, and employ avuncular terminology of the generational type, extending the term for both father's brother and mother's brother.

(Murdock, 1960:10-11)

There is, however, one major qualification that needs to be stressed concerning the Semai cognatic system. For the Semai a non-member of a descent group, whether Semai or otherwise,
can cultivate (hiit) consanguineal relationships and earn membership into a ramage group. Consequently, the non-member becomes "kin" or is socially recognized as such and thus enjoys similar usufruct and inheritance rights in the descent group. Any individual or group who migrates into the river basin of another band can inhabit a certain area with the permission of the raknak (elders) of that particular lengriik. However, non-members to the descent groups were not entitled to the use of the territory for all but building their houses and selai nyeng (house gardens). More importantly, non-members could not plant fruit trees anywhere in the territory because fruit trees are a marker of a ramage member's usufruct and inheritance rights over that territory and the fruit trees. Non-members could seek permission to acquire rights of access to the produce of a ramage's area but no planting of fruit trees was allowed. The giving of non-ramage members permission to plant fruit trees in ramage territory has implications for future generations and therefore not acceded to lightly.

Unlike in some Malay practices of land dealings which were evident in pre-colonial times (Wong, 1975:11) as well as in the later land system instituted by the colonial authorities Semai land dealings did not involve any rent exaction whether in cash or a return of a share in the produce crops. In the Semai system all types of land rights or land dealings were based on a superior proprietorship of the descent group over all the lands within their lengriik. This land-owning descent-group was referred to as the mai pasak the legitimate or original inhabitants/occupants of a lengriik. Thus, as the mai pasak owned these lengriik lands and as these lands formed the basis of their economy, production and profit were also shared - a Semai custom conceptualised as cha'samak ("eating together"). Non-members to a descent group may be granted certain usufructuary rights to lands within the lengriik. However, as long as non-members are not "admitted" into the descent group they cannot claim the common superior proprietorship of the mai pasak. The non-member is said to share certain territorial and usufruct rights only in accordance with their qualified status as mai numpuk (residents). Another aspect of the Semai jural system governing land-relations is that members of one descent group may have equal rights over the lengriik-lands of another territorial group located elsewhere. This is provided for when a member of one descent group enjoys a filiation link with another descent group through his/her parents, a link that converges upon a common ancestor from whom land rights are derived. The way a non-member cultivates consanguineal ties into a descent group in
order to earn rights in land follows the same procedures that a ramage member has to observe to gain social recognition of his/her already existing land rights. Ramage members as well as newcomers must demonstrate their interest in the affairs of the group, maintain constant and close ties and interact with others and show an interest as well as work on the maintenance and reproduction of the kampok (orchards). This is how ramage members may re-activate their rights when they migrate or return to another lengriik in which they have usufruct and inheritance rights based on ambilocal residency. A member who does not show his/her interest in reproducing the lengriik, by observing the necessary land practices, is said to have "forgotten" (inseep) his/her lengriik and thereby may lose his/her rights in lands therein.

Perak as a British Territorial Possession

As British officials took over the government of Perak in the mid-1870s a considerable number of settlers moved into this region to take advantage of the new economic opportunities (Lim, 1976:9). There was an increased demand for agricultural land, mining operations commenced in many areas, new towns sprang up, villages experienced growth and numerous land sales and widespread land speculation resulted (Sadka, 1954). One of the small towns that sprang up during these early years of colonial rule was Kota. Tin and trading were the two primary economic activities which had brought about an influx of Chinese and Malay migrants to this town. The Kota River tin mines were revived in the 1870s to become one of the main tin-producing areas of Perak until the end of the century (Wong, 1965). And, by 1890 trading activities were flourishing in this new town of Kota. A colonial official reported Kota to be "making great progress and the Malay shops are the best of the kind I have seen anywhere" (PGG, 1890:254). And, by the early 1900s a railway line and an upgraded road were connecting the town of Kota to the major port of Teluk Anson and other commercial centres such as Kuala Lumpur (Kaur, 1985).

If new Malay/Chinese settlements centred on trade and tin mining were eating away at what was Darat Legep territory from the town of Kota and upwards, large European-owned plantations, being established at the northwest portions of the Semai lengriik, did the same. In 1890, for instance, a British planter was granted a 1000-acre piece of land (AR Land
Department 1891, PGG 1892:295) which encroached upon the northwest portions of what was Darat Legep territory. The influx of new settlers and the resulting competition for land may be measured in the population increases in this period. In the Batang Padang District for instance the percentage of population increase between 1879 and 1891 was 61% with the Malay population doubling in numbers and the Chinese almost tripling in population (Sadka, 1968; 329f.). As for the tin mines around Kota and the Batang Padang Rivers there was an estimated 1000 Chinese in 1875 (Wong, 1965:87). By 1879 this number doubled (Memorandum on the Financial Condition of the Protected Malay States, Feb. 1877, Gov. to Sec. State 2nd March 1880, in CO 273/102; Notes on the Proposed Revenue Farms, Acting Gov. to Sec. State, 5th August, 1879 in CO 273/99). In the background of these early colonial developments of the state the Darat Legep Semai were compelled to move their settlements further east into the forests of the Central Mountain Range. By the end of the 19th century therefore, a large portion of what was the original Darat Legep territory was occupied by a wholly new town, mining fields, a large European plantation and several Malay kampungs (see Map II for the changes in the Darat Legep landscape following early colonial land-developments). In a sense, the pattern of Semai land rights during British rule of Perak in the last quarter of the nineteenth century did not change appreciably from the previous era of Malay rule. From the perspective of the dominant ruling regime, the Darat Legep Semai could enjoy occupation and use of a particular piece of land but only up to the point in time when that land area was appropriated and alienated for another purpose. During the pre-colonial period, the Semai enjoyed no rights whatsoever in the context of the Malay regimes that exercised eminent domain whether it existed in law or not. To the Malay regime the Semai were seen as potential slaves. Thus, each time Malay settlers encroached on Semai lands the latter were compelled to move their settlements further east into the forest. During the colonial period, however, tracts of forests in which the Semai relocated their lengriik were declared by the British regime as "no man's land", "vast and uncleared waste and forest land to be opened up and cultivated by bona fide settlers". Even towards the end of the 19th century, these large tracts of the Perak forest were seen as valueless and therefore to be cleared and cultivated (Acting Sec. to Gov., Perak to Colonial Sec., 2nd Oct. 1891, enclosure in Smith to Knutsford, 28th Oct. 1891, CO 273/176; British Resident, Perak to Colonial Secretary,
7th Oct. 1891). To the British regime, the "Sakai" were seen as part of the flora and fauna of the forests, allowed to roam therein but expected to die out in time (Noone, 1936).

With the "liberal land policy" advocated by the British regime during the first 20 years of colonial rule, Perak forest land was alienated as fast as it was applied for even before proper demarcation (Lim, 1976). What these policy implied was that new lands, such as the 1000-acre plot at the northeastern enclave of Darat Legep, could be alienated under the English-derived titles of a lease for 999 years after payment of rent and premium. The 999-year lease, it was believed, was to provide security of tenure to the landholder (Ibid.). Although there was criticism from certain quarters of the British regime "against parting with public lands at a sacrifice for the sake of an immediate addition to population which is not vital to the solvency or steady progress of the state" (Knutsford to Smith, 15th October 1891, CO 273/173), the Resident of Perak defended the Perak liberal-land-policy arguing that "...capital and labour are what we want and if we can get them by gift of certain areas of forest the exchange is no sacrifice but the wisest choice the Government could pursue (British Resident, Perak to Colonial Secretary, 7 October 1891 in Maxwell, 1894:46f). In practice, the 1879 and 1885 Perak land regulations allowed for settlers to forgo the paying of quit rents for a period of time. In fact the Perak Resident was so convinced of the liberality of land policy he was willing to advocate a free grant of land to those who could give satisfactory guarantees that they would cultivate it (British Resident, Perak to Colonial Secretary, 7 October 1891 enclosure in Smith to Knutsford, 28th October 1891). Even the Governor of the Straits Settlement stressed that the objective of Government was to get its land taken up on almost any terms (Maxwell, 1894:viii).

Perhaps at another more significant level of the colonial reorganizing of the geographical space of Perak were the new juridical meanings given to land and the long-lasting implications they had for the land rights of the Orang Asli such as the Darat Legep Semai. The colonial regime did vaguely acknowledge the land rights of the "native landholder" which had existed prior to the former's takeover of government in Perak. But who the "native landholder" was, according to the British, and how the latter proceeded to protect these "native" landholding rights need to be investigated. In the 1879 land regulations of Perak there was a recognition of "land in occupation of Natives" (General Land Regulations, Perak 1879, Class II land). However, the "native" in question was the Malay. However, even this recognition of the Malay
The native did not ensure that their land-holding rights were secured in terms of the said legislation. The clause regarding "land in occupation of Natives under Malay Tenure" was made null and void in practice by another section in the regulations which decreed that certificates to this class were to be superceded by leases for 999 years after survey (Lim, 1976). Moreover, when the new land laws of Perak were enacted in 1885 the class of lands in the occupation of natives under Malay Tenure was removed altogether. Therefore, despite the recognition of a "native" Malay tenurial system, the early colonial land administration was in a confused state with respect to "native holdings". Even when new and uniform land legislation was introduced in all the member states of the newly formed Federated Malay States, in 1897, there was no reference to any "native customary tenure". However, the 1897 legislation did provide, in practice, for a type of "native" landholding by way of registration of such lands in mukim Registers (Section 5 of Perak State Land Enactment, 1897). However, this was a practice and privilege only accorded to Malays. These privileged rights of the Malays were then legally explicated with the Malay Reservations Enactment of 1913. By this enactment, land was to be specifically alienated for Malays, the latter defined as "a person belonging to any Malaysian race who habitually speaks the Malay language or any Malayan language and professes the Muslim religion" (Cap. 142, F. M. S. Malay Reservations Enactment, 1913).

It is evident, therefore, that in the colonial restructuring of the geographical space of Perak the Semai land-rights were not even vaguely acknowledged. In fact, not only was the Semai landholding system disregarded by the colonial regime but the latter re-classified lands being occupied by the former thus taking away whatever legal prospects the Semai may have to make claims on whatever was left of their lengriik territory. To the colonial authorities lands occupied by the Semai were but large tracts of forests which were valueless and therefore to be cleared and cultivated. The only land policy which could attract settlers and lead to permanent agricultural settlement, they argued, was a liberal one and to their minds it could only be associated with a system of quit rents fixed in perpetuity. In addition, with the later provisions for the alienation of "native Malay" land, Semai-occupied "waste-lands" became "free for all" - for Malay settlement/cultivation, for European planters and other foreign settlers. Thus, land which the Semai either recognized as private usufructuary lands or as part of a territory which
actually belonged to them had become, in terms of legislation and practice, "vast and uncleared waste and forest land to be opened up and cultivated by bona fide settlers" (Ibid.).

The Orang Asli as Wards of the Malay Sultan

After several years, the English rulers and the Malay Raja gathered all the Orang Asli of Atuk Canu's lengriik with the purpose of appointing a headman from among them to act as a representative of all the Orang Asli in this area. Since Atuk Canu was mairaknak of the group, the people unanimously appointed him as their headman. It was from this time that the title of "penghulu" (headman) was used to refer to the leader of the Orang Asli. However, this appointment was an oral agreement and no letter of appointment was issued...

At that time, the lengriik of Atuk Pendue came under the administration of the penghulu mukim (Territorial Chief of the Sub-District) who was called Raja Alang. The Orang Asli of this lengriik were required to present regular offerings to him [the penghulu mukim] such as ubi muda, pucuk ubi, keladi, keledek, petai etc. and each time they sent these offerings they were required to bow before him.

At that time too, the Orang Asli of Atuk Pendue's lengriik were required to sell their fruits to Raja Alang's traders. The payment they received for their fruits was very little. Otherwise they were paid in kind with such items as salt, sugar and parang (machete).

The Semai oral history narrative above needs to be understood in the context of the changes instituted by the British after they took over the government of Perak in the late 1870s. The British fiscal reforms instituted in 1876 and 1877 had left most of the Malay chiefs and the rajas (those who were not executed or banished from Perak after the killing of the first British Resident) with very little income to support themselves and their following. However, these rajas and chiefs were entitled to certain allowances as part of the Pangkor Engagement. Most of them in this category were members of the royal house. Their claims on the state rested on their relationship to the ruling sultan (his consort, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters) or on their relationship to former sultans. However, the pensions given them were inadequate to the large hospitality charges and numerous dependents they still possessed. These rajas found it impossible to live within their allowances and were chronically in debt; they mortgaged their allowances and pensions to Indian money-lenders, a reflection not only of their financial difficulties but, more significant, of their inability to extort money under the new regime (Sadka, 1968; Khoo, 1983). Some of the chiefs and members of the royalty were engaged in the service of the colonial state. They were appointed members of the newly established State Council and
as assistants to district officers' in the latter's' dealings with the Malay population. Especially after the Malay ruling class' armed resistance against the British, in 1875, the colonial administration realised the desirability of legitimating the colonial administration. One of the ways was to appoint penghulus (headmen) as a point of linkage between the Residential administration and the rural Malay population. It was also a way to deal with the many unemployed members of the ruling class who were making pension/allowances claims on the state. As Swettenham, one of the chief architects of this policy put it:

...instead of setting the headman, and through them the people, against the Residential system, we should, in engaging their services, enlist also their sympathies on the side of the Government that supported them and their traditions (Proceedings, SSLC, 1883:168).

The area for which a penghulu was responsible was a mukim, traditionally the area served by a single mosque although as the population grew and additional mosques were built the word mukim came to refer to the unit of civil administration under a penghulu, that is, a subdistrict (Khoo, 1983). The increase in population, as was the case in Batang Padang, also meant that penghulus were less closely linked with the people of the mukim and in some areas, especially where new land was being opened up by immigrants, the practice grew up of recognizing (sometimes by the grant of a kuasa or empowering document from the sultan) headmen beneath the penghulu. These men were called Ketua kampung (village headman).

Under British rule the penghulus, in addition to their salaries, were initially allowed to retain what the British considered some traditional sources of income particularly cabut (a portion of the duty on the produce originating from their mukim). Such revenue, however, was to be collected at customs posts or by other government agencies and was paid to the penghulus by the state administration. Perak Order-in-Council No. 20 of 1889 stipulated that penghulus would receive 10% of the duty collected at Customs Stations on tin originating from their districts as well as 10% of all revenue they themselves collected on behalf of the government.

The amount of money collected as cabut varied considerably from mukim to mukim but one particularly lucrative penghulu post was that of the tin-mining district of Batang Padang. This was the penghulu referred to in Semai oral history. While his base salary was $15 per month the penghulu of Batang Padang received $100 per month as payments of cabut (DO Batang Padang, 5/90: Perak Establishments 1890). Beginning in the late 1890s penghulus were allowed a
remission of land rent payments on a maximum of five acres of kampung land and ten acres of rice land in addition to their salaries (Perak Circular No. 4 of 1898. In principal, the penghulu mukim was supposed to be the administrative linkage between the colonial state-government and the rural Malay population. Among his main duties were the maintenance of order, the administration of justice, and the collection of revenue: land rent on smallholdings, passes for timber cutting and gutta collection, fishing stake licenses and the kerah (corvee) tax which the British regime imposed on the Malay population (Sadka, 1968:286f). From 1893 District Officers collected rents. It was the function of penghulus to round up the rent-payers on collection day (Minute of 25 January 1897, Sel/Sec. 408A/97).

It is in the context of this British-instituted penghulu form of administration that we need to understand the changing relations between the Darat Legep Semai and the Malay ruling class. From oral history accounts, the Darat Legep Semai were rounded up to present a headman from among them to be their representative with the penghulu mukim. However, the rights and relations of the Semai headman vis-a-vis the penghulu mukim were clearly differentiated from that which the headmen of Malay villages enjoyed. The latter received certain cash bonuses for the work they did for the penghulu as well as the privilege to hold a certain amount of land free of rent during their terms of office (Minutes of Perak State Council, 15th October 1906). In the case of the Semai headman, however, not only did he not enjoy such privileges but he was also expected to pay regular tribute to the penghulu, a form of rent exaction by the Malay ruling class that the colonial regime had supposedly put an end to. There was also a marked differentiation in terms of the land rights that the Malay headman and the Semai headman could claim on behalf of their constituents. As was mentioned earlier, although there were no clear provisions in the colonial land legislation for the alienation of Malay customary lands (until the Malay Reservations Enactment of 1913) Malay peasants were entitled to register certain lands as their own landholding. This was the dual system of land administration that the British resorted to in the confused state of affairs concerning land legislation and "native" landholdings (Wong, 1975:77). In contrast with the registration of land-holdings held under a grant, which needed to be registered with the State authorities and entered into the Register of Titles, Malay peasants could record their land-holdings in the mukim Register. Although the recording of their claims was not valid until it had also been registered and although registration in itself did not
guarantee an indefeasible title to the Malay peasant landholder, the possibility of the Malay peasant in securing recognition of their landholdings did exist. And it was a right to land that a Malay headman could represent to the penghulu mukim on behalf of the former's village-constituents. In the case of the Semai, however, they were not entitled to make such claims to land or record their land-holdings in the mukim Register.

If there was some confusion in the British regime about the administration of native Malay landholdings there was clearly a total neglect towards whatever possibilities of Semai tenurial rights. What held sway, therefore, were an unwritten colonial policy and a Malay ruling class belief that the sakais (Orang Asli) were dependents of the sultans. Moreover, what this unwritten policy meant in practice is obvious from the Semai oral history. Through the office of the British-instituted penghulu and village-headmen system of rural administration the Semai were subjected to a Malay political control and an appropriation of their surplus production, but they were not granted any land rights.

Apart from being subject to the formal control of the penghulu mukim, the latter representing the sultan to whom the British accorded the rights of "guardianship" over the aborigines, there were other colonial authorities the Semai had to deal with. Semai-occupied lands had become state lands and therefore the Semai came under the charge of the District officers as well. When a forestry Department was set up in the early 1900s, the Semai also became accountable to the forest rangers. In addition, because the Semai constituted the "primitive" cultures of the Malayan society, they were officially subjected to the scrutiny and control of the Perak Museum and its field ethnographers. Bah Ra'na, the son of Atuk Pendue, recalls from his father that there was an initial resistance to this "new British policies" from several Semai groups in the Batang Padang District, including the Semai of Darat Legep. It was during this time that a mai biyaeg (white man) first visited the Semai settlements to assure them that they need not fear any revival of slavery by the Malays because the British had abolished the practice. This "white man" was the Superintendent of Sakai of the Batang Padang District, an Italian Police Captain appointed to the post by the Perak government in 1904 (Cerruti, 1908). However, despite the assurances from the Superintendent of the Sakais the Darat Legep Semai decided to move their settlements again. This particular movement of the Darat Legep settlements also brought about some changes in the Semai's internal political and
communication patterns. Compared to their previous pattern of movement and settlement, the interior Darat Legep settlements were on this occasion re-located much further from their border settlement and much further from each other (compare Maps I and II). In order to maintain their links with each other, therefore, and since the different groups decided to stay within the jurisdiction of a single lengriik, new raknak positions were created to co-ordinate and maintain the communication links among the dispersed groups. For the first time a mairaknak hutan (an elder of the forest) was appointed together with a setin (assistant to the mairaknak hutan) and a jenang (ancestral elder) each of these raknak looking after different sectors of the interior settlements. The Jenang took charge of the settlements in Cangkat Dulu and its environs. Given that Cangkat Dulu was the lengriik from which Atuk Canu and his followers first originated from, may explain why the Jenang (ancestral elder) was appointed for its care. The setin looked after the settlements located furthest from the border settlement while the mairaknak hutan took care of the other settlements located in the middle-ground of the lengriik as it were.

In this instance of Semai migration, one Darat Legep settlement was not re-located. It remained closest to the town of Kota. This was the settlement of Atuk Pendue, the new mairaknak/penghulu who was appointed to this office after the death of Atuk Canu. The location of the Semai mairaknak/headman's settlement furthest downriver was not an accidental decision on the part of the Semai. As with Atuk Canu's settlement earlier on, Atuk Pendue's settlement became the border-buffer settlement between the Darat Legep Semai and the "outside world". From the vantage point of his settlement, Atuk Pendue continued to represent the Darat Legep Semai to the penghulu mukim as was required by the authorities and he maintained the trading links between the Semai and the Chinese/Malay traders.

According to Semai oral history, the relocation of all but one of the Darat Legep settlements deeper and higher into the forests and the changes to their authority/communication structures was also a way to get around the formal controls, tribute exaction and the appropriating of Semai surplus being imposed by the penghulu mukim. Atuk Pendue would continue to fulfil his duties, as headman of the Semai, towards the penghulu mukim. He would regularly present himself to the penghulu mukim's at the latter's pejabat ("office") to submit the required tribute as well as trade in Semai forest produce. And, on occasions when the penghulu
mukim summoned the Semai headman to exact more tribute payments or demand corvee labour of the Semai, Atuk Pendue would explain that most of his followers had left his charge to pindah-randah ("practice shifting cultivation") in the inaccessible parts of the mountains. This new pattern of Semai settlement and authority/communication structures also enabled the Darat Legep Semai to minimize their contact with most "outsiders" or regulate them through the mediation of their headman. The Semai of the various interior settlements would bring their forest produce-for-trade to Atuk Pendue's house that was also established as a trading post to the familiar traders from Kota and other nearby towns. Atuk Pendue also facilitated whatever necessary dealings the Semai were required to perform in terms of local administration. Not only would he take Semai matters to the District Office or the penghulu mukim's office but the District/mukim officials would also visit Atuk Pendue's house when there was an official need. Effectively, then, as the political context changed, the Darat Legep Semai created a new political place in/from which to deal with the penghulu mukim and other state agencies. A group that had previously demonstrated their political culture from a fairly autonomous, everyday, action-base of a pitak location (tmpaat) had elevated one raknak position into a new political agency. The nature and extent of these changes can be located very specifically in the new significance of the deuk penghulu ("the headman's house"):

...whenever any one had any problem with the Gob or any orang bandar, they would go to the deuk penghulu (the headman's house)... when Atuk Nam discovered tin on his land, he went to the deuk penghulu to ask Atuk Pendue to obtain a tin-mining licence for him from the District Office in Tapah... when the Gob stole fruits from someone's kampok, he would go to the deuk penghulu... and Atuk Pendue will go to see the penghulu mukim... if the penghulu mukim does not do anything he goes to see the orang putih (white men) in Tapah... actually, this is how we are all living here in Kg.Baru now. This place actually is Atuk Pendue's settlement, only he and his peringa (extended family) lived here. But when the communists returned to the jungle to fight the British, all the Semai relocated and build new houses around the deuk penghulu (headman's house). (Bah Ra'na)

Until 1941, therefore, the deuk penghulu (the headman's house), the pejabat penghulu mukim (office of the Territorial Chief of the sub-district) and the pejabat Daerah (District Office) served as the significant places of politics the Darat Legep Semai entered into, as it were, as new locations and with different political positions. At the same time, the Darat Legep Semai reconstituted their "traditional" political networks and structures within the social and physical boundaries/frameworks of their tmpaat and lengriik. Just as much as the penghulu Semai was a
new creation, so too were the mairaknak Hutan (elder of the forest), the setin (assistant) and jenang (ancestral elder) reconstituted positions in Semai daily affairs within their lengriik.

According to Semai oral history, the first three decades of the twentieth century was for the Darat Legep Semai a period of adapting and establishing themselves to the realities of colonial rule and economy. In terms of their land status or land rights, the Darat Legep Semai enjoyed free access to the forests and its resources but otherwise possessed no formal landholding titles. When forest legislation was first introduced in Perak, in the 1920s, there were provisions in the laws for the aborigines to continue their "nomadic way of life therein" (Report on the Present System of Forest Administration in the FMS with Suggestions for the Future Management of the Forests of those States by H. C. Hill, K.L., 1900:2). Although forestland in the Batang Padang District continued to be alienated for state-projects, there were still large areas of deep-forest accessible to the Semai.

The Orang Asli as Dependents of the Perak Museum

There was one group of European colonists who drew the attention of the British regime to the land rights of the aborigines. These men were the field-ethnographers attached to the Perak Museum. The Perak Museum was set up in the early 1880s and remained the centre of anthropological research of the Orang Asli until the invasion of the Japanese into the Malayan peninsula in 1941. Since the inception of the museum, a succession of the field-ethnographers attached to the museum took upon themselves to advocate for the social welfare and land rights of the aborigines especially those living in the state of Perak. The first field ethnographer assigned to the Museum was L. Wray who was followed by I. H. N. Evans and H. D. Noone and their terms of office spanned the period between the 1880s to 1939. During this period these field-ethnographers constantly brought to the attention of the British regime the problems the aborigines were experiencing because "Sakai" land was being alienated for agricultural plantations and Malay settlement (Wray, 1903; Evans, 1890; Noone, 1936; Williams-Hunt, 1952). In the 1930s, some christian missionaries also added their voice in making similar appeals to the British administration on behalf of the Aborigines. In retrospect, it can be said that these interventions of the museum ethnographers marked the beginning of the
"protectionist" campaign towards the land rights situation of the Orang Asli. Already since the mid-19th century the British and Foreign Aborigines Protection Society (BFAPS), based in London, was campaigning for the protection of the rights and lands of the indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand and the Americas. The response of the colonial governments in all these countries, to the campaigns, was the adoption of a protectionist policy towards the tribal populations (Gale, 1992:218; Kariya, 1993; Bose, 1995). More concretely these governments began the establishment of reservations which did little to protect the indigenous land rights in any of these countries but this form of protectionist policy did become the form of resolving the issue (Ibid.). The museum ethnographers’ calls to the British administration to address the situation of the Orang Asli carried very similar wording to that of the BFAPS campaigners. However, until 1939 the British administration did not pass any formal protectionist legislation concerning the Orang Asli land rights. There were, however, token gestures at different levels of the British administration to cater to the museum ethnographers’ appeals. In 1904, for instance, the Resident of Perak appointed a Superintendent of Sakais in the Batang Padang District. And in 1932, some District Officers (Holman, 1958:18) established a few aboriginal reservations. With the continued campaigning, especially by Noone, the first piece of colonial legislation for aboriginal welfare was enacted in 1939. The Perak Aboriginal Tribes Enactment was passed by the state government which provided for the alienation of land for the purpose of creating Aboriginal Reserves. Together with this legislation, Noone was appointed as Protector of Aborigines. However, with the Japanese invasion of Malaya a year later no Semai lands were gazetted as Aboriginal Reserves.

The interventions of these Museum ethnographers, however, did not appreciably change the situation of the Orang Asli. As far as the colonial regime was concerned, the land occupied by the Orang Asli constituted the "vast and uncleared forest land that belonged to the state. These lands continued to be subject to alienation for state-projects of sorts. Semai oral history details the many acquisitions of their land during the early decades of the 20th century. With the passing of the Malay Reservations Enactment of 1913 two Darat Legep settlements were displaced to make way for Malay villages. In the same period, another large European-owned plantation was established which encroached upon Darat Legep territory and forced the removal
of yet another Semai settlement. In addition, parts of Atuk Pendue's settlement area were leased out to Chinese planters based on a Temporary Occupation License. Neither did the interventions of the Museum ethnographers alter the political relations between the Malay ruling class and the Orang Asli. For instance, in 1930 when Methodist missionaries attempted to proselytize the Semai in the Batang Padang District, the penghulu mukim protested against this happening to the British Resident on grounds that the "sakai" were wards of the sultan and therefore "potential Muslims" (Means, 1985). The Perak Resident subsequently intervened in the matter and secured an agreement with the Methodist missionaries whereby the latter promised not to convert any Semai for a period of ten years (Ibid.).

It may be safely concluded that the interventions of the Museum ethnographers on behalf of the aborigines were more a part of the formers' personal and anthropological pursuits than it was serious government concern. Even when in 1939 Noone finally persuaded the Perak government to enact special legislation to protect the rights of the aborigines, he was dismissed by the ruling regime as a "mere scientist sticking his nose in matters of high Government policy" (Holman, 1958:66). The latter's criticism seems justified when seen in the context of what the Perak Museum was actually about concerning their work with the aborigines. The major task of the museum ethnographers was to document the cultures of the aborigines in subjects ranging from "sakai" rituals to the size of the latter's body parts (see F. M. S. collections). These collections of anthropometric measurements of body-parts were and still are typical of measures of scientists engaged in the preservation of "threatened species". In these quests the Museum ethnographers were joined by numerous other anthropologists from England, Germany, Russia, Austria, Switzerland, French and other parts of the growing anthropological enterprise in Europe. Whatever cultures they documented and the many artifacts they appropriated from the aborigines were destined for the Perak Museum as well as museums and exhibitions around the world (see for instance the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Antiquarian Committee of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Cambridge, 1899 - Catalogue of the Ethnological Collection from the Malay Peninsula presented to the University by the Collector, Walter W. Skeat, MA. The heading describes the catalogue of 1,004 items; also see Vaughan Stevens sent out to collect "artifacts" for German museums - Wilkinson The Aboriginal Tribes). There was also a clear personal agenda behind
these museum ethnographers' campaign to secure the land rights of the aborigines and "save the sakai culture from extinction". Noone, the field-ethnographer who was most assertive in his campaigns on behalf of the aborigines, was reported as saying

...the people [the aborigines] look on me as a messiah... my love for them grows, and in this respect I feel I am fulfilling my obligation to anthropology. (Holman, 1958:21)

Thus, while the Museum, its ethnographers and other anthropologists secured a place within the sphere of Orang Asli affairs the role they played was to no avail as far as the land rights of the Semai were concerned.

Conclusions

Some scholars have argued that until the advent of the Communist insurgency period (1948-1960) the government did not intervene into aboriginal affairs but left the Orang Asli very much on their own or to the care of the Museum ethnographers (Means, 1985; Dentan, 1968; McLellan, 1985). While this argument bears some truth it does not explicate the fact that the government did institutionalize a particular form of state-Orang Asli relations characteristics of which still prevail to the present day. As far as the colonial government of Perak was concerned the existence of these "pagan races" was acknowledged but what areas they lived and moved in were a part of the state's space of accumulation over which the central government reserved the right to regulate and administer on the basis of the principle of territorial sovereignty. Therefore, vis-a-vis what was the Semai locality, land was marked and zoned as State Forest land or Malay Reservations and what land remained was designated "State land" which was thereafter leased for mining, quarrying and state-sponsored agriculture. As late as 1936, the Museum field ethnographers were still complaining that the government viewed the aborigines as part of the wildlife in the forests, not recognizing their traditional land tenure system and therefore alienating land for Malay reservations and commercial projects (Noone, 1936).

While the colonial government did not demarcate actual aboriginal areas, they did in fact institutionalize specific aboriginal relations which two state-related agencies were demanding for themselves. First, there was the Malay ruling class who claimed the Semai as Sakai, their permanent slaves because the latter did not belong to the universal Islamic ummah. Second were
the field-ethnographers attached to the Perak Museum who were concerned with the preservation of these "primitive" peoples and their culture. The Perak colonial government resolved these "problems of the aborigines" by first negotiating a compromise with the Malays whereby the Sakai was recognised, by the British regime, as dependants/wards of the Malay Rulers. The Sakai were permitted to inhabit "unoccupied" State land by sufferance as wards of the Malay rulers and Sakai hamlets would come under the administrative jurisdiction of the Territorial Chief of the Malay sub-district. Then, in 1905 a Superintendent of the Sakai was appointed in the Batang Padang District while the care and study cum preservation of Sakai culture were tasks assigned to the Museum field-ethnographers. As such aborigines such as the Semai of Darat Legep became not only wards of the Malay rulers but dependents of the Museum ethnographers. To the extent that Aboriginal places existed then, such as that of the Semai, they were extensions of the Perak Museum and the Perak royal court. In effect, therefore, the British administration solved not the problems of the aborigines but the problems of these two agencies in their gaining access to and control over the aborigine. The mobility of the Sakai, the difficulty in finding them, pinning them down, were real problems to the ethnographers and the Malay chiefs though for different reasons. "Putting them in their place", defining their boundaries, outlining their culture and appointing their headmen enabled field ethnographers to locate their illusive subjects for research and the Malay chiefs their dependants for the expropriation of forest produce. What the colonial government instituted, therefore, were aboriginal places i.e. a particular mix of relations (social networks) between the ethnographers and the "primitive races" and between the Malay ruling class and their "Sakai wards".

On the part of the Darat Legep Semai, the most obvious result of colonial expansionism was the great reduction in size and the relocation of their lengriik territory. Whatever remained of their lengriik territory, moreover, was not formally recognized by the colonial state. What rights the Semai did enjoy within their lengriik were possible by way of default rather than formal recognition. To the extent that the Semai relocated their settlements to the confines of the State Forest Lands, recognized as "unoccupied and waste lands", they were able to continue their territorial and tenurial practices. The way they relocated their settlements and the subsequent reorganising of their structures of authority and communication between settlements were also deliberate strategies on the part of the Semai to reproduce their land practices.
Chapter Four: The Making of Orang Asli Places in the 1940s to 1960s

All commentaries on the Orang Asli underscore the period of the 1950s and 1960s as crucial times in the changing relations between the state and the Orang Asli. During the communist war of "national liberation" against British-Malayan regime, which came to be known as the Emergency period (1948-1960), both fighting parties viewed Orang Asli "collaboration" as crucial to the winning of the war. Beginning in the early 1950s, the government of the day embarked on an active and intensive campaign to re-organize the lives of the Orang Asli in the interest of national security. It was during this period also that the state explicated the terms by which the Orang Asli could expect to enjoy whatever rights in the land accorded them. It would therefore be accurate to suggest, as most commentators have, that Orang Asli-state relations and Orang Asli rights in land, or the lack thereof, was/is intimately linked to the latter's perceived position as a "security/sovereignty" threat in national politics.

In this chapter, I wish to examine the politics during this crucial period in the constitution of state-Orang Asli relations and its implications for Orang Asli land rights. Without undermining the "national security" argument, I would demonstrate that other significant processes on different socio-spatial scales conflated in the making of social relations between the state and the Orang Asli during this period. In terms of place-making, or the constitution of social relations in a particular social space, other social processes on different scales are not merely "backdrops" to what is occurring in one place. During this time-period in question, for instance, there were at least three other significant social processes on different scales, apart from the national-security/sovereignty struggles between the government and communist forces, that were thoroughly interconnected in the making of Orang Asli places (social relations). First, on one local scale, Orang Asli groups were actively re-organizing their social space/relations in the context of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya initially (1941-1945) and subsequently, the conflicts between the government and communist forces. These Orang Asli strategies were especially frustrating the government forces in their efforts to win the war against the communists. Second, at the same time, on a national scale, the process of Malay nationalism was taking significant twists in its course, which clearly impinged on the Orang Asli situation. Finally, on an international/global scale, a change in the discourse/practice of
states-indigenous peoples relations could also be detected and which was impacting on many local situations around the world. It is the effects the interplay of these changing social relations on different scales had on the Orang Asli situation, especially their land rights that I shall examine in this chapter.

Semai-occupied land as Battlegrounds between 1941-1945

In December 1941, the Japanese armed forces, using bicycles as their main means of transport, fought their way down the Malay peninsula to militarily occupy the country. In the course of their invasion, the Japanese conflict with the British military and local resistance groups quickly spread to the jungle areas. One area in particular which became battlegrounds for intensive fighting between the warring forces was around the region of south Perak where the Japanese Military command was stationed (Chapman, 1950). This area also overlapped with Semai-inhabited places (Map...). At the beginning of the conflicts, British military "stay behind squads" attempted to harass the Japanese from jungle hideout-bases. Soon after the British forces were joined by a guerilla army led by the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP), initially known as the Anti-Enemy-Backing-Up Society, but later with British support was organized as the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). Japanese atrocities against the Chinese were especially harsh due to the latter's support for China in the earlier Sino-Japanese War. This helped swell the ranks of the MPAJA guerillas with local Chinese membership and it was not long before the Japanese military began to organize "search and destroy" jungle-expeditions against the MPAJA bases in the jungles (Leary, 1989). In the circumstances, the Semai found themselves in the midst of a war aimed at the control of the jungle areas. The Semai settlement sites were brutally assaulted by both sides in the contest for territorial control. Killings, a lack of food and other deprivations were characteristic of Semai everyday life during the period of the Japanese Occupation and even flight into the deepest jungle areas did not provide security. When the Japanese were not patrolling the Semai-inhabited areas to "search and destroy" British-MPAJA guerilla bases, their aircraft were bombing the stay-behind camps suspected to be located beside Semai settlements just outside the towns of Kampar, Tapah and Bidor (Chapman, 1950). As soon as the Japanese patrols left a particular jungle area, MPAJA-British
guerrillas would emerge to question Semai inhabitants of their enemy's movements and activities. Semai men were coerced to serve as porters and guides to the British and MPAJA forces in jungle trekking. The Semai were also obliged to courier food supplies from the nearby towns or provide it themselves to the jungle guerrillas. Meanwhile, both warring parties were constantly suspecting the Semai of aiding and abetting the other and there were several instances of Semai individuals being interrogated, tortured and killed. In mid-1942, for example, some personnel of Force 136 (a British clandestine army unit which was set up to destroy Japanese tenure of all Southeast Asian countries) joined up with a British-MPAJA unit in a base situated beside a Semai settlement in the Batang Padang District (Ibid.). In July of that year, the Japanese troops raided the area killing some MPAJA guerillas as well as some Semai villagers. The MPAJA guerillas suspected that "Sakai informers", from the area around the town of Kota, had tipped of the Japanese. As retaliation, several Semai from settlements around the Kota area were rounded up for questioning. Among those who were picked up by the MPAJA soldiers were Atuk Pendue, the Mairaknak/Penghulu of Darat Legep and his assistant. Beh Perang, in his sixties now, was in his teens when this incident happened and he recalls the events:

Atuk Pendue had gone to Tapah to collect the tin vouchers when the communists came looking for him. They asked his wife and neighbours for his whereabouts. Because they were afraid, his wife and neighbours lied and said that Atuk Pendue was visiting his sick relatives in Kampung... The soldiers waited until evening. It was getting dark and Atuk Pendue had still not returned. The communist soldiers then left but they instructed the people to inform Atuk Pendue that they wanted to meet with him. As soon as Atuk Pendue returned home, he was given the message... Immediately he set out in the direction given by the communists... not long after two communist soldiers came looking for Atuk Sanja. At that time, he was fishing in a nearby stream. They called out for Atuk Sanja but he did not reply until they threatened to kill his wife and children. Then they shot their rifles in his direction. Finally Atuk Sanja appeared... he was tied and taken away. Before he left Atuk Sanja instructed the people that should anything happen to him they should flee the settlements and only return when the war is over. His wife tried to stop the soldiers from taking her husband away but they beat her with their rifles and she fainted... For two days we waited for Atuk Pendue and Atuk Sanja... on the third day, we heard rifle shots... some people went to investigate. When they returned they told us that Atuk Pendue and Atuk Sanja were dead... when they heard this news the people were sad and afraid. That night itself they all fled the settlements... some went to Bukit Gading, others to Sungkai, Sandin...
The years 1942-46 were therefore trying times for the Semai. Japanese imperialist designs on Malaya and British, MPAJA and MCP resistance had converged in Semai-inhabited places in the jungles of the Central Mountain Range. Local-global social flows and interconnections between places and people during "peace time" are usually of a more gradual and mediated character but these "rules of engagement" between people-places are waived during war times. Semai-occupied places were located in the jungles and all of them were quickly transformed into key battle-sites for territorial control and Semai social relations were severely affected. The day they discovered that Atuk Pendue and his assistant were murdered, the villagers were also warned that MPAJA guerillas were to launch a raid on all the settlements in that area. That very night they fled to further-away Semai settlements, such as Bukit Gading, Sungkai and Sandin, to seek refuge and shelter from the threats to their life. For the present-day Semai who had lived through those times, the experiences are remembered in a diasporic-like recollection. Wah and Beh Tua were in their twenties when they, together with all the other Darat Legep Semai, had to flee for their lives to "far-away" places they had never been to before:

...we just took what few things we could carry and walked by night... through streams and over hills all the time afraid if we would be captured by the soldiers and shot like they shot and killed Atuk Pendue and Atuk Sanja... for 4 years we could not return to our settlements and we were separated from other relatives who had fled to other places... each time we met someone from another place we would inquire if the others were safe... we thought then that we would never see our relatives again or return to our settlement...

The Japanese occupation and British-MPAJA activities also had the effect, among other things, to consolidate relations between the Darat Legep Semai groups and several other Semai and Temiar groups in the region. As one informant explained:

We became mai numpuk (residents) with the mai pasak (original inhabitants) of Sandin, Sungkai and Bukit Gading. Previously, they were just another Mai darat (they of the hinterland) to us. We may have met in the jungle during our hunting but we never numpuk (reside) with them. They were from another gu (territorial watershed).

During their 4-year sojourn, moreover, the Darat Legep Semai also relinquished their penghulu (headman) position. Both as a protection against the MPAJA guerillas, whom the Semai feared were searching for them, as well as in accordance with their customary law where the soujourners became mai numpuk (residential others) in another lengrik. They recognized the authority of that group. Soon after their return to their previous settlements of Darat Legep,
however, the Penghulu Mukim of Batang Padang summoned the Darat Legep Semai "headman" to the former's office. The Darat Legep settlements convened a meeting and decided to appoint Atuk Jok, the son of Atuk Pendue, as the new penghulu in order to meet with the Penghulu Mukim. There was, however, a change instituted in the Semai deliberations and subsequent appointment of Atuk Juk as headman. While they maintained the traditional offices of setin (assistant headmen) and Jenang (elder) they decided to do away with the office of Mairaknak hutan (elder of the forest) which they had created at the turn of the century. According to Penghulu Sekarang:

*Mairaknak hutan* (forest elder) and *ketua kampung* (village heaman) were made into one office since that time, meaning that the headman now has control over the hinterland as well as the settlement areas.

Penghulu Sekarang could not give the reason why this change was decided but Atuk Nang remembers the discussions of the time:

One individual asked [during the meeting] if we should appoint a *Mairaknak hutan* to assist Penghulu Jok since Atuk Mawai [the previous *Mairaknak hutan*] had also died [two years after Penghulu Pendue was killed]. But we said that there is no need now. The Japanese war has brought the communists and the Chinese into the deep jungle and many of them have remained there. We are not the only ones occupying the forestlands. There will be problems and if we cannot settle them then our headman must bring them to the Penghulu Mukim. If it is just us in the forests, then it is necessary to have a *Mairaknak hutan*.

For the Darat Legep Semai the year 1946 was one of re-settling and re-organizing their places of settlements and *kampoks*. When they returned to their *lengriik* they discovered that Chinese farmer-squatters had occupied part of their land. The Chinese had moved in soon after the villagers left and used the Semai clearings to cultivate vegetables to supply the MPAJA forces. The incursions of Chinese vegetable farmers into parts of their clearings necessitated opening up new agricultural plots elsewhere. First, Penghulu Jok organized a *gotong royong* (community activity) to clear the undergrowth in their rubber plantation. Meanwhile, individual households returned to tend their *kampuk* plots in the forest. It was only in 1947 that they began, as a group, to open new swidden plots at Merubok. Soon after they had begun farming a Christian Pastor brought them news that the Communists were returning to their jungle bases. It was at this juncture, therefore, that the Darat Legep Semai decided to relocate their dispersed homesteads to
the site where Atuk Juk's house stood - at the banks of Sungai Nam, which is the current location of these Semai villages (Map...).

**Semai-Occupied lands as "Red" Areas**

With the surrender of Japan in 1945 the MCP moved from their jungle bases to continue their national liberation struggles against the colonial-imperial powers in line with Communist International policy formulated in 1941 (Short, 1975). The arrival of British troops and the re-establishment of a colonial administration, however, soon checked the MCP's political and trade union activities. When the MCP decided to launch its war of "national liberation" against the Malayan government in April 1948, many of the same guerillas who had earlier fought alongside British troops against the Japanese returned to their jungle hideouts to wage an intense and prolonged guerilla war this time against the British-Malayan government forces. Once again, the Orang Asli were caught in the midst of an atrocious jungle war. They were used and again suspected by both sides for collaborating with the enemy. Suspecting that the Orang Asli were either "influenced" or "forced" to collaborate with the CTs (communist terrorists), the initial strategy of the British Security forces was to forcefully re-settle groups of Orang Asli in areas where they could be closely controlled. Meanwhile, unknown to the British security forces the MCP politburo embarked on a systematic organization and mobilization of Orang Asli towards the cause of the war of national liberation (Leary, 1989). Exploiting their fear and mistrust of the security forces, their disenchantment with the colonial administration who failed to protect them during the Japanese Occupation and their general negative sentiments regarding the Malays, the Communist Politburo embarked on a campaign to conscientize the Orang Asli whilst organizing them for the nationalist struggle. In the document ("Outlines of the Malayan Asal Mutual Help Association" dated 13th August 1949) the MCP politburo introduced the word "ASAL" (original) to describe the Orang Asli - as "The Aboriginal inhabitants of the country who lived in the jungles"; that "the ASAL of the twentieth century [are] still living in a state of semi-civilization with no written characters, ignorant and superstitious... they are subject to deception and exploitation by other races thereby rendering them a backward race". The document also outlined the aims and plans for the mobilisation of the aboriginal peoples as
"ASAL" organizations in the "nationalist war of liberation". It was the MCP's use of this term "Asal", as part of the strategy to win over the Orang Asli to their cause, which incidentally inspired the government to coin the term "Orang Asli" to refer to these peoples (Tan, 1975).

The Communist mobilizing of the Orang Asli was deemed so effective that by 1953 British forces believed that some 30,000 aborigines were part of these "ASAL" organizations assisting the CTs in their war efforts (Carey, 1976:311; Noone, 1972:152). It was also believed that a special 12th Regiment Asal Organization was set up in 1950 which, by 1959, had a total strength of 50 units operating in the states of Perak and Kelantan. The situation became all the more hazardous for the Orang Asli of Perak when, on 9th January 1952, the Government forces recovered the aforementioned communist document confirming their worst fears that the Communist guerillas were being actively helped by the Orang Asli in their insurgent "terrorist" activities. Forced re-settlement of aboriginal groups suspected of being ASAL organization members was stepped up. At the same time, however, sectors of the British administration were also realizing that this strategy of re-settlement was proving counter-productive to their objectives, if not a blunder altogether (Nicholas, 1990:69). Thousands of Orang Asli, alienated from their familiar surroundings were succumbing and dying from the heat, disease and mental depression of their forced re-settlement (Jimin, 1983:60). It was assumed that this only served to reinforce aboriginal sympathy for the communist cause. Many Orang Asli escaped the camps, if they were not freed in CT raids, and many others who feared possible resettlement fled deeper into the forests seeking communist protection (Tan, 1975:193). Given these dawning anxieties, the Federal Government commissioned the Federal Advisor on Aborigines to the writing of a military manual on the "Malayan Aborigines" for the purpose of assisting the security forces to win over Orang Asli support from the cause of the communists to the cause of the British. In April 1952, Major P.D.R. Williams-Hunt, the Federal Advisor on Aborigines, produced "An Introduction to the Malayan Aborigines", material "... put together for the information of the security forces" (Hunt, 1952:88ff). The newfound concern of the colonial government towards the aborigines and the security motive behind this interest is evidenced in the forward of the aforementioned manual, written by Sir Gerald Templar, High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya from 1952-54: "Without some understanding of the background and outlook of these fascinating people, it is impossible to make use of them on operations" (Williams-Hunt,
1952:v). It seemed that the government security forces were learning from the strategies of the MCP. Among the MCP documents retrieved by the security forces there was a directive from the Central Politburo of the MCP which read:

> All comrades engaged in the work of the Asal must take full responsibility in investigating and studying the habits of living customs, traditions, rituals and other racial characteristics of the Asal... This will help us improve our methods of work... Understand fully the Asal compatriot's way of life... try to identify ourselves with them...

(Noone, 1972:151)

Semai informants remember the visits of "Tok Janggut" (Major Williams-Hunt) to their settlements in the years 1951-52. He encouraged Penghulu Jok to start planting again and even provided the villagers with crop seeds. He also brought them medicines and encouraged them to visit health clinics specially set up for them in nearby towns. Tok Janggut is all the more fondly remembered by the Batang Padang Semai in general because he married a Semai woman from the District in 1950. Moreover, his tragic death in June 1953, while attending his Semai sister-in-law's wedding is even more impressed in their minds. Neither the occasional visits of "Tok Janggut" nor the regular patrols of the security forces to the Sg. Nam settlement area obliterate the fact that the Semai were still suspicious and fearful of the British-Malay security forces as well as the CTs whose presence was continually made known just as much as the security forces. It was apparent that the Semai informants who do remember events during the Emergency Period refused to be drawn into the details of their involvement with the CTs. It is quite probable that the reason for this is that, at the time of my fieldwork, these Semai were engaged in the writing of a memorandum to the Perak state Government regarding the gazetting of their land as an Aboriginal Reserve. Evident in the memo is the emphasis put on how the Semai cooperated with governmental forces in the counter-insurgency campaigns.

Whether or not the Semai collaborated, and to what extent, with either the British or MCP military need to be examined in the context of a Semai "war strategy" which they practised during this period. A number of writers (Barber, 1971; Short, 1964; Dentan, 1968) as well as Semai villagers I spoke to have indicated that, during the British-Communist battles, the Semai had adopted a Temiar-devised war practice to deal with both the Communist and Security forces who were demanding Semai cooperation with threats of reprisals should they refuse. The strategy consisted of the following: within the geography of a particular watershed marked by a number of Semai settlements the Semai organized themselves such that groups
located upstream (ulu teow) and thus nearer the Communist jungle-bases were to lend support to the communists. At the same time, it was agreed that Semai groups settled downstream (direh teow) and in more regular contact with the government forces were to support the latter in their campaigns. In this arrangement, "pro-Communist" up-stream Semai and "pro-government" down-stream Semai groups were also required to keep each other informed of the plans and movements of both warring parties. Those groups located in-between the two previous groups were, as Dentan's contributors explained:

...to play dumb...we're just stupid dirty aborigines... we live and die in the jungle like animals. We know nothing. These midstream people were to provide food and shelter on demand to the mai [others]. They were not to supply guides and bearers except for a good cash consideration. They were not to ask the troops' plans or destinations... No information was to be given mai that might endanger any Semai or lead to a battle for which the Semai might be blamed... In the event of a communist victory the "pro-communist" bands were to cover up for all the bands downstream from them, claiming that all had been pro-communist. Conversely, if the government won, the "pro-government" bands were to cover for the bands upstream. (Dentan, 1968:81)

All the Semai caught in this conflict situation seemed to have adopted this strategy during the emergency period (Ibid.). Dentan also noted that even at the time of his fieldwork (1962-63) there were Semai groups resorting to this innovative strategy against Malayan government agencies trying to implement development programs in Semai areas (Ibid.). Given that this strategy was pervasive among the different Semai groups and that it was a strategy borrowed from the Temiars alludes to a sense of cooperation among the different groups of Orang Asli in the Batang Padang District, if not in Perak generally, during this time.

Seen in terms of place-making we can explain this Semai/Temiar strategy using what Giddens, inspired by Goffman, calls

..."front" and "back" regions which actors employ as integral the contextuality of action and the sustaining of ontological security. "Front" regions are zones in which some degree of norm conforming behaviour is expected, in which rule-following "correct performances" are required, in which one may be subject to some form of surveillance or control, in which one may feel compelled to hide or cover up certain aspects of the self. "Back" regions are usually "zones within which agents recover forms of autonomy which are compromised or treated in frontal contexts, unguarded moments in which rules may be undermined, unobserved areas where norms may be flouted, times and places sometimes allowing for more full disclosure of the self, niches in which both the powerful and less powerful can utilize reflexivity to sustain a psychological distancing between their own interpretations of social processes and those enjoined by "official" norms. (as quoted/paraphrase d by Fred, :23)
In the Semai case, however, the "front" or "back" zones, the "conforming" or "autonomous" actions, the "unobserved" areas, etc. were not so clearly distinguishable. Again, the notion of the Semai ruai-place can more fully elaborate the meanings of this strategy. While Giddens accept that identities are relational, the possibilities are limited by the assumption that such relations must be those of bounded, negative counterposition, of inclusion and exclusion. Yet as I have tried to demonstrate in the Semai case it is difficult, if not impossible to distinguish the inside of place from outside - indeed it is precisely the presence of the outside within which helps to construct the specificity of the Semai places.

It was perhaps this Orang Asli strategy which lent to the mobile and elusive nature of the Perak aborigines and which proved especially frustrating to the Security forces during the government's war with the communists in the 1950s. Since the start of the conflicts in 1948 the security forces had suspected the Perak aborigines for their collaboration with the communist insurgents but the matter could not be confirmed by army intelligence until 1952 (Williams-Hunt, 1952). Even when the suspicion was confirmed, with the discovery of a communist document on the Asal organization, the security forces were continually frustrated in their attempts to secure information or collaboration from the Semai. As the Federal Adviser on the Aborigines, Major P.D.R. Williams-Hunt, instructed the security forces:

The first problem in talking to the Aborigines is to catch your Aborigine... The second problem is that of interrogation, Aborigines are extremely irritating people to those unaccustomed to dealing with them. Firstly many Aborigines are quite incapable of giving a coherent story and secondly their way of life is such that they have little use for the past and only a slight interest in anything but the immediate future... Interrogation is best achieved by a "tame" aborigine... Most Aborigines have very little conception of time, distance or numbers...There are certain difficulties with their routes and movements... considerable difficulty may be encountered in Aboriginal place names many of which do not appear on the map. (Williams-Hunt, 1952:91f)

For the central government, Aborigine-inhabited areas in the 1950s were no longer viewed as merely "unoccupied" State lands nor were they extensions of the Museum/court where the protected primitive races, the Malay wards or the potential Christians are placed. Aboriginal areas had become "national security" or "communist-dominated" areas inhabited both by "naive", "semi-tamed" aborigines duped by the communists and "hostile" aborigines actively collaborating with the insurgents. While in earlier times the sense of place conveyed by the British onto Orang Asli-inhabited areas were "no-man's land" and "wastelands" (to legitimate
their economic exploitation of the forest lands), in the 1950s another British sense of place was projected onto "Sakai" areas to justify yet another form of intervention. In the 1950s, newspaper reports and official documentation/correspondence constantly employed these new categories to classify the "Sakais" and their places (Colin, Williams-Hunt & Sabak, 1989; Williams-Hunt, 1952). In one account entitled "New Force For Sakai Areas, [A]n organization called the Perak Aboriginal Areas Constabulary, is to be formed in Perak to police the remote areas in the state inhabited by the Sakais" (Straits Times, 8.3.50). In another account, an "'Enlightenment' plan shows modern life to villagers who have never seen a ship". It reads:

... [the] Sakai are to be given a chance to see all the wonders of Twentieth Century life in a big city...Under a new scheme, known as "Kampung Enlightenment"... groups of... Sakai men and women are to be taken on educational tours... [they] have never seen the sea or a plane, a ship or a train at close quarters. They have no idea of what a modern factory is...they will be taken to the Government offices...They will inspect the General Hospital, the Railway station, Police Headquarters, the Mosque, the zoo and a domestic science school...they will visit a Malay cinema an amusement park, Radio Malaya and they will see the Singapore Free Press in production. (Straits Times, 5.11.52)

In yet another telling account of these distinctions between the "backward" aborigine and the "civilized" British the colonial newspaper reports of the "Sakai girl [who] went to see the Queen" (Straits times, 13.11.1952):

Wa Draman the pretty Sakai girl who went to see the Queen, returned to Malaya by Comet yesterday - delighted with every bit of her month's stay in Britain. She was thrilled by the bright lights, she enjoyed fish and chips and she didn't even mind the weather. The two British institutions which most impressed her, however, were the Royal Family and the "big, strong, polite London bobbies". She waited two hours for Queen Elizabeth to pass by on her way to open Parliament, and bought a foot-high statue of a London policeman. But it wasn't all a holiday for Wa Draman. She helped her husband, Mr. P.D. Rider Williams-Hunt the acting Director of Museums and Adviser on Aborigines to the Federation, to collect Malayan museum pieces which had "gone astray". With her help, Mr. Williams-Hunt managed to recover what he called "an invaluable collection" of ancient Malayan pottery metal-work and antiques.

This British regime's sense of place of Aboriginal areas, as "national security" areas, was also fuelled by contemporaneous events happening elsewhere in the world. "The French debacle in Indo-China, the Korean war, and a strong Communist China galvanized both the British authorities and the Malayan people into a combined effort to stamp out the insurrection..." (Leary, 1989:22). This change in classification of Aboriginal places is reflected at the same time, in the transferring of the responsibility of the welfare of Orang Asli and the scrutiny of
their social relations from the Museums Department to a newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Not surprisingly, this department was placed under the authority of the Member of Home Affairs in the Federal Secretariat under whose jurisdiction were also the police and prisons departments.

The addition of this new layer of signification upon aboriginal sites as security areas inhabited by hostile/naive aborigines and therefore "place-extensions" to be overseered by the Home Ministry, entailed with it a new topographical knowledge needed for the governance of those places as such. As one government document reported the mandate given to these agencies:

In conjunction with the deployment of Security Forces, the Department of Orang Asli... were also responsible to provide medical assistance, operate shops, establish schools, collect civic and combat intelligence as well as conducting psychological warfare amongst the Orang Asli

More specifically, the security forces and the field-workers of the Orang Asli department were instructed to gather:

...topographical intelligence... which will be of value to Security Forces...to keep a series of route books with a section of the standard one inch map series on the left hand page and details of tracks, photographs, etc., on the right hand page. Routes and tracks...These should be photographed... rivers and streams of any size should be photographed... the locations of rapids and the route through them; tracks on one or both banks; places where it is best to off load and walk... A sketch plan to show routes into and in the ladang [Malay for 'clearings'], location of houses, particularly that of the headman... There is no end to the observation that can be made on the Aborigines themselves but probably only three points are of particular value to the security forces. (a) The general attitude of the people, i.e. whether hostile or friendly. (b) Details of any common disease from which the community is suffering. (c) The names, identity card numbers, and other details of headmen. Headmen should be photographed.... (Williams-Hunt, 1952:88ff)

As a result of these topographical intelligence, Aboriginal areas such as that of the Semai places were ascribed new meanings and this in tum was to have implications to Semai mobility and identity. Between 1948 and 1956, for instance, the Semai were restricted in their movements to the "secure" places of their aboriginal area marked out by the Security Forces and the Department of Orang Asli Affairs i.e. places (relations) where the Semai were supervised and monitored by security forces and fieldworkers of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Then in 1957 the whole Sg. Nam settlement site, just as other Orang Asli areas before, was declared a "red area" which resulted in their forced relocation to a military camp in the nearby
town. This camp then became the Semai-security forces' place for two years, an extension of the Home ministry as a place on internment but also a specific mix of relations based on 24-hour surveillance and control. For the Darat Legep Semai, this internment experience was clearly connected to the JOA's "welfare" activities in their settlements that began in the early 1950s. One elderly Semai informant recounts the developments leading up to their two-year internment in the camp:

...in 1953 there was a woman, Gus Mary, who took care of the Orang Asli in the Batang Padang District. She often visited our settlement and it was her that helped set up the first school in our village. She also encouraged the Orang Asli to stay in one place so it would be easier to protect them from the communists in the deep jungle...in 1954 another person by the name of Hely was sent to tend to the Orang Asli. His wife was a nurse in the hospital at Tapah. The situation in our settlement was becoming increasingly difficult. Mr. Hely distributed 15 shotguns to various villagers and 4 more shotguns were purchased by the village. In 1955, Mr. Hely was replaced with Tengku Mak Idin... at the end of 1955 the latter was replaced with Tengku Said. Following that, in 1956 Mr. Badillah replaced Tengku Said. It was Mr. Badillah who ordered the villagers be placed in the camp so that they may be protected from the influence of the communists... the roofing of our houses, beams and even all our domestic animals were put onto military trucks and transported to the camp. We stayed there for two years. It was difficult to find food. Gradually one by one the villagers fled the camp and returned to their settlement sites. In 1959, Mr. Richard replaced Mr. Badillah.

This severe limitation of Semai mobility, the consignment/confinement to a particular place, on one hand, and the limitation on their identity on the other, has remained a central feature of the government's policy towards the Orang Asli since the 1950s. The current legislation, regarding the Orang Asli - the Aboriginal People's Act, 1954 (revised 1974), hereafter referred to as Akta 134 - reflects this pattern of relations between the Federal/State governments and the Orang Asli. A key feature of the current legislation are the strict provisions designed for the control and surveillance of "aboriginal areas/reserves" in the interests of national security. Given that this legislation was passed a year after British Military intelligence confirmed their suspicions that the Communist Politburo was successfully mobilizing Orang Asli support for their war of national liberation, the purpose of the 1954 legislation is clear. It was to increase the state's powers of surveillance and control of the Orang Asli population in their specified "areas and reserves". The Aboriginal People's Ordinance (No. 3 of 1954) while containing many elements of the 1939 enactment, clearly removed whatever ambiguity or circumscription from and amplified such provisions as "exclusion of persons and class of persons", "the freedom of
association between Orang Asli and other sections of the population", "the appointment of headmen" and other matters pertaining to access to aboriginal areas/reserves (Rachagan, 1992).

In subsequent legislative revisions and amendments, since 1954, these features of surveillance and control of aboriginal areas/reserves, were further clarified to reinforce the already comprehensive powers of the state over the Orang Asli population. First, with formal independence and the adoption of the Malayan Constitution of 1957, Orang Asli affairs became a Federal responsibility (Ninth Schedule, Federal List No. 16) in contrast to the provisions of the earlier legislation which gave the administration of aboriginal affairs to the Governments of the respective states or settlements. In 1958 there was yet another amendment to the 1954 Ordinance (Legal Note 332/1958) and, since then, two more amendments, one in 1967 (No. 16/1967) and the other in 1974 (No. 134/74 or Akta 134). In fact in 1974, the Aboriginal People's Act of 1954 was further amended to give yet more unfettered powers to the Commissioner of Aborigines vis-a-vis control over Orang Asli places and relations. The Commissioner, in this case the Federal Minister-in-charge, is also empowered to determine who may or may not come into contact with the Orang Asli (Section 14, 134/1974); to determine the nature and extent of the interaction between Orang Asli and other sections of the population (Section 19 [1] [c], 134/1974); even to control the interaction among the Orang Asli (Section 12); to prohibit and control the entry into or the circulation within any place inhabited by the aborigine of any written, printed or published material or film, etc. which is capable of "suggesting words or ideas" (Section 19 [1] [c], 134/1974); to confirm the selection of a headman as well as remove him from office (Section 16 [1] and [2], 134/1974). In fact, the amendments to the 1954 Ordinance now extend the powers of surveillance and control of the state not only to aboriginal areas and reserves but to "any aboriginal inhabited place" (Section 14). The powers of the state also allow for the control of employment of aborigines (Section 19 [1], 134/1974) and the prohibition of any person other than an aborigine of the same ethnic group to adopt or take control of an aboriginal child without the consent of the state (Section 18, 134/1974).

These restrictive laws were mobilized at the slightest hint of "unrest" emanating from Orang Asli areas. In September of 1957, for instance, some Orang Asli groups in the Batang Padang District refused to supply a certain forest product to traders due to a sharp fall in prices.
(Straits Times, 20.8.57, 21.8.57). Despite protestations from the JHEOA that this was "wise" business dealings on the part of the Orang Asli the latter's actions were explained off by a government politician as the "work of the communist terrorists" (Ibid.). A few months later a new government directive required that the Orang Asli "no longer [be] allowed to trade their jungle products to any trader but only through a government agency..." (Malay Mail, 24.1.58).

By mid-1960, the Malayan government was confident of its victory over the communist insurrection and the State of Emergency was formally lifted. The military unit of the MCP, the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), had already been disbanded in 1958 with large numbers of its soldiers surrendering themselves to the Government Security Forces (Short, 1975). Those MCP guerillas that remained committed to their military cause had retreated to the Thai border. As for Orang Asli groups which were detained in urban camps, such as the Sg. Nam Semai, they were allowed to return to their previous settlement sites. But with the end of the communist threat Orang Asli-inhabited areas such as those occupied by the Semai, continued to be maintained as "restricted areas". A 24-hour police-curfew was imposed and except for certain state agencies and their officials, non-Orang Asli persons were barred entry into these places unless the authorities granted official permission.

**Orang Asli Areas as Melayu Places**

The security threat posed by the Orang Asli in the context of the communist insurrection was not the only factor that ushered them more intimately into the national politics of the 1950s-60s. There was another related process at the wider scale, which also influenced the state's construction of Orang Asli places during this period. This was the process of Malay nationalism. The history and complexities of Malay nationalism have been discussed at length elsewhere (Roff, 1967; Ariffin, 1993). What concern us here, however, are the significant implications of Malay nationalism on the Orang Asli situation in the post-war period. Although they were differentiated groups in terms of ideology, foreign connections and plans of action, there was one common concern shared by the Malay nationalists. This was the Malay grievance since early this century, regarding their steadily weakening socio-economic position in the country vis-a-vis the European and the Chinese populations (Ibid.). In the immediate post-war period
Malay nationalist sentiments were especially fuelled by the prospects of an erosion of Malay rights with the Malayan Union Plan proposed by the British (Funston, 1980). This Plan was designed for the integration of the different ethnic groups into one Malayan polity; the bringing together of the pre-war state-administrative structure which comprised ten government units into a centrally controlled state; and the formal transfer of ultimate sovereignty of this "new" colonial state to the British monarch. To achieve these aims the British government planned to reorganize the citizenship qualifications whereby the Chinese and Indians would qualify for citizenship under very liberal laws and to open up the Civil Service to all ethnic communities - a privilege previously accorded only to Europeans and a selected group of Malays. The Malay group which was most threatened by the implications of the Malayan Union Plan, and therefore the group that spearheaded the opposition to it, were the Malays of Aristocratic birth and those close to the nobility (Allen, 1967; Stockwell, 1979). Their oppositional activities culminated in the setting up of UMNO in 1946, the Malay political party which was to assume the dominant role of government when the British granted independence to Malaya in 1957. The UMNO leadership managed to garner broad-based support from the Malay population as it argued against the British plans of granting citizenship to the non-Malays under liberal terms:

If implemented [the Malayan Union Plan that is] the Malays would be reduced from a nation to a mere community among other communities in a land that was historically theirs. They would be forced to become Malayan nationals against their wishes as they were, had been, and always will be Melayu. The Malays felt that they would be reduced to the same fate as the North American Red Indians (Ariffin, 1993:55, referring to this fear articulated by the first president of UMNO at the Pan-Malayan Malay Congress on 5 March 1946)).

With a groundswell of UMNO-led Malay opposition to the Malayan Union proposal, as well as by "pro-Malay" retired British members of the Malayan Civil Service in London, the Malayan Union though inaugurated on 1 April 1946 was never brought into effect (Stockwell, 1979). What was put in its place, on 1 February 1948, was the Federation of Malaya concept, which was negotiated among the British, the Malay rulers and UMNO. In the Federation, the sovereignty of the Sultans, the individuality of the states, and Malay special rights were upheld. Citizenship was made more restrictive for non-Malays, requiring of them residence of at least fifteen during the previous twenty-five years, a declaration of permanent settlement, and a competent knowledge of Malay or English. Although citizenship rights were then given to the
non-Malays, they were denied a nationality (Ariff, 1993:109). In the Federation of Malaya Constitution, non-Malays were referred to as citizens of the Federation of Malaya but not accorded the status of "nationals". These non-Malays had to qualify to be subjects (nationals) of the Melayu rulers of the Federated (nation) States. A subject of the rulers was defined as:

1. any person who belongs to an aboriginal tribe resident in the state; or
2. any Malay born in that state or born of a father who is a subject of the Ruler of that state; or
3. any person naturalised as a subject of that Ruler under any law for the time being in force; and that the word 'Malay' should mean a person who
   (a) habitually speaks the Malay language;
   (b) professes the Muslim religion; and
   (c) conforms to Malay custom

With the establishment of the Federation of Malaya in 1948, and the British granting of independence to the Federation in 1957, the Melayu concept of nationality was translated more systematically into state policies and administrative structures. The thrust of the fledgling UMNO-dominated government was the creating of a national community based on Malay cultural traditions (Nagata, 1984). While the measure of the progress and effectiveness of national integration campaign with the local Chinese, Indian and Eurasian populations was assessed in terms of the Malay language, Orang Asli integration enlisted another criteria for evaluation - the Malay religion. Already in 1956, the Conference of Malay Rulers had declared their "Big campaign to convert the country's 10, 000 aborigines to Islam" (Straits Times, 22.8.56). But with the adoption of the Malayan Constitution of 1957 the Orang Asli became the responsibility of the Federal-state government (Ninth Scedule, Federal List No. 16). As such the "making" of the Orang Asli into "Melayu" became a state responsibility. The first newspaper report on this state-sponsored Islamic missionary activities in aboriginal areas which appeared soon after Malaya's independence underscores this discriminating strategy in the campaign:

Perak aborigines are being slowly converted to Islam, the State Council was told today... disclosed that 108 had become Muslims...Two do missionary work among their people by contact through headmen, it was said. Malay missionaries who speak the language of the aborigines are also active. In the last six years more than 460 non-Muslims approached the Perak Religious Department for conversion to Islam, although the department does no missionary work among the state's other non-Muslims. (Straits Times, 14.12.57).

Two months after the aforementioned newspaper report, another report indicated that the integration of Orang Asli into the national Malay community, by way of conversion into Islam,
was not restricted to aboriginal areas alone but in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as well. This report, however, did not mention that the conversion was that of the Commissioner of the JHEOA at that time. The Malay Daily reported that:

An English youth of Viennese descent, approximate 34 years of age recently embraced Islam at the Kadhi's court... The youth, Mr. Alexander Timothy Carey is a Christian. His Muslim name is Mr. Iskandar b. Yusuf... According to his testimony to the authorities he stated that he embraced Islam solely at his own wishes and need without any force or persuasion from any one.

(Berita Harian, Feb. 1958).

In 1961 when the Federal government announced its new policy of modernization-development of the Orang Asli, its objective was made explicit: "the ultimate integration [of the Orang Asli] with the Malay section of the community" (Government of Malaysia, Statement of Policy Regarding The Administration of the Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, Blue Book 1961:3). In socio-economic terms, this state policy was and continued to be implemented on the basis of the "modernization" model as stated by a director of the JHEOA as late as as 1983:

The 'modernization model', subscribing to the 'stages of growth' theory as expounded by W.W. Rostow et. al, is still being pursued by the Department with respect to those Orang Asli groups who are living within the rural fringe areas...(Jimin, 1983:55)

However, given the ethnic twist of this modernization programme, the implementation necessitated:

(a) The resettlement of Orang Asli into "pattern settlements" whereby they are housed in new Malay-type dwellings and provided with a piped water supply and facilities such as a school, community hall, health clinic and sanitary conveniences;
(b) The promotion of cash crops - Orang Asli are encouraged to cultivate cash crops such as rubber, oil palm, and fruit trees in specially designated plots of land; and
(c) The provision of agricultural skills and knowledge to unresettled Orang Asli (Carey, 1976).

McLellan (1985) termed this policy as a "... kind of ethnomorphosis planned for the Orang Asli... their acceptance of Islam and their eventual blending into rural Malay communities" (92). She and others (Means, 1985; Nagata, 1993) have also demonstrated how this "shift in government policy toward the Orang Asli" (Means, 1985:646) was all the more pushed through by the government in the 1960s and 70s as a way to resolve the ethnic question to ensure its legitimacy of rule.

The latent paranoia among some Malays concerning their precarious claim to majority status in the expanded Federation of Malaya, after the formation of Malaysia in 1963, led many Malays to view the aboriginal peoples of Malaya, as well as those of Sarawak
and Sabah, as essential - both as political allies and for the ethnic purposes of counting, ethnically, as "indigenous peoples". The Malay term "Bumiputra" - literally, son(s) of the soil - was supposed to encompass this wider concept of indigenous ethnic identity. (Means, 1985:646)

Thus, when compared to the 1931 census records which shows the Malay population to be 44% of the total, the 1970 statistics put them at a majority of 53.2% as a result of including the Orang Asli and East Malaysia (Borneo) indigenous peoples as fellow "bumiputra". Among other arguments, the government appealed to this numerical superiority of the Malays over the Chinese and other races to legitimate the "special rights" and preferential policies for the Malays which were introduced in the New Economic Policy (McLellan, 1985, Nagata, 1993).

In terms of administrative personnel as well, the Malaysian Civil Service became Malaysianized with independence, but with Malay quotas. As for the JHEOA, it was gradually transformed into a more exclusive Malay enclave. The first three departmental heads of the JHEOA were all British. The fourth was a "Hungarian born in Vienna, who had studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science and obtained a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh... [obtained] a position at the Department of Aborigines...converted to Islam which later made him more acceptable as a temporary head of Department since there were no trained Malay anthropologists at the time" (Means, 1985:646). Dr. Iskandar Carey remained head of Department until he was replaced by a Malay who had been in the department and was given leave to study for a Ph.D. from Cambridge, which he completed in 1973.

Baharon Azhar Raffie assumed the post of commissioner of aborigines in 1974. Already in his dissertation, the new Commissioner of Aborigines argued why the implementation of the Orang Asli policy is essentially Malay in orientation. This is because the Orang Asli:

....share some common historical and cultural ties with the Malays therefore the process of integration means, among other things, the evolution of a national consciousness through the acceptance of certain national symbols which are culturally Malay e.g. the King, the Malay language and Islam as the national religion (Baharon, 1973).

The head of the medical section within the JHEOA was for many years a British medical officer who hired and trained a majority Orang Asli staff for the Orang Asli hospital, which was set up in 1960. When he retired in 1969 the medical services were increasingly staffed with Malays such that by 1980 the Medical and Health Services Division of the JHEOA was headed by a refugee Cambodian Muslim. During the latter's term of office not only were the staff of the
hospital dominated by Malays but, by 1982, a majority of the patients were actually Malays rather than Orang Asli. (Means, 1985:647)

In 1978, when another Federal-Government policy-statement vis-a-vis the Orang Asli was formulated this specific nature of Orang Asli integration was repeated as an on-going objective:

... every facility and opportunity must be given for the Orang Asli to embrace Islam and continue to learn and live the teachings of Islam. (Guidelines for the Development of Orang Asli into the Modern Malaysian Society, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1978).

It was not just happening in Malaysia

A central theme in this thesis is that, in line with the Semai notions of place-making, the constitution of social relations in one place and at a particular scale is interconnected with social processes in other places i.e. at different scales of one global universe. The ways the British, then the Malaysian regimes went about organizing Orang Asli social relations especially in the 1950s and 60s and their implications for Orang Asli land rights - were not unique innovations just at the Malaysian scale. The practices of spatially segregating the Orang Asli from the rest of society, "protecting" them from the "evils" of modern society, assigning the care of their places to special agencies, legislating on their identity and mobility, integrating them into the dominant society, etc. were state-practices happening elsewhere around the world. Similar approaches by state regimes towards the indigenous situation were observed in earlier times and contemporaneously in places as far away from Malaysia as Canada (Kariya, 1993), China (Mosely, 1966), Australia (Gale, Vachon, 1982), Brazil (Cultural Survival, 1981), Chile (Berglund, 1977), the United States (Ortiz, 1984), Thailand (Tan, 1975) and the list of countries can go on (Burger, 1987; Moody, 1988; Ashworth, 1978, 1980).

In Malaysia during the 1950s, the indigenous situation was highlighted to the state authorities because of the perceived Orang Asli roles, first, in the communist insurgency and second, in the Malay nationalist campaigns. Similarly, in other countries across the globe especially in the 1950s and 1960s, state and interstate authorities were reacting in ways the British/Malaysian regimes were doing towards the indigenous peoples, within their national territory, who were politically "awakening" to their rights. The following two examples serve to
illustrate the point on the manner in which social processes, vis-a-vis the state's making of indigenous peoples' places in different countries across the globe are so thoroughly interconnected with each other. First, we look at Canada in the 1950s. In the context of Canadian indigenous peoples rights campaigns in the 1940s, the Canadian government in 1951 reviewed the previous Indian Act of 1924 (Asch, 1982). With this revised legislation, a state-sponsored economic modernization-development programme for the Canadian "Indians" began in the 1950s. And like the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) set up in the 19th century in the United States, the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) set up in the 1950s in Brazil, the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) established in the 1960s in the Philippines, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) set up in the 1970s in Australia, the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) set up in Malaysia in the 1950s, the development-modernization of the Canadian "Indians" was assigned to the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). More specifically, while the development-modernization programme was "integrationist" or "assimilationist" in character, the policy simultaneously, espoused a spatial segregation of indigenous populations into "reserves" (Kariya, 1993). More similarities between different governments can be mentioned. For instance, with the exception of the Australian DAA all the other aforementioned agencies which were assigned the development-modernization tasks of their indigenous populations were initially set up under the purview of the interior/home ministries of those states. And the similarities between the DIA and the JHEOA do not stop there. Since its inception, the Canadian DIA was transferred no less than ten times between various federal ministries and departments (Ibid.). Compare this with the JHEOA, which in its shorter history compared to the DIA was transferred seven times from one Ministry/Department to another. Like the DIA (Ibid. p. 188), the JHEOA (Hasan Mat Nor, 1993:9) was also mandated to be an almost total institution for the indigenous population, a one-stop agency for all their needs. The point of these comparisons is not merely to illustrate the similar organizational patterns whereby different governments go about intervening in the situations of their indigenous populations. Rather, the focus is on the ways in which the British/Malaysian governments went about "making indigenous places" i.e. constructing/organizing Orang Asli relations since the 1950s. These relations were clearly
shaped by similar social processes (vis-a-vis indigenous peoples) in earlier times and contemporaneously at locales far away from Malaysia.

Second, the "protection-assimilation" discourse of the British-Malaysian governments towards the Orang Asli in the 1950s and 1960s, although generated by the circumstances of the Emergency and Malay nationalism, was also an echo of a larger global discourse/practice regarding indigenous peoples being articulated during that same period. In the immediate post-World-War-II global scenario of post-war reconstruction and heightened development-modernization programmes in almost every country in the world, (Robertson, 1984) various indigenous groups in Europe, North/South America and Australia were also more organizationally articulating their own peculiar development problems. In as early as the 1920s indigenous groups of North America were already sending their representatives to the League of Nations with memoranda regarding the former's right to self determination (Bose, 1995). But it was in the post-World War II period that saw more groups - the Karen of Burma, different indigenous groups of North/South America, the Sami of the Scandinavian countries, the Inuit of North America/Canada, the Australian Aborigines, etc. - taking their grievances into the national and international policy-making fora (Burger, 1987). And the response of several governments including Malaysia to the indigenous situation in their countries during the 1950s and 1960s was development by way of protection-assimilation. The aforementioned case of Canada in the 1950s is exemplary. Similar spatial compromises to the indigenous situation were initiated in Australia (Gale, 1993; Vachon, 1982) the United States (Ortiz, 1984), Brazil (Presland, 1979). Despite the differentiated particularities of the indigenous "awakening" to their rights in the various post-world-war II countries, the similar strategy undertaken by various governments can be linked to the workings of one international agency during the 1940s and 1950s. The International Labour Organization (ILO) which was set up at the time of the League of Nations was involved with indigenous populations in South America since the 1920s (ILO, 1984). However, it was not until the end of the Second World War that the ILO was able to begin to make a significant impact on indigenous situations at a global level. The ILO campaigns resulted in the first ever piece of international law relating to indigenous peoples - ILO Convention 107 of 1957 (Convention Concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries). Although
the Malaysian government was not one of the 27 states to ratify this convention it was clearly
influenced by it in its 1961-formulated policy towards the development-modernization of the
Orang Asli. In fact, the wording of the "Government of Malaysia, Statement of Policy
Regarding The Administration of the Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, Blue Book 1961" on
pages 3-5 and 21, is almost a verbatim rendition of sections of the ILO Convention 107, 1957.
Examine these wordings of the ILO Convention 107:

Article 2 [No.] 1. Governments shall have the primary responsibility for... the protection
of the [indigenous] populations concerned and their progressive integration into the life
of their respective countries... (b) promoting the social, economic and cultural
development of these populations and raising their standard of living; (c) creating
possibilities of national integration to the exclusion of measures tending towards the
artificial assimilation of these peoples... Article 3 [No] 1. So long as the social,
economic and cultural conditions of the [indigenous] populations concerned prevent
them from enjoying the benefits of the general laws of the country to which they belong,
special measures shall be adopted for the protection of the institutions, persons, property
and labour of these populations. [No] 2. Care shall be taken to ensure that such special
measures of protection - (a) are not used as a means of creating or prolonging a state of
segregation; and will be continued only so long as there is a need for special protection
and only to the extent that such protection is necessary...

And the "Government of Malaysia, Statement of Policy Regarding The Administration of the
Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia" reads:

... their [the Orang Asli's] ultimate integration with the Malay section of the
community... but so far as their social, economic and cultural conditions prevent them
from enjoying the benefits of the laws of the country, special measures should be
adopted for the protection of the institutions, customs, mode of life, persons, property
and labour of the aborigine peoples. However, such measures of protection should not
be used as a means of creating or prolonging a state of segregation and should be
continued only so long as there is a need for special protection and only to the extent that
protection is necessary... The social, economic and cultural development of the
aborigines should be promoted with the ultimate object of natural integration as opposed
to artificial assimilation. (Government of Malaysia, Statement of Policy Regarding The
Administration of the Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, Blue Book 1961:3-5, 21).

These governmental and international policies suggest that the spatial protection-segregation of
the indigenous is a conditional step or process towards the "modernization-development" and
"integration" of the indigenous populations with mainstream society. At the conclusion of this
process, as in the case of Malaysia, all legal distinctions between Orang Asli and the Malay
community were to be unnecessary. Once the Orang Asli is integrated, s/he could then function
in society like all other Malays. In terms of land rights, therefore, the Orang Asli would then
enjoy similar rights as the Malay community once the former is "integrated". Until that point in
time, however, the spatial protection-segregation policy is necessary and a special state agency
is mandated to be the "trustee" or "guardian" of Orang Asli relations in those specified places.

**Restricted Areas**

For the Orang Asli in general, these processes of national security, Malay nationalism,
protection-segregation, modernization-development, etc. and their implications were clearly felt
on the ground as it were. These processes spelt out for the Orang Asli a confinement and
consignment of their identity and mobility to particular and restricted places. When the Sg. Nam
Semai returned to their settlements in 1959, after their two-year detention, they realized that
they were no more accountable to the Malay Penghulu of the Sub-District but to the JHEOA. If
the Semai wanted to move their settlements, the JHEOA must first be consulted. Similarly, the
appointments of Semai headmen must be confirmed by the JHEOA, gathering certain forest
goods required a licence from the department, trading in forest products were to mediated by the
JHEOA, etc. It was more than a question of accountability. The Orang Asli in general were
required to depend on the JHEOA for their every need (Williams-Hunt, 1993; Ibrahim, 1995) as
the latter set about to reorganize Orang Asli relations from scratch, as it were.

The Semai recall that for the first time in the early 1960s social infrastructure projects
were implemented at their village-level by the JHEOA. Among other things, a school, a
fishpond and a village-community hall were set up for them and they were provided building
materials to renovate their houses. These allocations of social infrastructure, however, came
with specific appeals to Malay culture and religion. For instance, the villagers were assisted to
re-build their houses into Malay-style dwellings:

...Tuan... [the JOA Officer from Tapah] even carried out a survey of our settlement and
orchard sites and told us that he will be applying for our land to be gazetted as Orang
Asli Reserve... for that purpose we should have more "normal" houses like the Malay
villagers... (Bah Kenyet)

In the schools established by the JOA, compulsory instruction in Islam was incorporated in the
Teaching curriculum, something the Semai initially acquiesced to but soon after resisted by
withdrawing their children from the school. (The JOA finally closed down the school on
grounds that there was insufficient staff to maintain it). In another project, the Semai were supplied with the basic technology and seedlings to start up rubber smallholdings, the primary income-generating activities of the Malay peasantry (Ibrahim, 1993). Besides that, regular visits were made by religious officials accompanying JOA staff to persuade the village headmen to convert into Islam promising them and their villagers better development prospects. As Bah Tua narrates:

We were advised that our Asli religion and customs are not good for us... that we are Malaysian citizens now, so we should convert to Islam and be true Malaysians.

These Islamic visits actually began soon after the Semai returned to their settlement sites after their two-year detention. Muslim missionaries began frequenting the Semai settlements to bring a message that the latter's religion was heathen and inferior. Beh Jil recalls the events during that time:

...that year itself [1959] the Gob missionaries began to visit our village. They would come often bringing us food, medicine and other provisions... they will give these to the headman and he will distribute them to all the villagers... the Gob will also give us ceramah (lecture) telling us how important it is to have religion, that we are now Malaysian citizens so we should accept Islam... but none of us entered Islam. They would continue visiting our village, continue telling us that we must have religion, that it is not good to be without a religion... they really persusah us... then when the JOA opened a school in the village, all the children had to attend Islam lessons... really persusah

As in earlier times, these forces of change "from above" as it were affected the Semai but the process cannot be simply read off as a one-way affair in the shaping of Semai social relations. Implications of social processes on different scales of society were concretely mediated through the social-cultural practices of the Semai in particular places. In terms of these impositions of Malay culture and religion on the Semai in the 1960s, the latter's response was reminiscent of the spatial "back-front" strategy they employed during the Emergency. Two examples may suffice to illustrate this.

The architectural style of the Semai houses, constructed in the early 1960s, reveals the ways they incorporated social changes yet maintained certain distinct Semai practices. When the JHEOA supplied them with building materials to renovate their houses the Semai villagers were instructed to rebuild them in the fashion of Malay dwellings. The villagers complied with these instructions because, as Bah Ingat put it, "they [the JHEOA officers] were supervising the
reconstruction work and they were supplying us the material". It is interesting, however, to note
that the architecture of the reconstructed houses of the villagers which are maintained to this day
betray a clear mix in cultural style. The front section of the Semai house, facing the road,
resembles a typical Malay dwelling-place, constructed from the materials provided by the
JHEOA, while the back section (the wal or fireplace/kitchen) is built from forest resources and
fashioned in a distinctively Semai style. When I asked Wah Kawat to explain the mixed
architecture, she explained:

...we had no choice, the materials provided by the JHEOA were insufficient. My mother,
sister and I spent several months collecting rattan, bamboo and wood from the forest to
construct our wal. When we extended the house, the JOA people were not around to
watch us, so we built it according to the Asli way.

But perhaps more significant in mediating the social processes impacting them was the way the
Semai dealt with the imposition of Islam. Withdrawing their children from the JHEOA-school,
where compulsory instruction in Islam was part of the curriculum, was one way to resist a
religion they could not identify with. However, Islamic missionaries were persistent in their
efforts at proselytizing the Semai. The Semai villagers finally managed to stop the Islamic visits
when the villages became "Christian/Bahai" places.

Methodists, Lutheran, Pentecostal and Catholic missionaries had begun working among
the Orang Asli of Perak in the early 1930s. Before the state-imposed restrictions in the 1950s the
missionaries were frequenting Orang Asli settlements even in the deep-jungle areas (Means &
Means, 1981; Means, 1985; Abdullah, 1979/80). Even during the Japanese Occupation some
Christian missionaries stayed behind in the jungle areas to render humanitarian services to the
Orang Asli (Means & Means, 1981; Means, 1985). Despite their proselytizing efforts, Christian
conversions among the Orang Asli of Perak prior to the 1960s were minimal. The Methodists
recorded about twenty conversions in 1941 after which the war broke out and
missionary/humanitarian work did not resume until the late 1950s and early 1960s (Ibid.). The
Catholics recorded even fewer baptisms among the Perak Orang Asli before the 1960s,
numbering only about fifteen persons (personal communication). The one Christian group that
did achieve the highest number of converts, in contrast to the other Christian groups, were the
Pentecostals. By the late 1950s there were at least two Semai villages, numbering about fifty
persons, almost wholly baptized by these christian missionaries (see Singapore Standard 16.9.56

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and personal communication with Wah Kenyet who belongs to the second village). As for the state-sponsored Islamic-proselytizing of Orang Asli, the Perak Department of Religious Affairs announced that forty-three Orang Asli were converted by 1956 (Straits Times, 22.8.56). And by the end of 1957 the number of Orang Asli Muslim converts in Perak had risen to 108 (NST, 14.12.57 in Nicholas, Williams-Hunt and Sabak, 1989:227). With regard to the Semai of Darat Legep, for instance, there are no records of any villager embracing Christianity prior to the 1960s although Christian missionaries were working in their midst. It was only in the 1960s that many Semai began embracing not only Christianity but the Baha'i religion. In fact the majority of the Christian Semai in Canu and the Baha'i in Iini were all baptized in the 1960s.

There is a large body of literature on the practice of stigmatized minorities in many countries to adopt world religions that are both opposed to the religion of the dominant group and which offer a universalistic dignity and status (Kooiman, Muizenberg & Veer, 1988; Aronoff, 1984; Stoll, 1991). The conversion of poor peasants to Protestantism as opposed to Catholicism in Central America (Martin, 1990), the "untouchables" of India moving into Islam, Buddhism and Christianity for centuries (George, 1982; Yesudass, 1980: Forrester, 1977) are but some examples. Methodism, Catholicism and the Baha'i religion filled this same functional role for the Semai especially in the 1960s. The pioneer-converts to Methodism, Catholicism and the Bahai religion are all bluntly frank about a common denominator when recounting the circumstances of their conversion. Beh Salit is 65 years old and one of the first Iini converts to the Bahai religion:

... but Gob missionaries, they were allowed to enter the village... and they kept visiting us and persusah us to become Muslim but each time we refused... some of us even talked of going back ulu teow so the Gob cannot persusah us... It was during that time that many of us muit ugama (entered religion)... the headman of... [another village] explained how the Muslim missionaries stopped persusah his village when the villagers there muit ugama... each time after that whenever the Gob tries to convert them to Islam, the villagers would show them their baptism certificates to prove that they had already muit ugama... those who did not have the certificates would place crucifixes and and religious pictures in their houses... even those villagers who did not enter religion, they fixed these religious pictures and crucifix in their houses...when the Gob visited them the people will say we already masuk ugama (Malay for "entered religion")...soon the Gob stopped trying to convert us.

That these Christian and Bahai religions initially served a primarily functional purpose for the Semai is further evident in the reasons for the specific choice of religion of each village. When
questioned as to why the Canu villagers accepted Catholicism and Methodism the answer from several contributors was invariably "because these religious workers were the first to visit the Semai area as well as set up their centers in the nearby towns". When I asked Beh Cernern the reason I'n villagers did not accept Christianity the same time the Canu villages did his response was:

No. We did not like Christianity. No one in I'n wanted to be Christian. How could we when it was a Christian Pastor who sold our land to the mining company and we were forced to move here... only recently some I'n villagers have joined Christianity because of marriage...

For the Semai, therefore, the need to be free from the persusah of the Gob missionaries was a prime motivating factor in their mutt ugama of the Bahai/Christian. Moreover, as long as the Semai "did not have religion" the Muslim encroachment into their places would continue. In a sense, the Semai in "entering" these world religions afforded them a "protective dignity", a re-positioning of their villages on the social map. It was protection and social position the Semai customary religion could not provide them against a religion they did not want in their places. In addition, as, Beh Salit explained, the protection was even extended to the Semai who had not embraced one or other of the world religions.

Conclusions

In this chapter I continued a theme from the previous chapter which is the land rights (and geography of social relations) of the Orang Asli, the Semai in particular, and how they further deteriorated in the years between the 1940s and 1960s. Following upon Semai notions of places and place-making, I have chosen to examine the land rights issue in terms of the changing social relations of the Semai. For the Semai, as I have argued earlier, social relations are made in "people-places" which are interconnected with other "people-places". Borrowing ideas from contemporary discussions on the spatialization of social relations, I have elaborated on the Semai notions of place-making by including, especially, the significance of the range of scales of the place-making process. As with any work which attempts to look at social processes in their range of scales there is the danger of emphasizing one scale of practices to the detriment of others or what Said would call "out-of-scale images" (Said, 1994). Thus, in this and the
previous chapter, while my concern is with the constitution of social relations in a specific Semai locale, I have tried to examine how social processes on different scales in particular time-periods have come together to impinge on the lives of the Semai. More importantly, I hope I have demonstrated how the effects of these social processes or the social flows between different places have been concretely mediated through the social-cultural practices of the Semai in particular places.

My concern in this chapter was to show how state constructions of Orang Asli places - in the context of the Emergency, Malay nationalism and a global discourse of protecting-segregating-assimilating the indigenous - were translated into articulations of a joint control over Orang Asli identity and mobility. In these state-constructed Orang Asli places the limitation of Orang Asli mobility in terms both of identity and space has been a crucial means of subordination. And the rights in land, or lack thereof, which characterize these places play a crucial role in maintaining this joint control over the identity and mobility of these peoples. However, place-making practice was/is not a monopoly of just state or nationalist agencies. Semai place-making, during the period being discussed here was concomitant with the processes "from above" as it were. In addition, it showed itself as a form of resistance that can be usefully explained as the "back and front" zoning-practice of time-space relations.

The Semai struggles for land rights, their masalah tanah which is another significant effect of this process of place-making, is also a struggle at place-making. The struggles are not merely aimed at securing a piece of titled land. It is also a struggle against place-making forces coming from the state as well as beyond which are aimed at consigning/confining the Semai to particular places and fixing their identity in exclusive terms. It is to these on-going and concomitant Orang Asli place-making processes that I turn to in the subsequent chapters.
Chapter Five: Making a Living in a Contested Place as observed in 1993-4

For centuries now the Semai were able to make a living in the Malayan forests on the basis of strategies I have briefly described in Chapters Two and Three. They had developed a broad-spectrum economy and a specific mode of production as well as an organizational structure to match both. In the course of the colonial period and especially during the last decades, their prime resource base viz. their forest habitat became disputed space. Although the Semai still have access to forest lands their tenurial rights have never been recognized neither by the colonial state nor by the post-colonial state. State-supported projects and private enterprise increasingly restrict their access to the primary source of their material existence and social reproduction, the vast forest.

How did the Semai continue to make a living in the face of these circumstances? What strategies had they adopted over these past decades and what consequences did they have for the Semai? I shall address these questions in this chapter.

Orang Asli economics in general has been popularly and officially described in a negative way as pindah-randah (shifting) (Zawawi, 1995:6) to reproduce what is an equally "misleading assumption of... [their] weak links to land" (Gomes, 1990:23). The state-sponsored development projects for the Orang Asli, therefore, were aimed at "settling" the latter and "stabilizing" their economy. In the face of these measures the Semai have developed an economy which is mobile yet firmly centred around their customary lands. Moreover, it is a way of making a living that is much embedded in their social life and needs to be understood in terms of Semai tenurial concepts which I have outlined in Chapter Two.

In answering these questions, I shall focus my attention on one of the three villages organized around the customary land of the Darat Legep Semai. To examine the socio-economic developments of all the three villages in their particular differences would require more than one chapter. Nevertheless, where necessary, I shall discuss the linkages of these three villages, which have come to share in a common customary territory.
The Making of Kampung Canu

In this section, I shall briefly discuss some of the major efforts by the Semai as well as the JHEOA to rebuild the former’s livelihood following the Emergency period. By 1959, all the Semai of Sungai Nam had returned from the detention camp to their settlement sites located at the fringe of the forests. They re-built their houses in two clustered settlements; one around Atuk Jok’s *tmpaat* and the other further upstream where Atuk Jenang’s homestead was located (Map...). Prior to their detention, the swidden farms the Semai had opened near their settlement sites were taken over by some Chinese farmers and converted into vegetable farms. A new Malay settlement had also sprouted up which ate away into part of their productive land. A Canu village who was old enough to remember those events expressed the mood of the Semai situation at the time:

...what remained of our houses, when we left, were all torn down when we returned... our farms we opened up were taken over by others... we had to start all over again and it was difficult. If the JOA did not help us with food and money and if not for our fruit orchards we would surely have starved...

Although the Semai were faced with the difficult task of re-establishing their livelihood there were two factors working in their favour. First, they received financial, food and medical aid not only from the JHEOA but as I shall discuss in the next chapter, from other charitable organizations. Second, although their swidden farms were occupied by others, much of the Semai fruit and rubber trees, though unattended during the war years, were still in their productive life. For instance, the rubber smallholding which Atuk Pendue’s descent group had begun in 1910 with twenty five seedlings measured 64 acres when the JHEOA surveyed it in 1969. Moreover, given that the Malaysian smallholdings generally benefited from rubber prices during the 1960s to the early 70s (Rudner, 1994) it was not long before the Semai began reworking these plots and receiving the returns. Although the rubber smallholding was the “property” of Atuk Jok’s descent group its resources were shared with members of the other descent groups who had come to settle in the former’s *tmpaat* and depend on the common resources. The grand-daughter of Atuk Pendue (the grand-father of the descent group which "owns" the rubber smallholding) explained the Semai custom underlying this practice of sharing resources in difficult times:

...genhaq...it means that the Semai who has sufficient land and food must help another who is suffering or starving without land and food. This is how the Orang Asli lived
through the Japanese Occupation and the Emergency years...after the Emergency we could return to our sakaa lands and our fruit and rubber trees... Just as other Semai shared their land and food with us when we fled during the war, we need to share with those who have lost their land.

That which was more promising than the rubber smallholding for the Semai were their fruit orchards located in the forests. To this day, these orchards are valuable to the Semai not only for the subsistence as well as the cash incomes they provide but they also represent the major portion of the Semai's sakaa (inheritance) landholdings. Although there are no exact figures on the number and sizes of the Semai orchards for the 1960s, there are two telling indicators of their extent and productive viability. First, before their displacements in the 1940s and 50s the Darat Legep Semai descent groups had established fruit orchards from "Atuk Jok's settlement to Bukit Dalam", a land area that measures some 60,000 hectares, and the same land area they returned to after the Emergency. Given that the total population of Canu and Pendue (the Darat Legep Semai unit) numbered 224 in 1969, even if only one quarter of the aforementioned land area was cultivated with fruits the person to productive orchard-land ratio would have been almost 70 acres. The second indicator of the extent and economic viability of the Semai orchard land was the decision made by the Canu-Pendue villagers in 1964 to take in the Ini villagers to share in the former's lengriik space. As a result of this intake by 1969 an additional 95 persons from the Ini village had to share in the Canu-Pendue land resources. In Table... I show the estimated availability of customary land on a per capita basis for the three Semai villages in the 1960s. Even with the addition of the Ini villagers each Semai of all the villagers would have enjoyed about 190 acres of customary land.

The Ini villagers were not the only Semai to be displaced by some development scheme or another in the 1960s, and who came to share in the customary land and resources of the Canu-Pendue lengriik. Prior to the JHEOA re-grouping of these Semai villages, in the latter half of the 1960s, five other families had migrated into the Canu settlement itself. They came from two different places, one a settlement near the town of Teluk Intan and the other was Kampung Lama. Of the three families from Kampung Lama,

Wah Jai, a widow in her sixties, had moved into Canu in the early 1960s. She came with her husband and three young children from Kampung Lama, which is some 40 kilometres away. They came with two other families from the same kampung. These families were not related to any of the Canu-Pendue descent groups. They had come to
know some Canu villagers when some of them had sought refuge in the former's settlement during the Japanese Occupation. They decided to move to Canu when their previous forestlands were cleared by FELDA for the setting up of a Malay rural-development settlement scheme. The JHEOA had promised to resettle them but like many other villagers of Kampung Lama, Wah Jai and her family decided to move into other Semai settlements. Presently Wah Jai and her unmarried daughter live in one household while her two married sons and their families have their own household. They all presently share sakaa rights in Atuk Jok's kampok lands.

Semai mobility in the 1960s was not limited to in-migration of families into the Canu-Pendue territory. I came across at least three other Semai villages - one located about 3 kilometres from Canu and the other two some 40 kilometres to the north of Canu - which received new families into their villages in the 1960s. In one of those villages, Kg. Sana, four Semai families had in-migrated from as far as the state of Pahang.

The aforementioned examples of Semai movements were based on the links that were created in earlier movements between Semai groups. In the case of the Ini villagers and the five families, their movements were a reverse flow of the earlier Darat Legep Semai movements during the Emergency into the previous territories of the Ini and Kg. Lama families. The same was the case of the Semai from Pahang who had migrated into Kg. Sana. However, there were Semai families whose migration to the Canu area represented a re-activating of their land rights based on kinship links. For example, two of the other five families who had moved into Canu in the mid-1960s had ambilineal ties with some members of Canu. In the case of one family for instance -

Wah Nor had originally belonged to one of the Canu descent groups. She is the daughter of Atuk Zam who opened the settlement of Bukit Empad. However, when she married, sometime in the 1930s, she followed her husband to his ramah group territory located near the town of Sungkai. Then, in 1963, she, her husband and two children moved into Canu. Their reason for moving - Chinese farmers had encroached on their landholdings while they were in detention.

There were other productive activities, apart from the rubber and fruit landholdings, which were possible on the extensive Semai-customary land and which made their place an attractive site for other displaced Semai. These included subsistence-cash oriented activities such as hunting, fishing, gathering, etc. Again, access to the primary means of production - the forest-lengriik land - resided in the kinship practice which original descent group members and the new Semai settlers negotiated and constructed among themselves. I have
mentioned these practices briefly in Chapters Two and Three, and I shall return to them in a later section. The point I wish to make here is that, despite their displacements in the 1940s and 1950s, in the 1960s the Semai were able to return to the range and mix of productive activities, which they had established in the decades before. They were able to do so for three reasons. First, the Semai continued to have access to and use of the vast tracks of their productive forest-based "landholdings". That these were more than sufficient for their needs is attested by the fact that they were able to share their resources with other Semai who were displaced from their lands. The second reason was their flexible kinship practice that allowed for an equality of producers, or the same access of all the Semai to the main factors of production. Semai tenurial patterns are not something fixed and given and neither are they recognized by the state. Semai land and natural resources tenure are part of a socio-spatial universe negotiated by Semai persons in their everyday relations with others, and not limited to only those belonging to the same ambilineal descent group, band or village but other Orang Asli and non-Orang Asli groups who have come to share, or have encroached on the same geographical space. Finally, in the 1960s there was an established market for all the major commodities produced by the Semai viz. rubber, fruits and rattan. There are no data on actual production figures but the recollections of older Semai suggest that the 1960s were productive years for them despite "having to start all over again". According to the Canu headman, for instance,

...in a few years, [after the Semai returned to their settlements] we stopped depending on the handouts of the JOA. The petai prices were good and together with the rubber we tapped we were able to live as we did before the war... there were regular *kenduri* (Malay for feast) in the village... In those days, only a few villagers went out to look for work... If we did not make enough money, we could collect sufficient food from the forest.

While the Canu Semai were opening up and sharing their forest-located landholdings with new settlers in the 1960s, the JHEOA was beginning to implement programmes to remove the Semai from the forest economy altogether. As part of their "sedentarization and integration" policies (Nicholas, 1990:71), the JHEOA began in 1968 to organize Orang Asli settlements, especially "those Orang Asli groups living within the fringe of rural areas" (Jimin, 1983:55) into what was called "pattern settlements". As subsequent JHEOA Directors explained this process, in and through these "pattern settlements" the Orang Asli would be:
... housed in new Malay-type dwellings and provided with a piped water supply and facilities such as a school, community hall, health clinic and sanitary conveniences... (Carey, 1976)

...that the Orang Asli may participate effectively in the socio-economic development process... improve their standard of living through the improvement and modification of their agriculture... increase their earning capacity and income level by getting them directly involved with the market economy... (Jimin, 1983:113f)

The re-organizing of Orang Asli groups, such as the Canu Semai into pattern settlements, represented a rural development programme aimed at shifting Semai reliance on a forest-based economy to a "modern" agricultural productivity centred around the village. More concretely, in terms of a re-organization of production, the main thrust of the JHEOA was to gradually replace the Semai subsistence-oriented pursuits such as hunting-gathering, swidden-farming, etc. with a more efficient, market-oriented cultivation of rubber, oil palm and fruits (Jimin: 1972:6). Given that the Canu Semai were already engaged in the cultivation of rubber around their settlements, the JHEOA focused their attention to the upgrading of rubber production in Canu. As I mentioned earlier, the JHEOA carried out a survey of the rubber-planted areas around Canu demarcating them into household-held plots. Villagers were provided with new-technology training by RISDA (Rubber Industry Smallholders' Development Authority) officials accompanied by JHEOA fieldstaff. Agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, rubber pressing machines, etc. were also provided. Moreover, to ensure that the Semai persists in rubber production and not "return to the forest" the JHEOA took on some added measures. First, they provided monthly cash allowances to Canu heads of households to supplement their subsistence needs. Second, as a longer-term measure, the JHEOA assisted the villagers to replant the fringe tracks of their rubber plots with high yielding rubber seedlings. Thus, the production from original plots, supplemented by cash allowances, were to ensure that the Semai could meet their subsistence needs until the fringe blocks of high-yielding rubber matured. The villagers were promised that as soon as the new trees matured the original plots would also be replanted with new high-yielding rubber.

In line with government policy the Canu Semai were also allocated a specially designated "Orang Asli Area" with the promise that the JHEOA will apply to the Perak State Government for the land to be gazetted as an Orang Asli Reserve. 270 acres of land around
the Semai settlement were marked out for this purpose. The villagers were also encouraged to cultivate within these allocated land short-term vegetables and fruits both for their own use as well as for sale. To this end, the JHEOA provided them with seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs.

**Canu Village in 1994**

The village of Canu in 1994 was not the same settlement it was in the 1960s. The population of the village had more than doubled from 178 in 1969 to 456 in 1994 (Table...). The growth in the number of households and population is not only the result of marriages and births but because new families had moved into the village. In total, twelve new Semai families had moved into Canu since the 1960s. As for out-migration, five families have left the village because their men are employed in salaried positions in the towns. Those who are away from the village as individuals include about 15 young men who are full-time employed in urban-based blue-collar work. However, it is in their range of productive activities that the major changes and continuities of the economic life of Canu can be detected. It is also in this area that some important aspects of their contemporary *masalah tanah* can be illustrated. I shall examine these issues in the following sections.

**Kerjak Kampok**

The Semai use the term *kerjak kampok* to refer to the range of productive activities they engage in at different levels of their customary land. These activities include hunting, fishing, gathering, agricultural production, etc. Although most of the Canu villagers also frequently engage in temporary waged-labour, referred to as *kerjak bandar* (town work), they identify the kerjak kampok as the mainstay of their mixed subsistence-cash economy. It is more than economic reasons that constitutes *kerjak kampok* as an important place in the lives of the Semai. For example, all the families who have moved out of Canu and earn salaries make it a point to return to the village at least once or twice a year to engage in *kerjak kampok*. The reason for this is that by engaging in these activities they demonstrate that they
have not forgotten (inseep) their lengriik or customary territory. Among those who engage in waged-labour, the young men who are employed in salaried positions some 100 kilometres away return to the village more frequently. Almost all of them own a motorbike and would visit their village at least every fortnight, during weekends and holidays. The reason for their frequent returning as one young men put it is, again,

...to join in the kerjak kampok... especially during the fruit season or there is an order for rattan - then we will take our annual leave from our employer and return to the village to join in the collecting

One young man even quit his job at a tourist resort in 1993 in order to be around the village for the whole fruit season, explaining that he could always find another "coolie's job" the following year.

The Canu Semai do not follow the same tenurial patterns in the carrying out of their different kerjak kampok productive activities. As such, I shall continue this discussion in terms of the different ways the Semai organize their kerjak kampok activities.

Selai Nyeng

Although they do not possess any legal titles over any of their lands, all Canu households operate agriculturally productive customary land holdings. These land holdings are located both within their settlement sites i.e. the JHEOA-allocated Orang Asli Area as well as on State Forest Reserve lands. These land holdings fall into two categories. The first is the selai nyeng. These are small plots of land ranging in size from 0.25 to 1 acre and located in an around their settlement area. By their very name itself, selai refers to the swidden farms the Semai used to cultivate as a single or group of households in previous times. However, since the 1970s the Canu Semai have ceased to practise swidden farming due to pressures from the state. Today, the selai nyeng refers to these fixed, small farming plots held and operated by each household. Table... shows the mix of crops the Semai cultivate at one time on their selai nyeng. These crops are mainly grown for the villagers' own consumption. Occasionally, a particular household may decide to cultivate a single cash crop on their selai nyeng. This was the case in Beh/Wah Kenyet's household where they planted cassava, a four-month crop, on their 0.75-acre plot, the sale of which earned them RM$600.
Overall, however, as Tables... and ... illustrate, selai nyeng production does not figure as a main source of cash income for the villagers.

Work on the selai nyeng has become, as some villagers put it, "more and more the women's work". This was also apparent in a usual daily routine of the villagers. One of the first morning tasks for the women was the tending to these gardens and the feeding of chickens, the only livestock reared by the villagers. It is not surprising therefore that several women, from different households in the village, had recently begun to work together in each others' selai plots with the intention of increasing productivity. And, in 1993, another group of women from all three villages got together to set up a common selai for the cultivation of cash crops.

Kebun/Dusun production

The second form of landholdings held/operated by the Semai is the kebun and dusun. These are Malay terms, the former means "plantation/garden" and the latter "orchard". For the Semai, these terms are used to distinguish certain plots of land cultivated with different crops but following similar tenurial patterns. The kebun, therefore, refers to those plots of land grown primarily with rubber and the dusun to their fruit groves. Prior to the displacements the Semai experienced in the 1940s and 50s, these kebun/dusun plots were part of larger territories (tmpaat) on which individual Semai settlements were also located. These tmpaat which also contained what is now marked out as kebun/dusun were in turn located within the larger Semai country or lengriik. However, with the regroupment and resettlement of the Darat Legep Semai in the 1960s into the villages of Canu and Pendue, most of the villagers were removed from the immediate vicinity of what is now their kebun/dusun plots. However, they have continued to maintain their kebun/dusun landholdings, most of which are located on State Forest Reserves. Currently, the kebun/dusun maintained by the Canu Semai consists of 83 plots of land ranging from about 1 acre to about 30 acres. 28 of these plots, measuring altogether 64 acres, are to be found in the Orang Asli Area marked out for the Canu villagers while 55 plots are located on State Forest Reserves. Of the 28 plots within the settlement area, 24 of them are kebun getah or rubber-grown plots while 4 are dusun or orchards. All the 55
forest-located plots are *dusun* (orchard) landholdings. The nearest forest-located Canu *dusun* plot is about a twenty-minute walk away while the furthest plot is some two hours walking distance from the village. No statistics are available on the acreage of the different *dusun* located on Forestland. When I left the field the Canu villagers were engaged in a project to map out and survey their *dusun* plots located on Forest Reserve lands (see sketch Map...).

While the *selai nyeng* plots are held/operated by individual Semai households, the *kebun/dusun* landholdings are owned and operated by Semai ambilineal descent groups. As I mentioned in earlier chapters, members of an ambilineal descent group are those who can trace descent from a common grandparent as well as outgroupers who have become incorporated (*hii*) into the group. Through their membership in the descent group the Semai claim rights of access to and use of *kebun/dusun* lands. Moreover, the Semai practise ambilocal residence/inheritance, which implies that villagers also enjoy rights of access to the produce of another *kebun/dusun*, located in a different river valley altogether. Although the *kebun/dusun* landholdings are owned collectively, fruit trees can be owned individually. In other words, for the Semai, land tenure is not the same as tree tenure. Villagers claim exclusive ownership rights over fruit trees they have inherited (*sakaa*) as well as trees they have planted themselves. This form of tree tenure is distinguished as a practice of *cha' halior* (to eat alone) while the practice of communal ownership over orchard lands/trees are characterized as *cha' samak* (to eat together). However, the social recognition and practice of these land/tree rights are predicated upon the group member or individual contributing to the reproduction of the *kebun/dusun* landholdings as a whole. In concrete terms, this means the regular clearing of undergrowth around the trees, replanting and, more importantly, harvesting and sale of the *kebun/dusun* produce. Thus, if for some reason a person cannot personally be involved in the harvesting/sale of *kebun/dusun* produce s/he may give another individual the right to do so on the former's behalf. This arrangement of granting rights of harvest/sale to another is a temporary one varying in periods from a day to the whole harvesting season or to several seasons depending on how long the particular member remains indisposed to tend to his/her *kebun/dusun*. For example, one of the villagers who works full time waged labour in the city is only able to join his co-ramage members in the harvest/sale of their *dusun* produce for about two to three weeks a year. Thus, in his absence
he has allowed his neighbour who is not a member to the former's descent group to harvest and sell fruits from his ramage's *dusun*.

There are a few more "rules" or concepts which underpin the *kebun/dusun*-related practices of sharing and exchange among the Semai. In an earlier section I mentioned the concept of *genhak* which requires those with more land resources to share them with other villagers who have less. And through the longer term process of cultivating *hii* or kinship relations, this sharing of land resources can take the form of a descent group granting permission to a non-members to grow their own fruit trees or establish their own *dusun*. Another form it may take is the shorter term granting of harvesting/selling rights by one villager to another who has less land resources or who may be experiencing a shortfall in the latter's own *kebun/dusun* production. Perhaps an example of one Canu household may help illustrate some of these *kebun/kampok*-related practices. There are two families in this household, that of Beh/Wah A and Beh/Wah B. Beh A and Beh B are cousins who together with twelve other Canu families belong to a common descent group which holds/operates about 70 acres of orchard land. Wah A belongs to another Canu descent group of five families, which has about 50 acres of orchard land. Wah B hails from another natal settlement altogether, some thirty kilometres away from Canu, and she too has access rights to several orchards of her descent group in that river valley. All these individuals have maintained their links with their ramage landholdings and, therefore, in the petai fruit season of 1993 (August to October) each of them joined in the harvests of their different orchards. Beh/Wah A together earned about RM$500 in petai sales while Beh/Wah B earned about RM$650. A different situation occurred for this same household in the durian fruit season of December 1993 - February 1994. The durian trees of Beh A and Beh B's ramage-orchards, together with those of a few other groups, were especially affected by the heavy monsoon rains of that season. In this event both Beh A and Beh B approached another Canu descent-group leader for permission to join the latter's durian-harvesting party. They both earned about RM$150 each from being a (temporary) member of the other descent group's durian-harvesting party, an amount which was about half of what they had earned from their own orchards the previous season.
In general, the granting of harvesting/selling rights by a "land owner" with more kebun/dusun resources to another villager with less is a temporary arrangement. However, there are instances when this arrangement becomes a regular affair at every harvesting season that the usual requesting/granting of permission is no longer required but presumed. Yet, the arrangement is such that both parties continue to acknowledge between "ownership" and "use" rights. This was the case with another Canu household which, along with about five other households, had lost most of their fruit trees about ten years earlier when their dusun lands were cleared by a non-Orang Asli individual who started a cattle ranch. With only a few trees to their name the Canu household had since then regularly sought permission from other ramage group leaders to harvest/sell produce from the latter's dusun. A a member of this household explained,

...every fruit season we would ask Beh Tani to join his group to collect the fruits from their dusun and sell them. Sometimes we don't even need to ask because he will invite us to join them... but whatever fruits we collect we can keep the proceeds of the sale. We give some money to Beh Tani for allowing us to use his dusun but he gives it back to us... but we insist that he takes something after all it is his dusun not ours... in the end he does keep some of the money, maybe a few sen or a few ringgit.

As Robarchek (1980) had observed in another Semai group elsewhere in Perak, two other Semai "rules" come into play in arrangements such as these. First, in the actual negotiation of such arrangements there is an understanding among the parties that irrespective of ownership rights "the person who does the work has the major claim to the proceeds of the labour" (Ibid. p.96). Second, whatever the arrangement "the important thing for maintaining claims is for an owner of fruit trees to continue to have an active interest by making some arrangements concerning the fruit" (Ibid.).

Having mentioned some important aspects of the Semai's kebun/dusun-related tenurial practices I move on to discuss the productive activities themselves. As I mentioned earlier, of the 83 kebun/dusun landholdings of the Canu Semai 59 are cultivated mainly with fruit trees while the other 24 are mainly rubber-grown plots. First, then, the Canu Semai fruit production. As Table... shows, the Canu villagers cultivate about 34 different species of fruit trees all of them local to the Malayan hinterland. While most of these fruit types are harvested by the Semai for their own consumption or occasional selling, five types of fruit trees are still seriously cultivated as cash crops. The reason for this is simply that there is a generally good
demand for fruits especially from the local market (Gomes, 1990). Orang Asli-grown fruits have an added appeal among local traders and consumers in nearby towns in that, as one trader put it, "the Asli fruits taste better because they don't put carbide on their trees" (other fruit-growers are reputed to use calcium carbide, a carbon compound, to hasten the maturing of fruits).

As for the Canu kebun getah (rubber landholdings), productivity has been declining for several years. There are several reasons for this. Rubber prices have been quite erratic leading the Semai to invest more of their time and labour in other productive activities. One villager, in his fifties, is one of the few Canu men who still tap rubber on a regular basis, outside the two main fruit seasons. According to him,

... we spend more than half a day tapping and preparing the rubber. Sometimes we may receive 70 sen a kati [weight measurement equivalent to about 0.5 kg] for our rubber, the next week it can be 20 sen... these days only a few old men like me and the younger women are the ones who still tap rubber. The others prefer to go hunting, collect rattan or take on contract work.

That the rubber smallholder sector in Malaysia, in general, is affected by declining prices since the mid-1970s is evident in the fact that this "sector is already one of the most depressed sectors of the economy" (Nicholas, 1995:81). However, in the case of the Semai, as with other Orang Asli groups, they face an added problem in rubber production. More than half the acreage of the Canu rubber trees have gone beyond their 35-year productive life. Moreover, promises by the JHEOA to assist the Semai in replanting the old trees have yet to be fulfilled. When in 1993 the Canu headman approached RISDA, the state agency set up to assist rubber smallholders, to provide Canu villagers with rubber seedlings his request was turned down. The reason given by RISDA was that the Canu villagers did not possess legal titles over their rubber land and were, therefore, not entitled to state subsidies or agricultural inputs.

Currently, therefore, rubber production activities in Canu are treated as kerjak sambilan (work of secondary importance). A few elderly men and the younger women of the village who usually do not take on contract work outside the village carry out rubber tapping. Moreover, even this group of villagers only engage themselves in rubber tapping outside the main fruit seasons (August-September and November-January). Although most of their rubber trees are old and the yield is of a low-grade quality, traders and shopkeepers in the
town were willing to purchase these small quantities of un-processed rubber or exchange them with market goods the villagers required such as rice and other dried foodstuff.

**Lengriik production**

Apart from their productive activities centred around the *selai nyeng* and *kebun/dusun* landholdings, the Canu Semai also engage in other forest-based subsistence-cash pursuits. These activities include hunting, gathering and use of the natural forest resources, the list of which is found in Table.... Again, in contrast to the *selai nyeng* and *kampok* landholdings, a different tenurial practice applies to these productive activities related to the forest resources. There are few basic aspects to this tenurial pattern. First, the area of the forest the Canu Semai have access to and use of is limited to the geography of their *lengriik*, a territory which is shared by the villagers of Pendue and Ini. To extract resources beyond the markers of their *lengriik* the Canu-Pendue-Ini villagers are required to obtain the permission of the elders of the other *lengriik*. In a sense, it may be more appropriate to describe the conditions of use and access to these *lengriik* resources as Semai natural resource tenure than land tenure. This means that any Semai from the three villages of Canu, Pendue and Ini can hunt, fish, collect, etc. forest resources provided these resources are confined within their *lengriik* area. These Semai-recognised rights of access to and use of forest resources have also been curbed somewhat by forestry policies. For instance, the Semai are not allowed to fell any trees, hunt certain species of animals and collect some types of forest plants which are considered as protected items.

In Table... I have listed the produce of the forests that the Semai currently extract under the different categories of: (1) food items, (2) material-culture items, (3) medicinal items, (4) religious-culture items and (5) market-exchange items (Table...). The reason for this categorization is to illustrate the range of products which the Semai have access to when the need arises for their use or exchange values. As one Semai put it:

> Our *lengriik* forest is to us like the supermarket is to the *orang bandar*. Almost everything we need to live on can be found there and what more we need from the towns we can buy with money we earned from selling the products of the forest.
The Canu Semai also produce mats, bags, baskets, fish-traps and other household items for their own use as well as for sale. These items are made from materials gathered from the forest such as rattan, bamboo, mengkuang and bertam leaves, etc. Occasionally, they sell these products to petty traders who visit the village, to neighbouring Malay villages or in the market at the town of Kota. While the JHEOA and RISDA have assisted other Semai villages in the Batang Padang District in marketing their handicraft for the tourist industry, the same project did not succeed in Canu. According to Canu villagers the reasons for their lack of success in this venture are a combination of; one, the quality of the handicraft they produced was not good enough and two, the producers did not trust the JHEOA and RISDA officers to market their products.

In 1991-92, however, a few individuals from a Catholic-Church based NGO and some urban-based NGOs engaged themselves in trying to market the handicrafts produced by several Semai villages in the Batang Padang District including Canu. These were informal arrangements whereby the NGO individuals would regularly collect the surplus handicraft the Semai produced, market them through various channels in the cities and then pay the producers the full proceeds of the sale upon their following visits. The production and supply of the handicrafts, however, are extremely erratic not least because payment is not immediately received and producers need to engage in other productive activities to maintain their livelihood. Three women from different households in Canu who were most regular in producing handicraft for sale through these individuals, earned an average of about RM 450 in the year 1993 from the sale of handicrafts. To date, however, this project does not appear to be an attractive source of revenue for the Canu Semai although the aforementioned individuals are maintaining the project.

*Kerjak Bandar*

The Semai refer to waged employment outside the village as *kerjak bandar* or "town work". In 1994, thirty-one Canu villagers were employed full-time in salaried positions. Of this number, five are salariat in the public sector and all of them men. The remaining twenty-six (twenty men and six women) are employed as salaried blue-collar workers in various
industries located in urban areas. Full-time waged labour is generally unattractive to the Canu Semai. One of the men, in his forties, described his experience, "I'm just waiting to retire and return to the village". As mentioned earlier, the younger men who are salaried workers are also often returning to the village to engage themselves in the kerjak kampok. Some of them even resigned from their jobs to be present for a harvest and thereafter returned to the towns to look for new employment.

_Makan gaji_ (earning wages), however, is a necessary and regular part of the Canu economy. Almost all the adult Canu villagers take on temporary wage employment to supplement their income. They do so when the need for cash arises and this is usually outside the major fruit seasons as Tables ... show. Canu women would work between five days to two weeks at a time in nearby Chinese-owned vegetable plantations. The women usually work between twenty to sixty days per year as contract labourers of this sort. Their labour is sought by Chinese farm-owners who approach them in their village at different stages of vegetable cultivation: planting, weeding, pruning and harvesting. They are paid on a daily basis. The wages paid is about RM$10 per day and lunch is usually provided. The men also work in the nearby vegetable farms but less often than the women do. They are sought for the "heavier" tasks of ploughing and transporting and earn about RM$15 a day. More often, the men work as contract labourers in construction work and estate-type plantations farther away from the village. When they accept contract work in construction or in estate-type plantations, the men reside at their place of work and do not return home from between four to twelve weeks at a time. They are also paid on a daily basis and their average income is about RM$20 a day. Men villagers who engage in this form of economic activity estimate that they work between two to six months a year as contract labourers.

**Masalah Tanah**

The form of production which has developed in Canu as a result of their confrontation with the forces of capitalism, the market economy, state interventions and their own social production-reproduction needs may be described as a type of simple commodity production. This form of production has been associated with the economics of peasant societies
(Bernstein, 1979; Cook, 1976; Chevalier, 1982; Friedman, 1980; Kahn, 1980; Smith, 1979; Smith, 1984) and more recently some scholars have drawn upon these theoretical frameworks to describe the current development of Orang Asli economies (Nicholas, 1985; Gomes, 1986). As Gomes summarizes it:

Simple commodity producers produce goods for a market but continue to produce use-values for their direct consumption. They are in a way partially integrated into a market economy as they still need to participate in subsistence production given that not all their food is obtained from the market. Further, unlike the case in capitalist commodity production, simple commodity producers have control over their productive means. The unit of production in SCP (simple commodity production) is mostly household. And the conditions recognised as prerequisites for SCP include a well-developed commodity market, competition among units of production which makes producers price responsive, free contractual relations among producers and labour mobility.

In the case of the Canu villages their form of SCP, centred around *kerjak kampok*, is a preferred form of village economics because it not only provides them a livelihood but in its practice they are able to ensure their social reproduction. Table... shows the range of items the Semai derive from their lengriik resource base in the course of their *kerjak kampok* activities which contribute to their social reproduction. Table... shows that during a four-month period between 1993-1994 a sample of Semai households in Canu-Pendue-I'ni earned an average household income of RM1258.57 with a range of RM$1025 to RM$1470. These calculations are taken from a small sample (N=7) but given that the villagers have fairly equal access to factors of production, it can be assumed that these statistics are generally representative of the Canu households. Moreover, two qualifications are necessary in considering these income statistics. First, these calculations were based on the villagers' cash returns during a fruit-productivity season that was adversely affected by a bad monsoon. Given that fruit production accounts for about 75% of the villagers' cash income, we can assume that they have earned better incomes. A second consideration is that the income statistics do not indicate the use-values, in terms of both food and non-food items, the Semai receive from their cash-related as well as other subsistence activities. One way to assess the value of their subsistence production is to examine the consumption pattern of the Canu villagers. Tables... illustrate the pattern of commodity consumption by the same sample of households from which the income statistics were calculated. The figures were collected for a two-week period outside the major
fruit seasons when the villagers were earning a major portion of their cash incomes from waged labour. The average expenditure on food items is only 27% of the total they spend on market commodities indicating that they still obtain most of their food through subsistence production. Although the Semai are dependent on market goods and have the means to procure them, they still prefer the food products from the forest. The reason given by villagers is that there are many dietary restrictions (*punan*) practiced by the Semai at various times which require that they consume certain food only available in the forest.

There are other features of the Canu economy, which make it a preferred form of SCP for the Semai, in contrast to what is proffered them by the state. Productive activities related to *kerjak kampok* relies on a low level of technology and is labour intensive. As with other Semai units (Nicholas, 1994; Leong, 1991; Gomes, 1990) Canu villagers' fruit production, agricultural pursuits on their *selai nyeng*, gathering, hunting, fishing and trapping require only a set of techniques, tools and other inputs derived from the forests and the creative labour of the Semai. One exception to this productive pattern is the case of rubber. With the introduction of high-yielding rubber seedlings and the use of fertilizers by the JHEOA, the villagers have now become dependent on continued inputs in this sector of their economy. This is one contributing factor to the decline in Canu rubber productivity, as mentioned earlier.

The Canu economy which is centred around *kerjak kampok*, is also characterized with diversity, flexibility and mobility which makes it fairly resilient especially in periods of production shortfall. For example, during the fruit season of 1993 which was a period of production shortfall for Canu households, strong monsoon winds and rains had adversely affected the petai and durian productivity for that season. Cash incomes from the sale of these fruits usually constitute a major portion of their earnings from *kerjak kampok* production activities. Thus, due to the shortfall in production the Semai resorted to various other productive options. Men from several households decided to trek farther up into the forests in search of rattan and bamboo, while women stepped up their food gathering activities. It was also at this time that the informal network of women decided to clear up a common plot of land to begin the cultivation of short-term cash crop vegetables. Individual households opened similar cash crop plots as they had done before in previous periods of shortfall in fruit
production or shortage of cash. Some women also stepped up or took up again, the daily tapping of rubber while other young men accepted temporary waged labour with urban employers. In addition, as mentioned in an earlier example, there were villagers who traveled to their kin's river valleys to engage in *kerjak kampok* there.

The Canu villagers have easy access to markets. They have a choice of several sources of market goods coupled with certain informal credit facilities. Itinerant retailers visit them frequently and there are many shops in the town of Kota, which is about seven kilometres away. Middlemen and traders in forest products also act as suppliers of market goods to the Semai in order to maintain good relations. The villagers can thus readily obtain the market goods they need. But in times of production shortfall, as in the 1993 fruit season, traders and shopkeepers allowed the villagers to purchase both food and non-food items on credit with the promise to repay either in cash or in forest products especially bamboo, rattan, durian and petai. Semai villagers I spoke to, however, were reluctant to accept credit unless they feel they can repay the debts by the following fruit season. Moreover, I did not come across any instance of serious indebtedness among the Canu villagers. As one villager put it, "we have a "supermarket" of food in the forests that we can obtain without incurring *hutang* (debt).

The Canu economy, however, is not without its problems. Chief among these is the fact that the villagers are gradually losing control over their main means of production - their customary land. Although they still have access to and use of vast tracks of their customary productive lands, these same lands and their resources are increasingly being encroached upon and exploited by other non-Orang Asli individuals and groups. Although the JHEOA had allocated about 270 acres to the Canu Semai as part of the resettlement policy, the status of the land is still that of TOL land. Moreover, the land is not formally leased to the Canu villagers. As such, a number of non-Orang Asli vegetable farmers and a cattle rancher have, over the past ten years, applied to the Perak Land Office and have obtained TOLs over some 30 acres of the Canu Orang Asli Area. Because of these happenings, some five households have lost parts of their *selai nyeng* and *dusun* landholdings. In total, as Table... shows the Canu Semai have lost about 70 acres of the land allocated to them by the JHEOA. Although the villagers protested these happenings to the JHEOA, the supposed trustee of the Orang Asli lands, no action was taken.
Another example of their land problem pertains to the villagers' *dusun* landholdings and the common *lengriik* lands in which the Semai hunt, gather forest products, etc. Most of these said lands are located on State Forest Reserves and according to the Forest policies, forestlands are accessible to Malay peasants settled on its fringes. While the Semai recognize and observe each others' *dusun* and their rights therein, the Malay villagers do not and, in fact, see the fruit trees in the forests as "wild" produce and thus free to gather. In the fruit season during the time of my fieldwork, the situation was exacerbated when unemployed Malay and Indian youth (whom the Semai suspected of being drug addicts) were also going into the forests and gathering the fruits for their own consumption as well as for sale. Malays from the neighbouring villages also compete with the Semai for the other marketable forest products, which the latter consider their "property" such as bamboo and rattan. The Semai have lodged reports with the JHEOA and the Forestry Department field officers regarding these encroachments but again no action was taken.

Perhaps the greatest threats to the Canu villagers' land resources are those posed by state-sponsored development projects. One such project set up in the mid-1980s, a FELDA land resettlement scheme for Malay peasants had already encroached into some fifty acres of the Semai forest resource base. During the period of my fieldwork, two other projects were discovered and if implemented will severely affect the Canu form of SCP. The first is a logging concession granted by the Forest Department to a private company to fell some five hundred hectares of trees. The area allocated for the logging falls squarely on Semai *lengriik* land that also holds their fruit *dusuns*. The second project is a proposed tourist resort to be built on the slope of a hill beside the waterfall, the main source of water supply for the Semai.

The decreasing land resources are also exacerbating what is still a nascent inter- and intra-village social differentiation. This growing differential access to the means of production, however, is linked closely to religious and ideological differences so I shall deal with the issue the following chapter.

**Conclusions**

In making a living for themselves in these past decades, the Semai have had to resist attempts by the state to make the former "modern" farmers in one place. The Semai have
achieved this in several interrelated ways. First, despite restrictions to the use of forestlands and resources, the Semai continued to engage in productive activities in their customary territory. They have persisted in the broad-spectrum forest-based subsistence-cash economy developed since, at least, early this century. In this forest-based economy, the Semai also maintained their customary tenurial and flexible kinship practices that govern villagers' access to and use of the forces and means of production. Apart from these forest-related productive activities, the Semai have also moved out into seasonal waged labour to supplement their cash incomes. And as discussed above, it is not merely by force of necessity that the Semai are taking on temporary worker waged labour. There is a conscious concern and willingness among the villagers to maintain their economic diversity and retain their effective control not only over their customary land but in relation to their other main means of production - their labour.

However, the continuity of the present diversified form of Semai economy and the success or failure of their productive strategies are dependent, precisely, on the Semai having independent control over their land and labour. The extant evidence shows that while the Semai still can and do make independent decisions concerning the manner in which they use and distribute their labour, they are increasingly losing effective control over their land. In the last thirty years the Canu Semai have lost about one quarter of their JHEOA-allocated land and have been experiencing increasing competition for the Semai customary-land and its resources from private and state-sponsored ventures. If the current extent of forest lands the Semai still have access to and utilize extensively, is appropriated for commercial exploitation such as the proposed Tourism Project and the logging venture, the Semai will definitely have no more room/land to manoeuvre. If this happens, and depending on what new land offers are given them, it seems likely that the Semai will be forced into becoming rural labourers.
Chapter Six: Political Places, Communities of Resistance, Contested Spaces and Interactions

In the last chapter, I discussed how the Semai in the face of inequalities in resource distribution and control responded by way of re-establishing a mobile and broad-spectrum economy. They persisted in a range of productive activities centred on their customary lands and organized themselves around flexible "kinship" practices. Contemporaneously, they were regularly moving out into temporary waged labour to supplement their means of livelihood. In terms of village politics as well the Semai were entering new locations, establishing new alliances and taking up new strategies to assert their political identity and articulate and organize their masalah tanah. These Semai relocations and repoliticisations were taking place in the context of a specific Orang Asli politics of the state, established since the 1950s, which emphasised a confinement/consignment of the Orang Asli to the "restricted Orang Asli Reserves/Areas/Places of inhabitation". In these places Orang Asli relations with all but specified state agencies were discouraged, if not altogether forbidden. One state agency, the JHEOA, was mandated to represent the Orang Asli in the latter's external relations. The Orang Asli themselves were not expected to be politically informed but instead were protected from "public" politics. As the state agencies penetrated Orang Asli places to reorganize their relations, the Orang Asli moved into new political locations to articulate their concerns and organize their struggles.

In this chapter I examine the various political locations the Semai moved into, the linkages created between different agencies in different places and the effects these interconnections have for the Semai land struggles and social relations? In the first section, I look at how religious places in the urban areas provided a political space for the Semai to articulate their concerns and assert a new "hybrid" identity. However, neither the Semai nor the Orang Asli in general, organised their struggles on a religious platform. In the following section, I give a brief account of the network of groups and individuals that emerged or coalesced around the Orang Asli cause. It is a brief account because my concern is the specificity of the interactions and interconnections that occurred in the Semai villages under
study which I shall discuss in detail in the following section. Finally, I shall focus on some prospects from these political realignments.

Articulating the masalah tanah in religious spaces

As I mentioned in Chapter Four, the Semai were embracing other world religions viz. Christianity and Bahai'ism in the face of governmental campaigns to impose a certain Malay identity upon them. This strategy of converting into Christianity and Bahai'ism was not limited to the Canu-Pendue-I'ni villagers alone. As Table ...shows, the total number of Orang Asli who had converted into Christianity by 1960 was less than a hundred in Perak. The number of conversions was significantly small then despite the presence of Christian missionaries among the Orang Asli of Perak for three decades. State-sponsored Islamic-missionary campaigns initiated in the latter half of the 1950s succeeded in converting some 108 Orang Asli by 1957 (14.12.57 in Nicholas, Williams-Hunt and Sabak, 1989:227). The Baha'is did not begin proselytizing the Orang Asli until the 1960s. However, in less than a decade and a half later, the number of Orang Asli in Perak who registered themselves as Christians were 1,467, a fifteen fold increase from 1960. During this same period some 1800 Orang Asli also embraced the Baha'i religion. As for Muslim conversions, the number of Orang Asli registered between 1960 and 1974 had increased about four-fold. From a number of 108 Muslim converts in 1957, Orang Asli registered 422 as Muslim by 1974.

What is significant about the Semai conversions is not merely the numbers but the ways they went about embracing these non-Islamic world religions and the role these religious activities played in their land struggles. Beh Tua is in his sixties. He is one of the first Semai of Canu to convert into Christianity and he recalls how he and several others from the village went about their embracing Christianity:

...the Christian lay-leader from the village brought us to the church center at Kampar. We would go there once in two weeks, some times once a month... there we were taught about Christianity... it was difficult for the Christian missionaries to enter our villages because they needed permission from the authorities... They [the missionaries] will come one time and tell us that they will return the following week but this does not happen. Later we find out that they could not get the "pass"...Most of us who are Christians now were instructed and baptized either in Bidor, Kampar,
Sungkai or Tapah. Only in the last few years the priest or the pastor can now baptise Orang Asli in their villages...

Muslim missionaries sponsored by the state were allowed free access into Orang Asli Areas. But as other scholars and the statistics have suggested, Muslim evangelising in Orang Asli settlements met with very little success (Abdullah, 1979/80). Islamic appeals were frequently met with a negative response by the Orang Asli except for some groups in the south of the Peninsular who were already nominal Muslims since early this century (Ibid.; Means, 1985; Carey, 1976). The Christian and Baha'i missionary campaigns, however, despite having to labour under restrictive conditions were drawing in hundreds of Orang Asli into their churches. Unlike their Muslim counterparts the Christian/Baha'i missionaries did not enjoy such easy access to the Orang Asli Areas. There were curfew restrictions on the area to contend with and as Beh Tua explained, if and when the Christian/Bahai missionaries wished to visit the Semai in the villages they had first to obtain visiting permits from the relevant authorities to enter these "restricted areas". The missionaries were allowed entry not as religious agents but under the guise of members of a social-welfare or humanitarian organization. During the course of their "humanitarian" visits to the villages the Christian/Baha'i workers would distribute food provisions, clothes and run literacy classes and health clinics. Religion was introduced "on the quiet" and villagers were encouraged and invited to visit the Baha'i/Christian centers in the nearby towns for proper instruction and initiation into the religion. The Baha'i workers needed to be particularly cautious as their organization was not legally registered until in 1974 (Murthi, 1969).

The main means of interaction between the Christian/Baha'i religious workers and the Semai was secured by the latter's travelling to the Baha'i/Christian centres in the nearby towns. All three religious organizations (Catholics, Methodist and Baha'i) active in Semai areas provided guest-quarters at their urban centers for their Orang Asli visitors. Moreover, it was at these centres that religious instruction and the conversion rites took place. More than 80% of the adult-Christian/Baha'i members of Canu and I'ni were initiated at these urban centres between 1960 and the mid-1970s.

One Muslim scholar had suggested that a major reason for the success of the Christian/Baha'i proselytizing campaigns, in contrast to the less successful Muslim efforts, was that the former missionaries were generous on "handouts" while at the same time "bad-
mouthing" the Malays/Muslims to the Orang Asli (Abdullah, 1979/80). This is perhaps simplifying what was a combination of "push" and "pull" factors that contributed to the pattern of Semai conversions. Muslim missionary activities among the Orang Asli were also strongly humanitarian in character. The reason the Semai identified with and entered into Christian/Baha'i places may be explained by the former's negative perceptions of the Islamic campaigns, i.e. as "Malay-izing" impositions from the state. But there were "pull factors" as well or rather "push factors" on the part of the Christian/Baha'i groups in their particular forms of outreach to Orang Asli groups. In the post-independence period, the enshrinement of Islam as the state religion or as Lee & Ackerman (1988) put it, the "marriage between the mosque and the state" (149), affected the religious liberties of the non-Malays in general (Means, 1978:390). Between 1952 and 1960 stringent changes in the law were effected in most of the Malayan states with the explicit purpose of defining the religious obligations of Muslims as well as controlling the activities of non-Muslims (Ibid.). These intrusions of Islam into non-Muslim affairs provoked a re-thinking, especially among the mainline hierarchy of the Christian churches, about the identity and mission of the church in this new Malaysian situation (Williams, 1976; Lee & Ackerman, 1988). One common theme of change in the 1960s and 1970s articulated by the mainline Christian churches viz. the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic and Lutheran, was the "indigenizing of the local church" (Ibid.). Two aspects of this "indigenizing" campaign were; first, the training of local clergy to "indigenize" church leadership and second, to incorporate local cultural forms into church liturgical services. Christian missionary activity in the 1960s and 70s, therefore, saw a high degree of experimentation and innovation that was largely due to intrusions of Islam into non-Muslim affairs (Fleming, 1962; Thomas, 1978; Williams, 1976). While taking on this new "indigenous" character, Christian missionary activities did not lose its "original" objective, which was to bring more converts into the fold. In the post-independence period, this need for numbers to assert their indigenous-Christian identity in the face of Muslim domination took on a more serious urgency. Not only the Christians but also the Baha'i first began intensive missionary activities in the 1960s (Murthi, 1969).

During the post-independence period, therefore, there was not only a Semai identifying with non-Muslim-places but a Christian-Baha'i identifying with the "indigenous
situation" such as those of the Orang Asli. This Christian/Baha'i "solidarity" with the Orang Asli showed itself in the extra-religious projects initiated by these churches. Education of the Semai in vocational skills and literacy were an important part of the activities conducted at the Christian/Baha'i urban centres in Perak. These centres served as places where Semai language, arts and crafts were promoted and preserved. The Methodist centre, The Sengoi Workers Training Centre, for instance, played a big part in compiling the first Sengoi-English Dictionary in 1986, a work which first began in 1960. These centres also provided the technical knowledge and financial aid to assist Semai families in initiating several income-generating projects at village levels. Villagers from Sg. Nam who had resisted sending their children to JHEOA-sponsored schools were encouraged to enrol their children in the regular urban-based schools operated by the Department of Education. To facilitate this the Methodist church set up a "Sengoi hostel" in 1960, in the town of Kampar which by 1974 housed some sixty Orang Asli students from various settlements in the region (Means, 1985:649). Although the Catholic and Baha'i groups did not set up special hostels for the Orang Asli children they provided lodging for the latter in their church buildings. By 1963, some Semai villages had set up their own hostels in nearby towns where children from Orang Asli settlements in deeper-jungle areas could be sent.

Beh Dara, in his late 30s, hail s from Pendue and was one of the participants at the Orang Asli youth conference of 1980 - the first public meeting of the Orang Asli "movement". He is still active in the land rights campaigns of his village. As a student he was a boarder in one of the hostels, set up by Christian missionaries in the early 1960s, to cater for Orang Asli children who were enrolled at regular urban-based government schools. He had wanted to become a Methodist Pastor but due to differences with church colleagues, in the mid-1980s, he has since left the church altogether... As he speaks of the Orang Asli Youth Conference he explains: ...already in these hostels and ... centres we began discussing our masalah tanah [land problem]... we realised that we could not wait for the government to give us back our land. We had to do something ourselves. According to them [the government] we had to become Gob [Malay] first then we will enjoy land rights. The Gob and the Asli are like the sun and moon, we could never come together... we organized the conference to bring Orang Asli youth from all over the place, young people who are educated like the orang bandar (city folk)... to talk about our future, the future of our land... when we returned from the meeting in Port Dickson [a seaside town some 200 kilometres south of the Canu village] we began to organize more meetings with different villages. We wanted especially for our headmen to organize themselves, so we persuaded them to do so... some of them were afraid saying that if we organize ourselves and speak out the government will accuse of us of being influenced by the communists. But
there were other headmen who were not afraid... finally, they agreed to a special conference of Orang Asli headmen...

Political and cultural resistance, especially in postcolonial situations, emerges from the hybridization of identities (Bhabha, 1990; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1995; Pieterse, 1995; Anzaldúa, 1987; Sandoval, 1991). Put in more concrete geo-political terms, if identity is the articulation of changing social relations of a particular person/group (de Lauretis, 1986; Mouffe, 1988) in particular places (Massey, 1994) then strategic political alliances can and will be constructed across and between these varying place-based articulations (identities). The relations forged between the Semai and the Christian/Baha'i churches, in the context of post-independence Malaysia, represented this hybridization of identity and resistance for the Semai. The Semai moving into "other" religions was construed as a politics of identity developed in opposition to the state. This is evident in the state's response to these Semai articulations. For example, in August of 1990 the Semai of Kampung Serigala, where thirty of its forty inhabitants are Christians, began the construction of church building in their village. When the District authorities discovered the project, they required that the Semai obtain official permission to build the church. The Semai complied with this condition but their request for permission to build the church was rejected on grounds that such construction contravened certain laws. The District Office, however, did not specify the exact laws that were being violated. The Semai appealed against this decision emphasising that the church was to serve not only religious purposes but also preschool classes to benefit all the villagers. The Semai appeal was rejected by the District Office and the villagers continued with the construction of the building. In November of 1990 officers from the District Office, the JHEOA, heavily-armed police personnel and bulldozers from the Public Works Department all convened at Kampung Serigala. In less than half and hour the church building was reduced to rubble by these government officers. Beh Supeh, the Christian lay-leader of the village, in commenting on this incident said:

Why do we need to ask for permission? This is our land. Our people were here even before the [town] Tanjung Malim was opened. Horse-carts were still being used then. We've built our houses here, and cultivated rubber for generations. It makes no sense now telling us that we are occupying the land illegally... We are sad not because of the money that is lost. No, we are sad because this is God's house. I pray to God to forgive them... they were worse than the communists ... we are a peaceful people. We are not
religion extremists. This is not Memali or Batu Pahat [these were two towns where extremist Islamic groups had clashed violently with the police]. There was no need to bring in the military with machine guns. This is like the Japanese Occupation... [we are going to] build a bigger and better church... we are still treated like dirt. Not as humans. We have a right to our land and to practise our faith. (Pernloi-Gah, Dec. 1990:10)

Following the incident at Kg. Serigala, a "Special Unit for the Conversion of Orang Asli" was set up under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Department (this link between the Kg. Serigala incident and the setting of the special unit was made by a Special Branch Police Officer). Among other measures, this unit spent twenty million Ringgit for the building of Islamic prayer houses in 265 Orang Asli villages throughout the country. In the same report which declared these facts (Berita Harian, 24.7.93) the Director of the Islamic Religious Affairs Division in the Prime Minister's Department stated that religious officials would be placed at all 265 prayer houses beginning 1993 as part of the "Government's effort to convert 80 000 Orang Asli in the span of the coming 10 years".

Going Public

Although religious places provided a space for Orang Asli groups to articulate their problems, they did not organize their land struggles on a religious platform. The first public meetings of the Orang Asli Movement, the Youth Conference in 1980 and the Headmen's Conference a year and a half later, represented participants from different religious persuasions who came together to assert their "Orang Asli" identity and concerns. This "Asli" identity was clearly asserted in the Memorandum the headmen presented to the parliamentarians and the press, following their conference:

...appeal that the Government seriously consider granting... one public holiday, preferably during our harvest festival, so as to give us a chance to share our culture and celebration with the other races in our country... that the freedom of religion be respected among our people and that no one be forced to accept any religion against one's own wishes... the government ensure that all forms of social prejudice against Orang Asli found in literature, mass media, exhibitions, tourism and the rest, be wiped out through positive measures. (Memorandum 1982)

These first public meetings of the Orang Asli leaders were followed up by regional meetings that led to the setting up of such regional organizations as the Batang Padang Semai
The Orang Asli Association. Then in 1984 several regional Orang Asli leaders came together to establish a national-level organization, the Orang Asli Association of Peninsular Malaysia (POASM). By 1991, POASM had set up several state branches of their association and their membership stood at 11,000. While POASM has become the formal non-governmental representative of the Orang Asli, both POASM itself as well as Orang Asli issues in general have been supported by a range of concerned individuals, NGOs of sorts and public-interest groups. For example, just before the Orang Asli Headmen's Conference, the leader of the main opposition party lent his support to the Orang Asli cause. He did so by writing several articles in the major newspapers to highlight Orang Asli issues. In addition, researchers from different local universities have become involved in Orang Asli campaigns. They include members of the Orang Asli Studies Group from the National University who are seriously contributing their consultancy skills to POASM's many campaigns. Of the several NGOs and public interest groups that are involved in varying extents in Orang Asli issues, there is one, which is wholly directed to Orang Asli campaigns - the Centre for Orang Asli Concerns.

Through the alliances forged between Orang Asli leaders and these various support-groups and individuals, the Orang Asli were, by the end of the 1980s, represented in a number of transnational organizations such as the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact and the Peoples' Plan for the 21st Century. But how did the Semai of Canu, Pendue and Ini figure in this extended network of the Orang Asli movement and what consequences did it have for the former's land struggles and social relations on the ground as it were? I shall examine this in the following sections.

The Case

While Orang Asli leaders and the support-groups are engaged in an on-going, long-term land-rights campaign, local Orang Asli groups have had to continually respond to more immediate threats to their land or the competition for resources therein. In the Canu-Pendue-Ini villagers, for instance, Malay settlers from nearby villages, not recognizing the Semai ownership of fruit trees, regularly expropriated these forest-products. A cattle farm set up on part of Semai customary land is polluting the villagers' water supply while the farm-owners
have often blocked the Semai access route into the forests. A pig-farm also situated on Semai customary land pollutes not only the waters but its foul smell fills the air. There is a quarrying operation also sited on Semai lengriik territory and whose heavy trucks are damaging the only access road into the town. In May of 1994, a group of Semai men, while gathering rattan in the forests stumbled upon a team of surveyors who were marking out "blocks" in the forest. These "blocks", measuring 100 acres each represent the units of forestland licensed out by the Forestry Department for the purposes of logging. Upon inquiry, the Semai men were informed by the surveyors that the Forestry Department had granted a concession of 500 hectares of forestland to a private logging company and that felling of the trees was supposed to commence by the end of the year. If carried out this logging will destroy not only the Semai's main resource base but also their ancestral burial sites. During the same year, the Semai discovered that the state government had granted permission to a federal government agency to survey a waterfall site for the construction of a tourist resort. This waterfall is the main source of water supply for the Semai.

The news of this upcoming logging project in their forests soon dominated the discussions and conversations of the Semai. Anxieties were expressed among groups of men who went hunting/gathering together, or as they worked together in contract-labour groups, or as they met in the coffee-shops in the nearby town; and among women who worked as contract-labour in Chinese vegetable farms, or as they engaged in fishing trips, or when they gathered at each others' wal (fire-place), or selai nyeng [vegetable plots]; and among men and women who visited other villages in the District. "What do we do... if our land is logged over then that is the end of our livelihood... all our fruit trees are located in the forests". This is how Wah Kawat explained the dilemma the Semai were discussing.

The Headman's House

In the days that followed their discovery of the logging project, many villagers visited their respective headman's house to register their concerns and propose that village meetings be convened to discuss and decide what ought to be their course of action. During the Canu meeting a few days later, the villagers gathered at the headman's house. At this meeting, many
questions were asked of the headman. Fears were expressed but no course of action was decided save for the suggestion, from Wah Kawat, to consult the POASM and NGO leaders. The fears expressed at this meeting were threefold. There were many stories of previous encroachment to their land as well as stories of other Semai kampungs in the Batang Padang District that had lost out on their land due to some development project or another. The latest incident was that of Kg. Keroi, a Semai settlement just five kilometres from Canu. Their kampuk plots were destroyed when that part of the forest reserve was leased out for cattle rearing. They were offered no compensation on their loss of fruit trees. Thus, the villagers decided to poison the trees rather than allow the cattle rearers to benefit from the sale of the fruits. There was also a fear expressed toward the government, more specifically the Police, should the villagers embark on a course of action that may appear "subversive". Wah Kawat recalled the incident the previous year when Special Branch officers questioned her on the pre-school education programme which she had initiated in the village. As she put it, "It was either the Forestry Department workers over there or the JOA field-workers that must have informed the police".

In this meeting, the Canu villagers also expressed their apprehension about the JHEOA, which as the headman assured them "are supposed to look after the welfare of the Orang Asli". He suggested that the matter of the logging be brought to the Pejabat JHEOA (JHEOA Office) at Tapah, so that JHEOA "may appeal to the Forest Department on our behalf" to revoke the licence or otherwise ensure proper compensation. However, several villagers reminded him of the many instances they were given the run-around at the JHEOA office or "cheated by JHEOA officials". "If they were really looking out for our welfare", one woman remarked, "they should have informed us of these projects before we came to discover them by accident"

Meetings in the headman's house had become increasingly characterized by these fears and the general inability to work out a course of action with regard to a village problem, and the referral of the problem to POASM or some other NGO. Since the setting up of these villages as administrative units in the 1960s, the headmen are the formal links between the JHEOA office located in Tapah and the villagers. He receives a monthly allowance from the JHEOA, and is expected to attend monthly meetings where he communicates JHEOA plans
for the villagers or villagers' problems to the JHEOA. In fact the headman in his links to the JHEOA represents the main channel by which the villagers have access to information with regard to their lands i.e. information regarding the application of reserve land, matters regarding encroachment of their customary lands, compensations to be negotiated and paid, etc. However, such information from the JHEOA has not only been made increasingly inaccessible to the headmen but was deceptive in character. For example, four months before this logging event, there was a similar meeting in Pendue but to discuss the issue of clearing and replanting their rubber trees. In December of 1993 JHEOA officers had approached the Pendue headman to propose that the Pendue's aged rubber trees be felled and new trees be planted with seedlings and subsidies from RISDA and Bank Pertanian (Agricultural Bank). The JHEOA officers also proposed that they will arrange for a private contractor to clear the trees, sell the rubber wood and pay the Pendue villagers the proceeds of the sale after the necessary deductions for the contract-labour charges. The Pendue headman informed the JHEOA officers that he would first consult the Pendue villagers about the matter. The headman's reason for doing so was that he had heard of similar JHEOA proposals to other Orang Asli villages in the district that had resulted in failures. In one instance, the Pendue headman recalled,

...the JOA people visited the headman of Kampung... to put forward the suggestion to clear and replant their rubber trees... the headman agreed and the contractors came to cut the trees, but after some weeks the people in the village did not hear or see the JOA people about their money from the sale of the rubber trees. When Penghulu... went to the RISDA office to ask them when they will start the replanting the RISDA people told him that they were not informed by the JOA about this project. The RISDA people also told Penghulu... that even if the JOA had informed them about the project RISDA cannot help the village in replanting because the people in the village do not have titles to their land.

The Pendue headman recounted a similar incident in yet another village. In that case not only did the villagers lose out on the sale of their rubber trees but their headman was later approached by the contractor who demanded that the headman pay for the costs of clearing the trees. The JHEOA officers had sold the rubber wood but not paid the contractor for his services. Thus, the Pendue headman called for a village meeting to discuss this matter of the rubber trees. "Should they trust the JOA and risk being cheated, or do the clearing themselves and risk the vengeance of the JOA". This was the main question discussed and again,
villagers expressed their fears, their indecision regarding what to do and later suggested that the movement leaders be consulted.

The headman's house is the formal and therefore necessary political place not only for the villagers' dealings with the JHEOA but a place for non-governmental extra-village agencies to meet with and mobilize villagers for political action. Thus, when the POASM representatives visited Canu another meeting was convened at the headman's house, this time with the AJKK (Ahli Jawatankuasa Kampung or Village-Committee Members) of the three villages. On this occasion, the three headmen and their AJKK were advised to produce a memorandum to be submitted to the Perak State Government. In the memorandum, they were to compile details of the history, demography and geography of the Semai settlement, their traditional ties as well as economic use of the land. These details and facts were to make for a strong case for their application. The memorandum served as an application for their land to be gazetted as an Orang Asli Reserve. It was suggested that, in view of the upcoming general elections and politicians intensely campaigning for voter support, this was a good time for local Orang Asli communities to go over the heads of the JHEOA officials and engage the government politicians directly in their land campaigns.

This strategy to document the history and map out the geography of the indigenous settlements had its origins in the First Conference of the Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact in Chiengmai, Thailand, in 1992 (AIPP, 1995). The Orang Asli of West Malaysia as well as the indigenous peoples of East Malaysia were represented in that meeting. Following that, local NGOs in Thailand and East Malaysia held follow-up workshops to train indigenous leaders with the skills of surveying, mapping, etc. Beh Sengor who lives in a neighbouring village in the District was one such person to participate in those workshops. Two persons from Canu had also attended such workshops in East Malaysia. As such, to help assist them in memorandum project the POASM representative also suggested that the Canu-Pendue-I'ni villagers seek the assistance of these people.

In the same meeting at the headman's house, the POASM representatives also advised the villagers to consider the option of applying for individual titled land-lots instead of Orang Asli Reserves. The reasons given were, first, that the Perak State Government had announced in September of 1993 a new policy concerning land allocation to the Orang Asli. In this new
policy, the Orang Asli will not be granted land as Aboriginal Reserve but on an individual-title basis. The second reason put forward by the movement leaders is that, even if the Semai did succeed in obtaining Aboriginal Reserve land there is still no security of land tenure according to Akta 134. This proposal, however, was not resolved at this meeting. The pros and the cons of both options were discussed but the majority of the villagers who did speak out voiced their dissatisfaction with the option of individual titled land lots. Their main argument was that, as Orang Asli they possessed the right to own their land as a Semai collective. Moreover, if they applied for titled lots, they would be required to pay land tax like every other Malaysian. However, a smaller group of villagers argued that if they opted for individual-titled land lots it would be more in keeping with the government's plan of development-integration for the Orang Asli, ensuring security of land tenure and a better chance of the application being approved.

In articulating their differing land demands it was clear that villagers were not only expressing differences among themselves. They were articulating where they were coming from in terms of their various links with extra-village agencies.

Beh A, who argued for the applying of individual-titled plots, is actively engaged in POASM activities. He is in frequent communication with one of the POASM member who is currently engaged in negotiations between the Perak State Exco and Orang Asli leaders. Moreover, this particular POASM member is a supporter of the Perak Government's new land policy for the Orang Asli. And, as Beh A quoted his POASM colleague, "if the villagers can afford to pay for their T.V./Radio licenses every year, I'm sure they can afford the land tax". In contrast to Beh A, Beh B who also supported the option of applying for individually titled lands is not a member of POASM. He is a devout Baha'i and like a number of other villagers are regularly visiting the Baha'i center in Ipoh. His reasons for opting for the individually titled plots are clearly religious: "our religion teaches us to be obedient to the government, if the government proposes that we do this then we should... don't get involved in worldly matters like these political activities..." Among those who insisted on applying for Orang Asli Reserves, it is Beh C who stood out as the strongest voice. He had attended the NGO-sponsored workshop in East Malaysia, following the Chiangmai Conference, and gave many examples of the indigenous peoples there who are persevering in their land struggles especially against the logging projects. He also participated in Perjuangan Kenyalang (Struggle of the Hornbill) a 1992-campaign of the Sarawakian indigenous peoples for their Native Customary Rights-lands to be upheld. As part of this campaign, indigenous representatives from Sarawak with the assistance of local NGOs and opposition political parties had traveled around Peninsula to advertize their cause and gain public support. Several Orang Asli met up with this delegation, one of them being Beh C.
Following upon the meeting with the movement leaders, individual village meetings were held at the respective headmen's houses to appoint representatives from each Semai village to a special committee that would be responsible for producing the memorandum. The committee, which comprises six men (two from each Semai village), was to engage small groups of villagers to assist them in the collection of the necessary data for the compilation of the memorandum. At this meeting also, the headmen were delegated the tasks of visiting the JHEOA, Land and Forest Offices in Tapah to obtain the required documentation and survey maps of their settlement and forest sites. They needed this documentation first, to substantiate the fact that this area was formally recognized and allocated as an Orang Asli area; second, to ascertain that the application was previously drawn up and submitted by the JHEOA to the State Executive for the gazetting of the land as an Orang Asli reserve. They also needed the survey maps from the Land Office to provide the exact topographical contours of the land area they were applying for.

In the subsequent days and weeks, the small groups, under the supervision of the committee members were actively involved in the collection of data for the memorandum. However, there were problems. There were the frustrating and unsuccessful results of the headmen's visits to the JHEOA, Land and Forestry Offices at Tapah.

*The District Offices*

The three Semai headmen went separately to the District offices of the JHEOA, Land and Forest Departments located in Tapah to obtain the required official documentation. From the JHEOA office, the headman from Canu succeeded in obtaining only the survey map of the Canu village-site. This map was drawn up by the JHEOA-surveyors in 1969 when applying for that site to be gazetted as an Orang Asli Reserve (see MAP...). The JHEOA officers told the other two headmen that no such survey map existed for their villages. At the land office, the headmen of Canu and Ini were able to purchase a copy of the land-Department survey map of their villages (see MAP...). In these maps, however, their village sites were categorized as "TOL" or Temporary Occupation License land. As for the Pendue headman, he was informed that the Land Office has yet to survey the Pendue area. At the Forestry Office,
meanwhile, they received no information except the assurance from the officers there that their villagers will continue to have access to their resource base in the forest reserves. Their requests for other documentation such as the survey plans of the proposed logging project from the Forest Department Office, copies of the Orang Asli Reserve applications the JHEOA had made on their behalf several years ago and specific survey plans from the Land Office were not met. According to the headmen, their experiences at these offices were disappointing and frustrating. They were either given the run around from one office to another, or they were told to be "patient" that their land will be gazetted soon and that the JHEOA will continue to appeal to the State executive. They were assured that they will not lose their land of settlement and will continue to have access to forest reserve land.

The Canu and Pendue headmen made another attempt at securing the necessary documentation from the Tapah offices but to no avail. Again, they were encouraged to be patient and to leave it to the JHEOA to handle the matter. As scholars have pointed out in the study of some "simple societies" or in the case of the construction of gender relations, spatial control to maintain subjugation entails not only the controlling of access to people, places and resources but to knowledge as well (Spain; Moore, 1986; Bourdieu, 1977). On one hand, by controlling access to knowledge, people, their places and resources through the control of space the dominant group's ability to retain and reinforce its position is enhanced. On the other hand, to maintain their positions dominant groups must also be able to control constructions of reality that reinforce its own status so that subordinate groups accept the social order and their own place in it. The powerful, however, cannot maintain their position without the cooperation of the less powerful. The relations between the Semai and the JHEOA, via the headmen, can be usefully explained in these terms. On one hand, the villagers are expected to rely on the JHEOA for the protection and security not only of their land but also in all matters. Even in matters of criminal acts towards the Orang Asli, when they are reported to the local police the Orang Asli are instructed to bring the matter to the JHEOA. In Kg. Tipu, for example, the village headman had engaged a private contractor to install electricity cables into the village. This is a requirement from the National Electricity Board before electricity is supplied to the village. To meet the costs of the installation of electricity cables all the village households had made contributions which amounted to RMS$
3000 and this money was paid to the contractor. Subsequently, when the contractor absconded with the money without completing the installation of the cables, the village headman lodged a report with the local police station. As the headman recounts:

...the officer-in-charge told us that there is nothing they can do and that we should take the matter to the JOA office in Tapah. We have a signed contract with the contractor, and now we want to make a report of a crime but he did not even want to take our report. When I insisted that he makes the report he said that he would but still repeated that nothing would come of it. Therefore, what do we do now? If we go to the JOA they are going to tell us to go to the Police...

But on the other hand, the experience of the Semai when they go to the JHEOA office, as Wah Kawat explained, is at best ambiguous:

..they either tell us that they do not know anything about it or that we shouldn't worry because they'll look into it. When our headman approached the JOA people in Tapah about the logging project, the JOA officers said, "we weren't informed by the Forestry Department of any such project". How is it that they don't know? When we ask them about the status of our land, one time they tell us that it is gazetted then on another occasion they tell us that it is not gazetted or they don't know...

Zawawi's argument, for a similar situation in Pahang, perhaps throws some added light on the situation:

Being specially administered under the `custody' and so-called `protection' of the JHEOA, the Orang Asli are seen as first and foremost as being under the jurisdiction of the Department vis-a-vis their development inputs and support. At least, this is how it has been traditionally perceived by various district development authorities. Indeed, what is consistent about the Orang Asli village communities in the region is the lack and often, absence of basic needs and social amenities. Whilst the JHEOA often complains over their lack of funds, it is a known fact that at least about two-thirds of its fund allocation goes to feed its bureaucracy. But the traditional identification of Orang Asli problems with JHEOA does not help the situation. Other agencies seem to offer a helping hand not as a matter of policy or principle, but perhaps out of sympathy, or when appealed to by some politicians or influential individuals on behalf of the Orang Asli. (Zawawi, 1993:30).

It is, therefore, no surprise that a common pun among the Semai is their version of "JOA" which does not mean Jabatan Orang Asli but "jual Orang Asli" (to sell the Orang Asli)".

Other observers (Hood Salleh, 1988:7; Hasan Mat Nor, 1993:9) and the JOA itself (Ishak, 1993:) have commented on this Orang Asli "negative attitude" or "antagonism" towards the JHEOA. The reasons by the JHEOA are suggested in a remark made by the Director:
... the weakness arising from the Orang Asli community is connected to, among other things, their hopes to achieve a socio-economic standing on par with the other sectors of Malaysian society and their hopes to acquire land-tenure rights or the certainty of residence in reserve areas, all the hopes which for them have not been achieved... In various situations outside influences have instigated the Orang Asli to raise certain issues which have resulted in their negative attitudes towards the government, the Department and the Malay community. (Ishak, 1993:6,8)

Other authors have suggested variant reasons for the Orang Asli's negative attitude towards the JOA. Among the reasons is the "dependent" attitude of the Orang Asli because of years of relying on the JOA as a one-stop agency for all their needs (Hasan Mat Nor, 1993:5). Or the Orang Asli experiences of the JOA's inefficiency, inefficacy, incompetence and perhaps lack of interest in the latter's affairs (Zawawi, 1993:33):

Though JHEOA, as far as the Orang Asli can remember is the organization that has been assuming the traditional role of 'protector', in times of present complexities with the accent more on development rather than social control or security, the Department has not been able to display the required leadership qualities, nor vision and commitment. It has been too caught up in bureaucracy; and lately too detached, indifferent, and no longer fired by zeal or emotion. For many, it is just a job.

_Bah Bebakti's House_

There were new problems for the memorandum campaign when, a couple of weeks later, the Ini headman announced that his village was withdrawing from the common memorandum campaign. The Ini representatives stopped working with their counterparts in the other two villages and they also stopped the data-collecting activities in Ini. What led to this decision seemed to be a combination of religious as well as land-use differences between the villagers of Canu and Ini. In recent years several Ini villagers had opened up _selai nyeng_ (individual-household vegetable garden) on Canu villagers' land. These Ini villagers had not sought permission from the Canu/Pendue villagers, for using the latter's land, nor did the Ini headmen take any action when the matter was brought to him. Another grievance Canu/Pendue villagers had against several Ini villagers was the latter's "lack of interest" in the care and maintenance of the common _kampok_ (orchards). Several Canu/Pendue households had offered Ini villagers the use of their orchards when the latter had first
relocated at this site. However, the I'ni villagers, while they shared in harvesting rights did not contribute to the maintenance of the orchards.

In I'ni, however, the land-use conflicts and the reason for pulling out of the memorandum project were viewed differently. Especially significant to the I'ni headman's decision to withdraw from the common memorandum project, were the views being expressed at the house of the Baha'i lay-leader, Bah Bebakti's house. Since the start of the data-collating activities, the issue of the common memorandum project became a much-discussed topic among the Baha'i followers who gathered at Bah Bebakti's house. One opinion that was constantly put forward in these meetings came from members of the devout-Baha'i group. In their view, the common memorandum project was going to favour Canu villagers because Christian Canu villagers were "dominating the data-collection activities". At an earlier meeting at Bah Bakti's house it was this same small group of devout Baha'i men who were persistent that the increasing conflicts over land use between I'ni villagers and the other two Semai villages were due to the fact that Christian villagers in Canu/Pendue were "against our religion".

According to one I'ni villager who attended several of these meetings at Bah Bebakti's house, one of the latter's arguments is that I'ni villagers will lose out anyway if the common memorandum succeeds because the land applied for gazetting is ultimately the original lengriik of the Canu and Pendue villagers. I'ni villagers do not own the land as their mai pasak (original lengriik). As such, they (the I'ni villagers) will still have to contend with the Christian elements in Canu and Pendue. Bah Reta, one of the six in the Baha'i core-group, suggested that the I'ni villagers should apply for land on their own, instead of submitting a common application, and request for individual titled-land lots.

Given that the I'ni headman is himself a Baha'i follower, and present at these meetings in Bah Bebakti's house, these religious views of the common memorandum project were known to him. When asked about his decision, however, he explained that the I'ni villagers would fare better if they applied for individual titled-land lots. He also argued that, given the Government's thrust to integrate the Orang Asli into mainstream society, this application for individual titles stands a better chance of being approved.
As the Baha'i examples indicate, Semai movements into religious places beyond the village did not mean a common repolitisation for Semai identity nor articulation of land priorities and demands. The position of Baha'i Semai, for instance, may be understood by what Gaver explains of Baha'ism in general:

...shun politics like the plague and be obedient to the government in power in the place where you reside... refrain from participation in partisan activities (1967:29)

But in articulating their land demands in terms of Aboriginal Reserves the other villagers were reproducing the discourse of "protection-segregation" which characterized their history since colonial times. This seemed to be the POASM representative's concern and dilemma. But as one pro-Reserves villager explained "POASM is mainly engaged in negotiations with the government so it is their job to change the laws governing Orang Asli... we want reserves but we want the custodial rights to be given to us not the JOA".

Wal Wah Kawat (Wah Kawat's Fireplace)

A few days after the I'ni headman decided to pull out of the common memorandum project, the Pendue headman also followed suit arguing that if the three villages could not work together then it would be better for each village to produce its own memorandum. He, however, did not pursue the idea of a memorandum for his village. Atuk Segrag, the Pendue headman, was already quite angry after his frustrating visits to the District Offices. And the I'ni decision to pull out from the campaign was but the last straw for him to feel that:

...this way won't work. The government people will not help us... look at how they treated us at their offices when we went to see them, how much worse when we are not there. We do the memorandum, we send it to their office and they will not read it even. Maybe we should try another way. Maybe we should do what the Penan are doing in Sarawak... blockade the forest when the loggers arrive.

Within a period of two months, therefore, the data collection activities were only being carried out in Canu. Although the I'ni headman argued for applying for individual titled-land lots nothing was being done about it in that village. In Pendue, as well, the villagers continued to meet at the headman's house but no alternative plans were organized. The collecting of data in Canu was going on but was fraught with problems. The villagers' morale was low and the work was, according to Wah Kawat, "moving very slow".
But if the memorandum activities were being hampered it did not mean that villagers had forgotten the threat of the impending logging project. The subject was a matter of everyday conversation and the places in the villages where these conversations were most abuzz were the household wals (fireplaces). First a few words about the wal.

All the villagers live in houses with a similar architectural style which betray the changes introduced by the JHEOA in 1969 as well as the "traditional" extensions put up by the villagers since then. The front raised section of the house facing the access route into the village consists of a living room and bedroom that resembles a typical Malay dwelling-place. It is made from wood and corrugated metal roof, materials provided by the JHEOA. Just behind this section of the house is a smaller room located at ground level that was designed to be the kitchen area. Members of the Semai household, however, use this "kitchen" area as a storage place. For their cooking needs the Semai have constructed their wal (fireplace/ kitchen) as an extended back-section or another single unit located behind their house. The wal is raised on stilts and, in contrast to the front portion of the house, is built from forest resources such as bamboo, rattan, unprocessed wood and thatched roofs. The wal is more than a cooking and eating place. It is perhaps the most frequented gathering place not only for members of the household but when neighbours and friends "drop in" for visits. It is also the place where, as Wah Kawat put it, "...important discussions are held"... public meetings are held in the headman's house but the issues are always discussed in someone's wal first; and after the public meetings we will return to someone's wal to discuss those issues again... usually the decisions are first made in the wal. There is a combination of reasons why the wal has become a prominent meeting-gathering place for the Semai villagers. One obvious reason, at least to this observer, is that the wal is the most comfortable place of the Semai house. With its raised floor and walls made from bamboo strips placed slightly apart, and its thatched roof the wal provides a natural "air-conditioning" in the hot and humid tropical weather. This is in stark contrast to the effect produced by the corrugated metal roofs covering the front section of the house. However, the reasons provided by villagers, for the prominence of the wal are somewhat different. First, traditional Semai dwelling places were longhouses where as many as ten or more families would live together. In these longhouses each nuclear family would have their separate sleeping rooms but the wal was the central space of the house - kitchen, living room and meeting place all rolled into one. In fact, the wal was the "front section" of the traditional Semai house. That the wal has become the "back section" of the Semai house is also telling of the other reason why it has gained prominence as a meeting-gathering place. As Wah Kawat explained it: "...it [the wal] gives us privacy to talk more freely... outsiders don't come to the wal, they will knock the front door and we will speak with them in the living room... and when we are gathered in the wal the slits between the bamboo [of the wall] allow us to see when strangers are approaching the house...

If there were one series of wal-gatherings which could be singled out for the significant role it played in the memorandum project then surely it would be those held at Wah Kawat's. Since
the first discovery of the logging project, these issues were subjects of regular discussion for
the informal women's network gathered almost daily at Wah Kawat's wal (fireplace). This
informal woman's network often met as a "core-group", of about seven women in Wah
Kawat's fireplace in between their daily chores. This group comprised of women from the
three villages who also gathered as part of the larger network, in organized fishing-gatherin
g trips, contract-labour groups, or daily activities of bathing and doing the laundry by the
riverside, etc. Wah Kawat's fireplace has earned a reputation for being the main meeting place
of the women. A few months earlier, for instance when one Canu woman "filed for divorce" at
the headman's house, her husband accused the women gathered at Wah Kawat's fireplace as
responsible for conspiring against him. In a sense he was right, Wah Kawat's fireplace was
that meeting place this woman had discussed her husband's refusal to allow her to use
contraceptives, one of the issues that prompted the divorce proceedings.

However, in these weeks the women were discussing the logging threat and the problems
concerning the memorandum project. They were especially displeased with the attitude or lack
of response from the Semai men, in particular the headmen, towards the issue. Some excerpts
of their remarks may well illustrate the tenor of the conversations in Wah Kawat's wal:

They are waiting for the headman [of Canu] to do something, but he is only interested in his
hunting. We are going to become like the people at Kampung ... The JOA will one day
come and tell us that we must leave this place and then it will be too late. (Wah Satu)

It is like the time when the JOA tried to cheat us in the selling of our rubber trees... if Wah
Kawat did not contact Bah Satin surely they [the headmen] and the other men would
have allowed the JOA to take our rubber wood. (Wah Dua)

We have to insist that they call another village meeting and we must say something or else
they will continue to do nothing. (Wah Tiga)

The women were also unhappy with some of the POASM and NGO leaders who were
only consulting the men or relied too much on the headmen and their all-men village
committees when they communicated or visited the villages. They expressed anxieties that
what had happened in Kg. Sabeu i will be repeated in their villages. Kg. Sabeu i had earlier on
produced a memorandum at the behest of the movement's leaders. Wah Kawat and some
women from Canu had visited that village to obtain advice on how to go about the
memorandum project. There they met up with some Sabeu i women who expressed grievances
over what they had experienced. In negotiating alternative sites and sizes of land to be submitted for gazetting, the women of that village were neither consulted by the village committee or the movement's leaders. When the Kg. Sabeui women discovered the final settlement sites chosen by the men, it was clearly to their disadvantage. Kampoks (orchards) plots belonging to women were "sacrificed" in favour of men's kampoks. Moreover, the new settlement sites negotiated by the men were located farther away from facilities such as the clinic and market which women needed to frequent. As one woman from Kg. Sabeui remarked of the men: "They don't care about the distance because they have their motorbikes. We have to walk."

The women from I'ni who were represented in Wah Kawat's wal were concerned that if their headman and village committee opted for individual titled-land lots, as the headman had suggested, the whole village would be relocated to an altogether new settlement site. This would mean that the women would lose out on their selai nyeng (vegetable plots) which they had opened and maintained. The main concern of the Canu women, meanwhile, was that if they had no say in the negotiating process between the state agencies and the village committees, their kampoks may be "sacrificed" to save men's kampoks as it had happened in Kg. Sabeui. As for the Pendue women, they made it clear that they wanted to resume the common memorandum project because they felt their village could not succeed if they attempted a separate memorandum.

In the weeks that followed the number of meetings at Wah Kawat's fireplace increased. The women discussed at length ways of intervening into the memorandum project so that the women's interests will be adequately represented and of mobilizing the Pendue and I'ni men back into a common memorandum effort. At one of the meetings, it was decided that Wah Kawat and a few women would visit some respected and "progressive" elders from nearby villages in the district. It was hoped that these elders could persuade the Semai headmen to resume the common memo project. The women also decided to visit some of the movement leaders to introduce their specific concerns. They wanted to be assured by the leaders that the Semai women's interests will be considered in whatever negotiations that may happen.
Meanwhile, the women were also mobilized to persuade the menfolk to resume the common project. All this while, the increasing significance of the meetings in Wah Kawat's fireplace was recognized by male villagers from all three Semai villages. What further contributed to the growing importance of the meetings in Wah Kawat's fireplace was the success the women achieved in acquiring some of the necessary documentation the headmen had previously failed to obtain from the District Offices. These documents include the record of application the JHEOA had made for the gazetting of their land.

However, among the menfolk, there were mixed reactions to the changing meanings and activities attached to Wah Kawat's fireplace. Some men were mildly encouraging: "Well, at least the women are doing something." (Bah Kenyet); "... I think they are right, after all the men are working more and more in the towns and the women must look after the village so it is right that they should also be in the memorandum committee" (Bah Riang). Others, especially those belonging to the Baha'i network were openly critical: "Wah Kawat, Wah Satu, Wah Dua are influenced by their church people... it is another Christian way to convert more Orang Asli" (Bah Bebakti). Some men were simply sexist: "It is dangerous what they are doing, getting involved in politics. It is not women's place... it will surely bring us trouble from the government" (Bah Agut).

The women, however, aware of the mixed reactions to their fireplace mobilizing, took certain measures to allay fears and suspicions to encourage participation especially from the men in their activities. For example, in contrast to their usual practice, the women convened the *wal* meetings in the evenings so that men could walk in and join these informal meetings. Moreover, the four Christian women belonging to the core group, who were accused by Baha'i men for their presumed hidden Christian agenda, announced at one of these *wal* meetings that they were "quitting Christianity". And they did.

Encouraged by the growing interest of the Semai men in their efforts, the informal women's network became more active in their organizing of the campaign. For instance, they decided to organize a workshop in Canu during which they brought together several knowledgeable villagers from all the three Semai villages to draw up their own map of their forest *kampoks* (Map ..) to serve as the map they were unable to acquire from the Forest Department nor the JHEOA. Wah Kawat invited some individuals from a literacy-training
NGO based in Kuala Lumpur to assist the villagers in the mapping of their *kampok* plots. Wah Kawat had come to know of this NGO when representatives of the group had, earlier in the year, approached the Semai through the Catholic Orang Asli Team to use the Semai villages as an "exposure-immersion" site for participants in an international literacy-training programme. The Semai responded with reluctance to the idea because, as Wah Kawat put it, "there will be foreigners among the participants and the villagers could get into trouble with the authorities if the programme is discovered". This time around, however, Wah Kawat decided to take the risk though she made specific request to the NGO representative that if foreigners were to be part of the contingent to visit the village that the foreigners be chosen from the Asian participants rather than the "conspicuous" *orang putih* (white people).

Wah Kawat's anxiety was understandable given the Malaysian government's suggestion that when the indigenous peoples organize themselves for land campaigns "foreigners" or "outsiders" have influenced them. In the case of the Sarawak indigenous peoples' land struggle, one federal Minister went so far as to describe these "foreign agitators" as "eco-imperialists" and warned of the possible threat of "eco-terrorism" affecting the country (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14.5.92). Thus, on another occasion during the course of the memorandum project when finances were running short to support the village women's work, an "outsider" suggested that Wah Kawat apply for monies from the "Global Fund For Women". Wah Kawat did not entertain the suggestion. On another occasion, an offer from IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) via a Dutch agency to finance the Semai mapping project was also turned down. Details about the interconnections between "foreign" agencies and villagers during the memorandum campaign are best left unsaid due to obvious reasons.

Despite the efforts of the informal women's network mobilized around Wah Kawat's fireplace, the headmen of Pendue and Ini stuck to their decision to stay out of the memorandum project. Many villagers from Pendue and Ini, however, continued to lend their support to the project although the memorandum was finally produced and submitted to the Perak State Government as the Kg. Canu application. Although the memorandum represented the appeals of the Canu villagers, the land area they applied to be gazetted into reserves covered the customary lands of all three villages.
More significantly, the women's efforts opened up new possibilities in the land struggle or resistance itself at the grassroots level. The women have demonstrated that the Semai are not only confronting the imposed geography of the state over the Semai meanings and relations with the land, but also a specific resistance against the bounded or gendered notions of the land which were previously unchallenged. For the Semai women, the land is also peculiarly tied to their moral, social and economic relations activities and duties vis-a-vis the selai nyeng and access to certain facilities. It is a question of having a voice in the deliberations of so-called community politics and the possibility of entering the political space of discussion and organizing regarding the land rights campaign. In a sense, by excluding women from the official negotiations, the state, the movement leaders and the men of the village were actually defining the land as a singular space - men's space - in political as well as economic terms. The women were thus challenging the notion that the men are the symbolic trustees of the land as the men-committees were challenging the JHEOA on similar grounds.

While the women were not excluded from the deliberations taking place in the headmen's houses, they were dissatisfied with the male dominance in the discussions and organization of the land campaign and the lack of concern that men showed towards peculiarly women's relations with the land. This dissatisfaction was also directed towards the Baha'i men who decided to pull out of the memorandum project altogether on religious grounds, also articulated by men. Thus, their simultaneous informal meetings and actions were assertions of their right to the land as well as assertions of their active role in the community the men presumed to represent. They reconstituted a physical political place around the fireplace - a woman's place - in a sense displacing yet via that political space entering the so-called formal political place of the headman's house with different political positions. At the same time, they opened a new symbolic political place introducing a new perspective from which the land rights issue is perceived.
What Prospects at State Level

It seems unlikely that the Canu application for their customary lands to be gazetted as Orang Asli Reserves will succeed. The Perak State Government, more precisely the Perak State Executive Council, is empowered though not obliged both by the Constitution and specifically by the Akta 134 to declare Orang Asli-occupied areas as aboriginal reserves. If we examine Table... it shows that of the 14,465.55 hectares of land applied by the JHEOA on behalf of the Semai in Batang Padang to be gazetted as Aboriginal Reserves: (1) only 3538.36 hectares have been approved and gazetted as Aboriginal Reserves; (2) 1439.46 hectares have been approved but not gazetted as Reserves, and; (3) 9,487.73 hectares have not been approved, which means they are pending a decision from the State Executive Council. Moreover, most of these applications including that for the Canu village were made almost thirty years ago (Pernloi-Gah, June, 1991). The prospects for the Semai application are also dismal in the light of announcements made by the Perak Government in 1993 that the Orang Asli of Perak will be relocated in permanent FELDA-type farmlands with the provision for them to own land as individual-titled-land lots. (Dasar dan Garis Panduan Pelupusan Tanah Kepada Orang Asli, MMK Perak, September 1993).

As for the Federal government, it has been argued by the JHEOA (Ishak, 1993:5f) as well as other scholars (Williams-Hunt, 1993; McLellan, 1985; Gomes, 1990; Hasan Mat Nor, 1993) that since all matters pertaining to land comes within the legislative and executive purview of the individual states (Ninth Schedule, State List No. 2, Malaysian Constitution), it is the failure of the individual states not the JHEOA as a Federal department nor the Federal government that the Orang Asli land problem still persists. The problem, however, is not a matter of inadequate legislation to empower the Federal government to act on Orang Asli land matters. As Rachagan (1990:103ff) demonstrates the terms of the extant legislation vis-a-vis the Orang Asli stipulates that the administration, welfare and development are the responsibilities of the Federal Government and that the Constitutional powers conferred upon the Federal Government to expedite the "land question" is also unfettered. It is thus, a lack of political will on the part of the Federal Government to intervene in the land problems of the Orang Asli. Moreover, the latest position of the Federal Government on the question of Orang Asli Reserves is suggested in a 1993 announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister:
In Malaysia... the indigenous people... would not be "protected" and designated to confined areas similar to reservations for the indigenous people in some industrial societies. (quoted from the New Straits Times, 30.11.93)

According to one of the Orang Asli movement leaders involved in the 1994 negotiations with the federal government, there are no indications that the legislation governing Orang Asli-state relations would be changed or will the JHEOA be disbanded. This would imply that if the Semai villagers are relocated into permanent FELDA-type farms and granted individual titled-land lots, their occupation, use and "ownership" of the land will still be governed by the present legislation which means that they will be no more than "tenant at will" (Section 8(1)(c) of the Akta 134). Although Section 8(3) of the Akta 134 provides for the Orang Asli to legally own land personally and have rights other than as tenant at will, the very next Section 9 prevents any dealing or transactions in such land, not only between Orang Asli and non-Orang Asli but between Orang Asli persons without the consent of the Commissioner. Any transaction effected without the Commissioner's consent i.e. the Director-General of the JHEOA, shall be void and of no effect (Section 9). In Section 12 of the Act, moreover, the rights of the Orang Asli over their land is further curtailed in the provisions made for their compensation should revocation or any other form of encroachment happens. Revocation can happen because it is provided for in the same legislation. In the event then of encroachment or revocation, Section 12 does not oblige but merely provides for the state to exercise its own discretion when it comes to compensation. Moreover, if compensation is to be paid it is also up to the discretion of the state whether to pay it to the person it deems rightful to receive such payment or pay the compensation directly to the Commissioner of Aborigines who is trustee for aboriginal lands. More importantly, if the Semai are granted titled-land lots on permanent farms they will remain wards of the state and the JHEOA trustees of their lands.

Conclusions

The masalah tanah or land problem is the central issue around which the contemporary political struggles of the Semai are organized. In this case study, I highlighted some of the different places or political spaces this struggle is taking place within the Semai villages: the changing identity of the places and the changing identities within these places vis-a-vis the
land struggle. I also attempted to examine the movements and interconnections between village places and other places beyond the village. The singular vocabulary of "land" as a specific space is unpacked in terms of the plural spatialities that they connote. Consequently, the notion of that singular geography is displaced by plural geographies, avoiding relativism through the theoretical refusal to submit to the separation of the abstract and the empirical in the process of theorization.

Some of these places, like the headman's house, has a longer history as a "site of struggle" than another, the fire-place (wal) of Wah Kawat the "leader" of the informal women's network. Yet, the meaning of the headman's house and nature of activities happening there, as well as the community of resistance constituted around that place have changed considerably since forty years ago. At the same time, the wal (fireplace) in Wah Kawat's house is a more recent political space to have emerged. The fireplace, seemingly a women's place is reconstituted as a place of mobilization as well as a reconstituted community site of resistance vis-a-vis the land struggle. All the places of the village are constructed out of a particular combination of social relations that interact at a particular location but go beyond the particular locale both in terms of time and space. The identities of these places are not fixed because the social relations constructed around them are changing, not only because of their interconnections to other places, but the particular events happening in the locale.

If we move to the "larger" picture of the state and the Orang Asli leadership does not seem that the Semai application for reserved land will be approved. Both the Perak state as well as Federal Governments is insistent that the Orang Asli should be re-settled the way Malay peasants are in FELDA-type schemes. And the Orang Asli leadership at the national level seems reluctant to "push" the issue. However, at the Semai "locale" level at least the Canu and Pendue villages are determined to resist this form of resettlement. We can only assume that if they are forced to comply they will but they will also refashion their land politics but in a new place.
Chapter Seven: Conclusions

The aim of this study was twofold. First, to write a story of the Orang Asli land struggles in the context of their changing social relations. Second, to explore, from the ways I have chosen to tell the Orang Asli story, some methodological possibilities to examine indigenous land struggles elsewhere in Southeast Asia. As such, in this final chapter there will be two main parts. The first part will be a recapitulation of issues discussed in the preceding chapters. For obvious technical and organizational reasons this section will not be a comprehensive summary of all the issues covered in the earlier chapters. Rather I shall draw together some of the major contours of the Orang Asli land struggle highlighting at the same time the methodological framework employed to represent these changing relations. The reason for this is that such a summarizing will lead more easily into the next section, which is a discussion on how a similar approach can be used to examine indigenous political struggles elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Land Struggles and Changing Social Relations as Place-making

Despite the justifiable ways other scholars have examined the changing social relations of the Semai, I have sought in this text to explain similar themes but by using a framework which, as I have argued in Chapter Two, is more consonant with Semai notions of the social. My argument is that too often when a social group is marginalised or excluded - whether in the production of texts or society - so too are their perspectives on the situation even when they constitute the focus of discussion. I have also argued that when examining Orang Asli social relations, which have direct links with their land struggles, this place-making approach can offer a more dynamic way of bringing out the cultural politics central to such practices that other approaches tend to ignore or place in the backdrop. In addition, I have also claimed and hope to have demonstrated in the preceding chapters that this place-making approach can provide a clearer picture not only of the different agencies converging in the Orang Asli situation but how the latter's social relations extend beyond the familiar operational fields of the state and the political economy. This does not mean, however, that
the state or political economy is irrelevant to the changing situation of the Orang Asli. Both
the state as well as business corporations are important actors vis-a-vis the indigenous
situation and these facts have been brought to the fore in many studies. But at the level of
social inquiry there is a need for a re-evaluation of the indigenous situation, not only in terms
of the state or the international economy, but also in terms of the whole development of social
relations. These relations have made for the states and the political economy to be
represented, on one hand, as so powerfully capable to affect the indigenous situation, yet, on
the other hand, so powerlessly incapable to rectify the indigenous question.

To reiterate, the basic idea behind the place-making approach for explaining Semai
social relations is that these relations are very much place-based but they are not place-bound.
The Semai, I have argued, organise their relations in terms of a sense of place about their
selves, and a "structure of feeling" projected on to their immediate locale. In Semai thought
and practice there is an acknowledged existence of other people-places, at the level of the
intra-personal as well of the social, and it is interaction between these people-places that
reproduces/maintains/change their own places of action and practice. But unlike Bourdieu's
"habitus", the Semai sense of feeling is not systematized in the form of a theoretical or clearly
explicated ideological paradigm or discourse. The notions of the ruai, lengriik, persusah, a-
bor, etc. are "constituted dispositions" which shape the flows and interconnections between
and within Semai constructed places. Thus, to explicate Semai notions and practices in a
more analytic fashion - in order to consider the social, economic and cultural relations in
which Semai senses of place are embedded in - I have drawn from the recent debates in
human/cultural/feminist geography. Geographers have also emphasized that place is
something created by people, both as individuals and groups and across a range of spatial
scales. They are also increasingly arguing on the whys and hows to analyse the social in terms
of the spatial to formulate the spatial in terms of social relations (Keith & Pile, 1993; Duncan
and Ley, 1993; Rose, 1993). What feminist geographer, Doreen Massey (1994) has argued in
this regard, is perhaps the most relevant for the approach employed in this study. Massey
argues that

...what is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and
space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched
out'. The fact is, however, that social relations are never still; they are inherently
dynamic. Thus even to understand space as a simultaneity is, in these terms, not to
evacuate it of all inherent dynamism... The view, then, is of space-time as a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity. Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification. (1994:2f)

Massey provides useful working definitions of "space" and "place", which the Semai notions did not, which can be used to exemplify the features of place understood by the Semai. If space is understood as the "stretched out" relations of social networks across all spatial scales then "place", Massey suggests, can be formulated "as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings" (Ibid. p.5). But the constructions of these particular articulations (places) are also specifically constituted by the particular interconnections with social relations in places that lie beyond.

It is within this explanatory framework that the main objective of this study has been set. This objective has been to give an account of the changing social relations of the Orang Asli, which is contextualised in the process of their land struggles.

The story of the Semai land struggles whether in the past (Chapters Three and Four) or the present (Chapters Five and Six) speak of issues that range beyond the contours of the few Semai settlements. Or for that matter the political economy of the pre-colonial, colonial or postcolonial regimes. For more than a century now the Semai of Malaysia have been defined within a political-cultural universe that has enabled and justified successive dominant regimes in different circumstances to: hunt the former as slaves, relegate them to "die it out" in the hinterlands, herd them into detention camps, force them into a "special" treatment of protective segregation at the same time engineering the specific ways they are to be integrated within society, etc. This same cultural politics linking the ruling regime and the indigenous population as a whole have also facilitated the dispossession of whatever lands the latter may have been occupying whenever these lands were required by the regime or members of the dominant society. At the same time, the nature of relations prompted on the part of the indigenous various socio-economic modes and land practices of accommodation, adaptation and resistance also characteristic features of the latter's social relations. But in the interplay of these cultural-political dynamics both Semai as well as state agencies have not only taken
their place making efforts into wider social arenas but worked with distinctive discourses or ideologies of "indigenous places" that have come from a range of socio-spatial scales.

In terms of Semai place-making in the past we see that it is impossible to claim for them a timeless identity based on purely internal histories. Their identities and land practices were never fixed but flexible not only because of their unique kinship patterns upon which they were based but also because their geographical space was constantly encroached upon by other agencies. What developed in this context was a tenurial/territorial system whereby rights to the use and ownership of or access to lands were not a given fixed condition but part of the social milieu negotiated by the Semai in their day-to-day relations with each other. Moreover, these rights were negotiated constantly not only among those acknowledged to be "original" co-members of a particular group but others who came to inhabit the same geographical space.

The examples and discussions, which illustrate that state agencies operated in spatialized strategies, are clearest in Chapter Four. Whether it was the making of the Orang Asli Area a Malay place (which betrayed the nationalist project against the British/Chinese) or the character of the Orang Asli Area itself (which owed a debt to ILO impulses) the interconnections with social processes happening elsewhere were inevitable. Positions matter and they need to be legitimized in as wide an arena of the public as possible. For instance, in the face of escalating pressures from the Orang Asli and indigenous groups of East Malaysia the Federal Government sponsored an "International Seminar on Indigenous Peoples" in November 1993. This bringing together of 162 participants from 33 countries, in the background of the UN International Year of Indigenous peoples, demonstrates not only the capacity but necessity of the state to legitimize its cultural politics in a global arena.

But as I have discussed, especially in Chapter Six, the Semai were also articulating and taking their struggles in places beyond their villages. As state agencies such as the JHEOA and Islamic religious organizations reached into the homes, villages and economy of Orang Asli places - with the avowed objective of integrating the Orang Asli into the Malay community - the Semai entered into new locations and different political positions in the changing national politics. These were urban places, more specifically non-Islamic and non-governmental places which the Semai began to frequent. Unlike earlier Semai movements,
between settlements and towns, it was not just the Semai headmen who were doing the travelling. Because of governmental restrictions on Orang Asli areas, Semai men, women and children were regularly "going out" to visit Christian and Baha'i church centres located in the nearby towns of Bidor, Kampar, Tapah, etc. Although initially they were entering into religious places to articulate their "hybrid" identity and land problems, within a decade their land campaigns and "Orang Asli" discourse demonstrated clear links with constructs of "indigenous" and land strategies formulated in many different places around the world. While their various movements into different places did not translate into a symbolic power shift, the significance of their struggle is their appropriation of public space itself. In the face of a state politics, which emphasised a confinement/consignment of Orang Asli into special places protected from public politics, the Semai movements marked a clear making of an identity developed in opposition to the state.

Semai mobility and their forging of links with places beyond the village did not result in a homogenization of their relations. Or, to put it in another way, there was not the making of one community of resistance. If anything their movements resulted in a greater mixture of ideas and affiliations which came to impact on their social relations and land struggles. Again, in taking a place-making approach which entails the examination of relations in particular places the specificity of the different ideational flows and their interactions can be made explicit. This is what I have demonstrated especially in Chapter Six by discussing a particular land campaign of the Semai villagers. In going about the organizing of the memorandum campaign, the Semai were in a sense asserting their land demands and priorities in terms of their differentiated mobility and the distinct relationships they forged with people and places from a range of scales. In this context the Semai showed themselves to be not just a "people from a certain place" (Sengoi) but "people from the beginning" (Orang Asli), or Baha'i or "woman", or "like the Penan of Sarawak", etc. Thus in the case of the Semai of the three villages, the distinct articulations as a result of differentiated mobility vis-à-vis social relations changed the perspectives the *masalah tanah* and consequently problematized any easy alliances among them. The reason for this differentiation, and this is another aspect of a place-making approach, is what Massey calls:

...the *power geometry* of it all; the power geometry of time-space compression. For different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in
relational to these flows and interconnections. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. (Massey, 1994:149)

What this underscores is that the Orang Asli land struggles are therefore place-making efforts on their part but not necessarily in circumstances of their own choosing. This shows itself most clearly in the economic system that they have developed which was the subject of discussion in Chapter Five. Faced with the ever-increasing restrictions to the use and control of their customary lands, the Semai persisted in a range of forest-based economic activities organized along place-based principles of kinship. These place-based principles of kinship not only determined for the Semai the ways for the allocation of productive means but also, by the practice of which, ensured the reproduction of their place-based social relations. But that the general circumstances were not of their own choosing is demonstrated by the supplementary ways they had to resort to make a living, i.e. engage in regular waged labour. Moreover, the context of unequal power relations applies not only with regard to the relations between the Orang Asli and the state agencies but, as I have shown in Chapter Six, power differentials in terms of gender, religious affiliations and relations with different agencies in the movement network also impinge on the Semai situation. In a sense the Semai entered into places provided for them and not places they created for themselves.

In so far as Orang Asli places are part of the space of accumulation and control ruled by the state and capital the land prospects look bleak for the Orang Asli. But the movements of both state as well as Orang Asli agencies indicate that indigenous relations cannot go on with "business as usual". If anything the spatial practices of Orang Asli groups at "locale" level is continually challenging the cultural politics linking Orang Asli and dominant society/state. What makes the spatialized practices of the Semai significant is that people treat the spatial as charged with emotional content, mythical meanings, community symbolism and historical significance. And it is the "structure of feeling", not empirical rationality that one finds built into the framework of institutional perceptions and bias which characterize the everyday life. And even if it happens, as it is likely to, that the Semai are physically relocated
their accumulated space-time experiences and inheritances, their geographical background, cultural origins and social networks - their sense of place - will be carried with them. And it can be safely assumed that just as efforts to put them in their place will continue the resistance generated from Semai sense of place will be refashioned in another place. This makes for a place-making approach of understanding all the more relevant and necessary. As bell hooks argues for those who have no place there will always be a struggle for a place to be (hooks, 1991:149). And as one Semai put it:

The orang bandar [city folks] can never understand or feel what we have been through, what our masalah tanah [land problem] is really about. The way we Orang Asli live on the land is very different from the way of the orang bandar. Our lives are so strongly connected to the land. Our culture, traditions, customs, food, medicine, income and livelihood - all of these are in the forests, the rivers and the mountains. Moreover, our God, the spirits of our ancestors and the spirits of the forests are all tied with the hills, the flowers, the forests, the stones, the trees, the rivers, the animals and the land. We are struggling for more than just a piece of land. We are struggling for the rights to live on the land as Orang Asli. For a long time now we are being forced to live as squatters on the land, to be treated as a backward people who cannot and should not enjoy some basic rights as other citizens do. We are not asking to have a country of our own or a government of our own. We are only asking that we be accepted as indigenous peoples and be allowed to stay and move in our hereditary land. People from the outside say we are nomads. Government ministers tell us that we must settle down so that we may prosper. Christian missionaries and Imams tell us that if we stay in one place we can send our children to school... their schools. Even the television programmes show us as living like animals. But we are not nomads. We are being forced to move from our hereditary land. During the war with the Japanese, we were forced to move, during the war with the communists we were forced to move. And now, we are again forced to move. We are not nomads but we are forced to move.

Place-Making as a Methodology to examine Political Struggles of Indigenous People in Southeast Asia

Most of the indigenous groups in Southeast Asia are traditional forest dwellers whose subsistence depends on the forest and its produce but who have never enjoyed legal rights over forest lands (MRG, 1994). The need for environmentally sustainable approaches to forest management based on the recognition of customary rights is increasingly recognized in the context of rapid depletion of Southeast Asia's forest resources. Environmental pressure
from the "outside", both governmental and non-governmental, has often been more concerned with improved legal mechanisms for shared resource management than with explicit recognition of indigenous land rights. Where special land status has been recognized it tends to be the result of colonial legacy but even then the fiction of communal landownership was maintained amid a widespread pattern of land transfers and private landownership sanctioned for by the state. It is no surprise, therefore, that controversial issues about Southeast Asia indigenous groups today often concern the status and meaning of the protective laws inherited from the colonial period. In the case of Indonesia, for instance, the tenure regime was derived from a combination of customary (adat) law and codified law for the protection of indigenous or tribal land rights - a system which has its origins in the racialized manner landownership was regulated by the Dutch. Although traditional occupiers can make claims based on adat customary law some, three-quarters of all Indonesian land is now classified as forest with the land rights vested exclusively in government forest departments. At least this is the case in principle in accordance with the Basic Forestry Law of 1967 (WALHI, 1990). In practice forest management, especially in the Outer Islands where most of the indigenous groups are located, has been in the hands of private concessionaires. There are now over five hundred concessions to private companies in the Outer islands with an average size of about 100,000 hectares (YLBHI, 1990). As a result there has been growing land conflicts between tribal communities, the state and logging contractors with UN and other donor agencies, advocating for community-based strategies for the mapping of adat land rights and borders. Indonesian NGOs have also lent their support to these tribal land causes by, among other things, documenting cases of land eviction throughout Indonesia and pointed to the frequency and intensity of such cases of land conflicts over the past decade (WALHI, 1990). In the Philippines, a country that has gone further than any other Asian country in linking the concepts of ancestral domain, special land rights and autonomy, indigenous land rights struggles continue to be a feature of the country's politics. More than half the Philippines is considered forest lands and within the public domain and virtually all the country's indigenous peoples live in those designated areas. For the indigenous, like the Orang Asli of Malaysia, it is their customary lands but for successive governments in the Philippines it is land that is unexploited and unclaimed. Consequently, forests have been logged at a rate
virtually unparalleled elsewhere and some thirty-one dams were proposed to be built since 1979, all these projects on lands occupied by indigenous populations. As in other places Philippine indigenous groups have also been losing their lands to foreign interests. The Aetas, for example have been displaced from some 50,000 hectares of their traditional land by US army and naval bases. And the Malaysian-based Guthrie Corporation in cooperation with the Philippines National Development Corporation, with loans from the British Commonwealth Development Corporation (NDC), appropriated some 48,000 hectares of indigenous peoples' land for oil palm plantations. In this latter example about 3000 indigenous peoples were forcibly evicted from these lands and in the process, some thirty murders were documented which were linked to the NDC and Guthrie (CIIR, 1982). As in the case of Indonesia, indigenous groups have been mounting campaigns of sorts in defense of their land rights. Perhaps the most prominent actions are those represented by the Cordillera People's Alliance for the Defense of their Ancestral Domain, a coalition of some fifteen indigenous groups which now has an office based in London.

The list of indigenous land struggles in Southeast Asia, their historical, local and transnational interconnections are documented variously in human rights literature and development studies (Ashworth 1980; Burger, 1987; Colchester 1989; Cooper, 1978; Dorall, 1990; Hong, 1987; ICIHI, 1987; IWGIA, 1987). They are all "indigenous" or "ethnic minorities" both in official accounting statistics and social status. They are conventionally cast as "hunters-gatherers" or semi-nomadic and their current struggles share common features with the Semai. They are all, geographically, "hill-people" or "interior-people" and local-perjorative names are still commonly used in reference to them, for example the "Kha" in Thailand and Laos, the "Pnong" in Cambodia, the "Moi" in Vietnam "Igorot" or "Manobo" in the Philippines, the "Orang Ulu" or "Dayak" in Borneo, "Toraja" in Sulawesi, and the list goes on. As the Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact, an organization where many of these indigenous groups are represented, has explained, these groups are engaged in campaigns of sorts to claim for cultural-political rights over their customary lands, resources, recognition as indigenous, etc. As in the Semai situation, while their struggles are primarily directed at the state, there is a global dimension to their struggles in terms of the language used in their campaigns, their communication and solidarity with human-rights, tribal, developmental and
ecological movements, as well as inter-governmental authorities. In the last decade especially there has been several joint conferences bringing together these indigenous representatives to discuss common strategies and share ideas regarding their land struggles. Of note is the setting up of first, the Asian Indigenous Peoples’ Pact in 1989 and then the Asia Indigenous Women’s Network in 1993, the latter having been represented in 1995 Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. But behind these formal organizations are a host of intermediate agencies, cultural workers, social activists, NGOs, religion-based movements, social researchers, etc. working at a range of scales in processes which we can safely assume, are impinging on local struggles in different places.

In Chapter Two, I mentioned that despite the lack of consensus at arriving at a universal definition of indigenous peoples there is a common agreement, across the board as it were, of one contradistinctive feature of this social category of peoples. This distinguishing feature is the "special" relationship of indigenous peoples to the land. This "special" relationship has been variously described as "traditional", "ancestral", "religious-sacred", "fully-fledged", etc. However it is described, the thrust of these explanations is to impress on the reader the fact that there is a unique and prominent relationship which indigenous people have with land and the meanings of which cannot be adequately captured in the familiar language of "sovereignty", "property" and "jurisdiction". A clear example in point is the present state of affairs in the indigenous land rights debate. Indigenous groups the world over are insisting on land rights which encompass this "sense of place" associated with the designations of their land as "traditional", "ancestral", "religious-sacred", "fully-fledged", etc. (Moody, 1988; Burger, 1987; Vlist, 1994). In fact, in a 1992 statement indigenous peoples’ representatives from around the world decided that:

We must never use the term "land claims". It is the non-indigenous people which do not have any land. All the land is our land. It is non-indigenous peoples who are making claims to our lands. We are not making claims to our lands (The Kari-Oca Declaration and Indigenous Peoples Earth Charter, World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development, Kari-Oca 25-30 May 1992).

However, international and national state agencies that wield the power to grant such “claims” insist on discussing them in terms of western notions of private law (Brolmann & Zieck, 1993). The terms "usufruct", "tenure", "possession", "property", "ownership", etc., terms that are currently constituting the framework for negotiating indigenous land rights all
belong to the realm of private law. What this implies, therefore, is that whatever titles to land ultimately granted to indigenous peoples the possibility of expropriation of the land by the state will always be there (Ibid.). Moreover, even if the land is not expropriated, lands titles that are granted in this fashion does not include subsurface rights (Ibid.).

The difficulty at understanding indigenous peoples relationship to the land in terms of western notions of property, and thereby the nature of their land struggles, holds true for not only the Semai case but other indigenous groups in Southeast Asia. Take the example of the Mangyan people of the Philippines who wrote this letter some twenty years ago:

We are 200 representatives of the Alangan Tribe of the Mangyan people of Mindoro who have met for two days here in the sitio of Paitan, Calapan, Mindoro, at the foot of the Halcon mountain.
We have discussed many things which we wish to share in this fertile plain around Calapan that is said to be as big as the province of Bulacan. We planted and harvested in peace, We thought we were the only people in the world (Mangyan means Man) and we were proud and contented. A hundred years or so ago the Tagalog and later Ilocano settlers came to take our land. We retreated because it seemed to us there was enough land for all and we are not a warrior people as everyone can tell you.
But the land is not unlimited. We have been forced up into the mountains. Still the settlers come. If we plant a few trees, a Tagalog or Ilocano will come and claim them. There is no place for us to settle down. Don't believe that we are contented roaming the mountains building temporary huts, living by kaingin. We are not a nomadic mountain people. We have been forced up to the mountains. We know such a life is no life for our families: half the children die, there are no schools, no medicine.
We have met these days to discuss our problems, not as a small group but as a whole tribe, for we know that a solution is possible only if we have union. These days together we have felt the warmth and strength our tribal unity brings. We are happy to be Mangyans.
Here are our needs:
1. We want land for our tribe, enough for all of us, a piece of land that is titled and secure, that others cannot steal. We are willing to take any land, provided it is secure and adequate for our families. We will not retreat anymore.
2. We want our own way of life. We are willing to live side by side with others but we want to live our own culture and traditions. We are losing these since we live as isolated small groups browbeaten by Christians. We want our own secure land, our own place, where we can come together and find again what are really our way of life, our beliefs and traditions. We want to protect what is left of our culture, as you protect a small flame till it grows into a strong fire. Our traditions are peaceful as everyone can tell you. To us they are like life itself. If we lose our own way, what are we? We need our own place to become the people we are supposed to be. Time is running out.
3. Lastly, we need schools for our children where they can study in peace and not be insulted as they are now in the lowland schools. We want them to learn
your ways which have so much to offer, but we want them to be true
Mangyans also. We want your schools, but on our terms, in our place.
We older Mangyans are illiterate. Of the 200 meeting here only 26 can sign their
names. We do not want to stay this way because such ignorance is harmful to us. We
want adult education courses. We want to learn. But above all, we want to know our
rights.
(The Philippine Times, Open Letter to the Filipino people, 1-15 January 1977)
Perhaps the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1974) has put it rightly that a
reductionistic view of spatialization has entered into western social science that disables
scholars to examine the fuller meanings of land as a spatial category. The "commonsensical"
world that we inherited from the enlightenment "space" has little concreteness and as it is
unobservable as such, it is presumed not to exist. However what exists in the imagination of
people and affects their everyday decisions must be considered in social science.
Using a place-making process to examine indigenous land struggles of the kind that
are happening in Southeast Asia has several advantages which I have already demonstrated in
the case of the Semai. Several dimensions of the land rights struggle can be grasped all at the
same time yet avoiding either a romanticized or derogatory characterization of indigenous
social relations. First, the place can be materially specified - it is the geography of the
customary lands which the indigenous group is claiming. Second, if "place" is, as Massey
defines, particular articulations of the "stretched out" relations of social networks across all
spatial scales then it is possible to understand how the indigenous land rights struggle is about
the construction of particular social relations. And this construction of social relations is
interconnected with articulations of relations in places that lie beyond the particular locale as
is characteristic of indigenous land struggles the world over. In other words, the indigenous
land struggles cannot be understood as merely isolated affairs at the "local" scale. Neither is it
the case, as most governments would put it (Armitage and Kenedy, 1989), that when
indigenous peoples engage in land struggles it is because they are agitated by "outsiders" or
"foreigners". In other words the indigenous land struggles cannot be read off from just one
spatial scale. It is the necessary concomitant of the inter-relation of social processes on
different scales that "come together" or are mediated through the specific practices of
particular places.
In the case of the Southeast Asian indigenous groups there is an added challenge to their organizing efforts which may be clarified in a place-making analysis of their changing social relations. As they take their struggle into the international circuit, Southeast Asian indigenous groups are also experiencing difficulties locating their place in the more established indigenous trans-national networks which are dominating the global arena (Bose, 1995). North American, Latin American and more recently the Australian Aboriginal/Indian lobbies have clearly established their places and set the indigenous agenda in the international fora. In contrast, Southeast Asian indigenous organizations are "newcomers" to these transnational indigenous politics. As such they have to contend not only with the above-mentioned groups but their equally well established support groups such as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the latter which has demonstrated reluctance to admit indigenous groups which are not campaigning for an autonomous state.

Case studies of different indigenous land struggles is beyond the scope of this text but perhaps one example may indicate the spatially "stretched out relations" of indigenous peoples and the implications for their local land struggles:

In the spring of 1992 some thirty over indigenous representatives from different parts of the world travelled around Europe bringing their land issues to the attention of European politicians, business corporations, non-governmental organizations and consumers. This group of indigenous leaders included five representatives from Southeast Asian countries. This campaign, called the "Symbolic Discovery of Europe", was mainly organized by the Dutch Centre for Indigenous Peoples but was launched with the sponsorship and support of several other European organizations. It was also intended to coincide not only with the UN Year for the Indigenous Peoples but the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Many exchanges happened not only between the indigenous leaders and European parties but also among the indigenous representatives themselves. One particularly significant exchange for me was a conversation between the Lil'wat representative from Canada and the Kenyah person from Malaysia. The Lil'wat representative was explaining some history of his community's land struggles and the role that literacy campaigns played in raising people's consciousness. He was especially interested in the indigenous groups of Malaysia because, according to him, the literacy campaign in his community was initiated some twenty years ago as a result of a visit by a Lil'wat woman to an Orang Asli community in Malaysia. Apparently, the Lil'wat woman had come across an Orang Asli group which was engaged in a literacy project and upon her return to Canada brought back with her some "interesting literacy training skills" which she then introduced to her community.
Travelling provides a means for conceptualizing the interplay among peoples that were never so separate or inaccessible one to another as their relations have been represented. Travel erodes the brittleness and rigidity of spatial boundaries and suggests social, political and cultural identity as an amalgam, the intricacy of which defies the comparative simplicity of "identity" but the implications of which can be adequately traced in the specific places of the travellers. Concerned primarily with traveling theory and traveling cultures, James Clifford has been among the most thoughtful of proponents of travel metaphors. As terms of cultural comparison and a means of comparative knowledge, travel for Clifford (1989) moves us beyond the fixity of singular locations as he suggests in:

"Location', here is not a matter of finding a stable 'home' or discovering a common experience. Rather it is a matter of being aware of the difference that makes a difference in concrete situations, of recognizing the various inscriptions, 'places', or 'histories' that both empower and inhibit the construction of... categories like 'Woman'... [and I may add indigenous]... categories essential to political action as well as to serious comparative knowledge. 'Location' is thus, concretely, a series of locations and encounters, travel within diverse but limited spaces... (Ibid. p. 82)

There is a danger in this idealizing of "travelling cultures/ politics" which is characteristic of the frequent fliers and jetsetters and projecting it on to indigenous activists. And it is attempting to think of Clifford's travellers as these individuals who accumulate culture along with "air miles" while gazing down on the topographical lands below. But I am referring to indigenous groups such as the Semai, the Aetas, the Mangyan, etc. who in their process of travelling come back to place-making. And their place-making challenges some influential conceptualizations of placed politics. Since the 1980s the world has seen the recrudescence of exclusivist claims to places - nationalist, regionalists and localist. All of them have been attempts, like the "blood and soil" immigration policies of many countries, to fix the meaning of particular places, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities and to claim them for one's own. Within the academic literature as well there has been a continuation of the tendency to identify places as necessary sites of nostalgia, of the ongoing opting-out from Progress and History. But if place-making, as Semai examples have shown, are not based on timeless identities or purely internal histories and not exclusive claims to places then there are possibilities for a re-envisioning alternative geo-political imaginations.
Tables
Table 1:
Items Derived From and Cultivated on Semai Lenggrik Lands

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<tr>
<th>Lenggrik</th>
<th>Kampok</th>
<th>Selai</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>cultural/religious</td>
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<td>akar kembu java</td>
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| daun bex lex | | p. bunga |
| daun kasei | | p. centum |
| daun ribu | | menuwas |
| kayu jongkang | | daun kuar |
| k. cemakau | | pinang-hutan |
| k. gerangung | | kawil |
| k. rimau hantu | | hibis |
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>b. changlung</td>
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<td>b. batuk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. dekoh</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. liang</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>b. bureh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. sepad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lengiik</td>
<td>Kampok</td>
<td>Selai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medicinal</td>
<td>market</td>
<td>cultural/religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kayu gebaru</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>kememyam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kijai</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>senggut</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>serai laut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>penulin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. keloi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pembenci</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. temir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This is a ceremonial 'dance/sing', held at night for the purposes of 'healing' the land, healing illnesses, thanksgiving, welcoming guests and celebrating life.

2. This is a ceremony to honour the ancestors and other ruai (spirits), celebrate the new year, thanksgiving to Nyeng (God), and prevent bad things from happening. For this ceremony, and depending on which particular purpose it is intended for, one of three balai (concoctions) are made from 8 varieties of bamboo and 45 varieties of leaves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tubers</th>
<th>Mushrooms</th>
<th>Sprouts</th>
<th>Other Vegetables</th>
<th>Hunted/trapped items</th>
<th>Fished items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aka garam</td>
<td>cicau</td>
<td>remenyne</td>
<td>berteh</td>
<td>babi-hutan</td>
<td>tabung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ubi hutan</td>
<td>kaki lag</td>
<td>jering</td>
<td>buah kulim</td>
<td>beruang</td>
<td>katak kecil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umbut langkap</td>
<td>carek</td>
<td>sangkok ayam</td>
<td>camberapa</td>
<td>rusa</td>
<td>kak dap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umbut bayes</td>
<td>sakoi</td>
<td>ubi</td>
<td>cenei</td>
<td>kijang</td>
<td>kandak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umbut bertam</td>
<td>kerja</td>
<td>kerong</td>
<td>chabang tiga</td>
<td>simui buluh</td>
<td>ikan lanur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umbut salak</td>
<td>tipus merah</td>
<td>paku bijau</td>
<td>daun manis</td>
<td>s. kayu</td>
<td>i. rukok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suru</td>
<td>paku merah</td>
<td>rebung aka</td>
<td>daun kuak</td>
<td>s. gua</td>
<td>i. heil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telinga beruk</td>
<td>paku beras</td>
<td>paku limbat</td>
<td>daun punggur hawa</td>
<td>kancil</td>
<td>i. limbat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudo</td>
<td>kuntat</td>
<td></td>
<td>terjun</td>
<td>landak-batu</td>
<td>hudang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burut(3 var.)</td>
<td>gerunggang</td>
<td></td>
<td>janggut baung</td>
<td>l. tunggal</td>
<td>gatai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mata</td>
<td>siku</td>
<td></td>
<td>kemumok</td>
<td>burung-bekek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rengas</td>
<td></td>
<td>mangka</td>
<td>b. punai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>paku limbat</td>
<td></td>
<td>pegaga</td>
<td>b. merbah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rebung manis</td>
<td>b. engeng</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rebung betong suku</td>
<td>b. kuang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rebung duku</td>
<td>ayam-hutan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sawi enggang</td>
<td>tikus-lubang tupai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sulang</td>
<td>menali</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tamut</td>
<td>t. hitam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tarong</td>
<td>musang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>berok-sikah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pelandok bulan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kabub</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>siambang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>keluang</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tengling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>katak-demang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of Darat Legep Customary Land (acre)</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of Canu, Pendue and I'ni</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person/customary land ratio (acre/person)</td>
<td>189.2</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JHEOA-allocated Area (acre)</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person/allocate land ratio (acre/person)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2:
Status of JHEOA Land Application in Perak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Application</th>
<th>Approved and Gazetted</th>
<th>Approved but not Gazetted</th>
<th>Not Approved Yet</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Hectare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinta</td>
<td>2,858.57</td>
<td>1,094.77</td>
<td>1,881.68</td>
<td>5,835.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batang Padang</td>
<td>3,538.36</td>
<td>1,439.46</td>
<td>9,487.73</td>
<td>14,465.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Perak</td>
<td>1,497.87</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>664.40</td>
<td>2,162.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Perak</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>174.14</td>
<td>27.42</td>
<td>201.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Perak</td>
<td>2,277.82</td>
<td>2,229.03</td>
<td>92,638.91</td>
<td>97,145.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuala Kangsar</td>
<td>4,415.23</td>
<td>2,728.86</td>
<td>324.76</td>
<td>7,522.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,587.85</td>
<td>7,720.26</td>
<td>105,024.90</td>
<td>127,333.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jawatankuasa Kerja Pembangunan Senator Orang Asli Perak
Table 4:
Canu, Pendue and I’ni Villages: Incomes Received by Seven Semai Households inside the major fruit season, October 1993-January 1994\(^1\) (RM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Dusun(^2)</th>
<th>Selai</th>
<th>Lengrik</th>
<th>Wage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1,220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 8,810.00
Average per four months: 1,258.57
Average per month: 314.64
Range: 1,025.00-1,470.00

Table 4.1:
Canu, Pendue, I’ni Villages: Incomes Received by Seven Semai Households outside the major fruit seasons, February – May 1994 (RM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Dusun(^3)</th>
<th>Selai(^4)</th>
<th>Lengrik(^5)</th>
<th>Wage(^6)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>1,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>2,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 9,086.00
Average per four months: 1,298.00
Average per month: 324.50
Range: 671.00-2,580.00

\(^1\) Estimated income based on recall for the months of October – December and actual income figures for January.
\(^2\) Income almost wholly from the sale of fruits.
Incomes mainly from the sale of fruits and rubber.

Household Three and Four received these incomes from the sale of cassava while the others from vegetables.

A major portion of these incomes are from the sale of rattan and bamboo collected from lengriik land. For example, household Four earned RM154 from the sale of bamboo and RM395 from selling rattan. The remaining earnings came from the sale of some minor forest products such as kasai (for the making of incense sticks) and mushrooms. In the case of Household Two and Five, apart from the major portion of their lengriik incomes coming from the sale of rattan and bamboo, their incomes also include the returns from the sale of handicrafts produced from forest-collected items.

Incomes in this category include both case earned from temporary waged labour as well as monies contributed to the household from members who are working full-time.
Table 5:  
Consumption of Market Goods by Seven Households between 4-17 May (RM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Food Items (A)</th>
<th>Non-food Items (B)</th>
<th>Total (C)</th>
<th>A/C %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 204.28  27.2
### Table 6:
Religious Affiliations of Orang Asli in Perak, 1960-1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Religious Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 Sources: ?, 14.12.57 in Nicholas; Williams-Hunt; Sabah, 1989:227; Straits Times 22.8.56
2 Source: Carey 1970
3 Source: JHEOA Census 1974
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Animism</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Baha'i</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>14,556</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>1,833</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>4,857</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terengganu</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>19,071</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>5,710</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Sembilan</td>
<td>3,512</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaka</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50,774</td>
<td>2,671</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>56,927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 1: Orang Asli Tribal Groups in Peninsular Malaysia
Map 2: Administrative Divisions and Main Towns of Perak
Map 3: Orang Asli Villages in the District of Batang Padang
Map 4.2: Semai Sketch-Map of their kampok landholdings
Map 4.3: JHEOA-Survey Map of the Canu Settlement Site
Map 4.4: Land Office Survey Map of the Canu Settlement Site
Map 5: Darat Legep Lengriik in the 19th Century

Legend:
- Present-day
- KD 'Aboriginal Area'
- Elephant-transport tracks
- Rice fields prior to British rule (1874)
- Malay Settlements
- Centres of Territorial Chiefs
- Centres of the Royalty
Map 6: Pre-colonial Perak
Appendix I:


Thank you Mr. Chairman, Mr. President, we have carefully examined the issues raised by the states that have reservations on article three. They have put forward their positions in different formulations, but they all boils down to the following:

1. Local Self-Government or Autonomy as self-determination,
2. states rights to territorial integrity precedes the rights of the people to self-determination,
3. limiting the enjoyment of the right to self-determination to those who already claim it,
4. The absence of the universally acceptable definition of the word "people". Mr. President, to think of self-determination as local self-government or autonomy is absolutely wrong. It must be understood that the right to self-determination and self-government or autonomy are two totally different sets of rights altogether. The right to "self-determination" is an inherent right and on the other hand, autonomy is a right granted by a sovereign state. Meaning, the sovereign that grants autonomy has absolute right to take away the right as well without consultation.

Secondly, the concept of sovereignty and territorial integrity as a right which precedes the right of self-determination of the people is completely opposed to the doctrine of popular sovereignty, the basis of the modern nation-states. It cannot be sustained without first denying the peoples of their sovereignty wherever they are. This concept, the concept of sovereignty and territorial integrity challenges the legitimacy of the existence of the states that has emerged on the strength of "We The People" which is also in their constitutions. We also want to remind the states of the position of the International Court of Justice on this issue in the well known Western Sahara Case of 1975. Judge Dillard, International Court of Justice: "It is for the people to determine the destiny of the territory and not the territory the destiny of the people".

Thirdly, Article 7 of the of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States have been referred to by countries including Argentina in support of their argument that there is no basis for self-determination in countries where there are elected governments and that assertion of the right of self-determination cannot be allowed since that will amount to permitting disruption of the states territorial integrity.

These states seem to have got themselves totally wrong because the reading of the specific articles and paragraphs and the whole declarations give a different picture altogether.

The "De-Colonisation Process" itself is a process of recognition and respect for the right of self-determination of peoples under alien subjugation and domination.
De-colonisation involves disruption of dismemberment of territories of the existing states, there is no doubt about it.

Further, the language of the 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations is simple and clear. The world body does not favour disruption/breaking up of states conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination. In other words, the rights of states to their territorial integrity is conditional to their compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination. This is consistent with the United Nations Charter, and the two International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Lastly, the absence of an Universally accepted definition of the term "People" has been used by the states to cover-up their expansionist designs. But the 1960 Declaration of Independence in Article 1 has given it unmistakable terms that peoples under alien subjugation, domination and exploitation may legitimately, meaning under international law, asserts their rights to self-determination. We would like to refer again to the famous Western Sahara Case of 1975 where the I.C.J held that "a people - defined by their sense of collective identity, mode of political self-regulation, and predictable territory of economic activity-stable population, and demarcated territory - can claim sovereignty and assert self-determination even if they do not have a developed administrative apparatus.

Thank You.
APPENDIX II

Memorandum 1982 of the Orang Asli Headmen's Conference

We the Orang Asli of West Malaysia wish to make known our aspiration for our future to the Government and people of our country.

1. Orang Asli representation in Parliament
   We hope that the Government will make efforts to increase Orang Asli representations in Parliament. This will ensure that our voice will be heard in the supreme decision-making body in our country. Furthermore, we appeal that those chosen to represent us be elected by the Orang Aslis.

2. The Aboriginal Act 134 (Amendment in 1974)
   We appeal that the above Act be reviewed again and amendments be made where necessary to ensure that it conforms with the aspirations of the Orang Aslis today.

3. Administration of the Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli
   That a deadline be given by the Government as to when the JHEOA will be administered by Orang Aslis themselves.

4. Land
   We appeal that all Orang Asli land will be gazetted and a copy of the land title be given to each village headman. This will ensure that our land will not be taken away from us by any outsiders.

5. Exploitation of our Natural Habitat
   We appeal that the Government enact new laws to safeguard the indiscriminate exploitation of our natural habitat by mining and timber companies. And that all present activities of such companies be ceased to safeguard the livelihood of our people in the villages.

6. Economic Development Programs
   Much has been achieved over the years and therefore we call for the intensification of such efforts to make sure that the objectives of the 4th Malaysia Plan be achieved among our people.

7. Education
   We call for a review of the effectiveness of our village schools set-up by the JHEOA. Furthermore, we appeal that the Government will grant us special places in the institutions of higher learning.

8. Health
   Community health programmes must be intensified and the Orang Asli Hospital in Gombak be expanded and modernised to serve our people more effectively.

9. Orang Asli Culture
   We applaud the efforts of RTM to broadcast Asli programs over the air. We seek that this be continued and intensified and be expanded to include programs on television. We seek that efforts be made by authorities concerned to ensure that our language be preserved and be given importance so that our children may be able to learn them.
We also appeal that the Government seriously consider granting us one public holiday, preferably during our harvest festival, so as to give us a chance to share our culture and celebration with the other races in our country.

10. Security
The security of our villages from communist terrorists be given utmost priority. The “Senoi Praak” be further strengthened and modernised and be given the recognition for their noble services to the country.

11. Religion
We appeal that the freedom of religion be respected among our people and that no one be forced to accept any religion against one’s own wishes.

12. Social Prejudice
That the Government will ensure that all forms of social prejudice against Orang Asli found in literature, mass media, exhibitions, tourism and the rest, be wiped out through positive measures.

With love and loyalty to our homeland,
We the Orang Asli of West Malaysia

Sekian, terima kasih.

Kami yang benar

[Signed by 22 Orang Asli headmen]
APPENDIX III:

DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1. AFFIRMING that indigenous peoples are equal in dignity and rights to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.

2. AFFIRMING ALSO that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind.

3. AFFIRMING FURTHER that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust.

4. REAFFIRMING also that indigenous peoples, in the exercise of their rights, should be free from discrimination of any kind.

5. CONCERNED that indigenous peoples have been deprived of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, resulting, inter alia, in their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests.

6. RECOGNIZING the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights and characteristics of indigenous peoples, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources, which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies.

7. WELCOMING the fact that indigenous peoples are organizing themselves for political, economic, social and cultural enhancement and in order to bring an end to all forms of discrimination and oppression wherever they occur.

8. CONVINCED that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs.

9. RECOGNIZING also that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment.

10. EMPHASIZING the need for demilitarization of the lands and territories of indigenous peoples, which will contribute to peace, economic and social progress and development, understanding and friendly relations among nations and peoples of the world.

11. RECOGNIZING in particular the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children.
12. RECOGNIZING ALSO that indigenous peoples have the right freely to determine their relationship with States in a spirit of coexistence, mutual benefit and full respect.

13. CONSIDERING that treaties, agreements and other arrangements between States and indigenous peoples are properly matters of international concern and responsibility.

14. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirm the fundamental importance of the right of self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

15. BEARING IN MIND that nothing in this Declaration may be used to deny any peoples their right of self-determination.

16. ENCOURAGING States to comply with and effectively implement all international instruments, in particular those related to human rights, as they apply to indigenous peoples, in consultation and cooperation with the peoples concerned.

17. EMPHASIZING that the United Nations has an important and continuing role to play in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

18. BELIEVING that this Declaration is a further important step forward for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples and in the development of relevant activities of the United Nations system in this field.

Solemnly proclaims the following United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

PART I

ARTICLE 1

Indigenous peoples have the right to the full and effective enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law.

ARTICLE 2

Indigenous individuals and peoples are free and equal to all other individuals and peoples in dignity and rights, and have the right to be free from any kind of adverse discrimination, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

ARTICLE 3

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

ARTICLE 4

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, economic, social and cultural characteristics, as well as their legal
systems, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

ARTICLE 5
Every indigenous individual has the right to a nationality.

PART II

ARTICLE 6
Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and to full guarantees against genocide or any other act of violence, including the removal of indigenous children from their families and communities under any pretext. In addition, they have the individual rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 7
Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right not to be subjected to ethnocide and cultural genocide, including prevention of and redress for:

a. any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;

b. any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;

c. any form of population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;

d. any form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed on them by legislative, administrative or other measures;

e. any form of propaganda directed against them.

ARTICLE 8
Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct identities and characteristics, including the right to identify themselves as indigenous and to be recognized as such.

ARTICLE 9
Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No disadvantage of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

ARTICLE 10
Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.
ARTICLE 11
Indigenous peoples have the right to special protection and security in periods of armed conflict.
States shall observe international standards, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, for the protection of civilian populations in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict, and shall not:
   a. recruit indigenous individuals against their will into the armed forces and, in particular, for use against other indigenous peoples;
   b. recruit indigenous children into the armed forces under any circumstances;
   c. force indigenous individuals to abandon their lands, territories or means of subsistence, or relocate them in special centres for military purposes;
   d. force indigenous individuals to work for military purposes under any discriminatory conditions.

PART III

ARTICLE 12
Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature, as well as the right to the restitution of cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.

ARTICLE 13
Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains.
States shall take effective measures, in conjunction with the indigenous peoples concerned, to ensure that indigenous sacred places, including burial sites, be preserved, respected and protected.

ARTICLE 14
Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
States shall take effective measures, whenever any right of indigenous peoples may be threatened, to ensure this right is protected and also to ensure that they can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.
PART IV

ARTICLE 15
Indigenous children have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State. All indigenous peoples also have this right and the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
Indigenous children living outside their communities have the right to be provided access to education in their own culture and language.
States shall take effective measures to provide appropriate resources for these purposes.

ARTICLE 16
Indigenous peoples have the right to have the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations appropriately reflected in all forms of education and public information.
States shall take effective measures, in consultation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all segments of society.

ARTICLE 17
Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own language. They also have the right to equal access to all forms of non-indigenous media.
States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity.

ARTICLE 18
Indigenous peoples have the right to enjoy fully all rights established under international labour law and national labour legislation.
Indigenous individuals have the right not to be subjected to any discriminatory conditions of labour, employment or salary.

PART V

ARTICLE 19
Indigenous peoples have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, at all levels of decision-making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

ARTICLE 20
Indigenous peoples have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, through procedures determined by them, in devising legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
States shall obtain the free and informed consent of the peoples concerned before adopting and implementing such measures.

ARTICLE 21
Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities. Indigenous peoples who have been deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair compensation.

ARTICLE 22
Indigenous peoples have the right to special measures for the immediate, effective and continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the areas of employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and disabled persons.

ARTICLE 23
Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop all health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

ARTICLE 24
Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and health practices, including the right to the protection of vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. They also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all medical institutions, health services and medical care.

PART VI
ARTICLE 25
Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

ARTICLE 26
Indigenous peoples have the right to own, develop, control and use the lands and territories, including the total environment of the lands, air, waters, coastal seas, sea-ice, flora and fauna and other resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. This includes the right to the full recognition of their laws, traditions, and customs, land-tenure systems and institutions for the development and management of resources, and the right to effective measures by
States to prevent any interference with, alienation of or encroachment upon these rights.

ARTICLE 27

Indigenous peoples have the right to the restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, occupied, used or damaged without their free and informed consent. Where this is not possible, they have the right to just and fair compensation. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status.

ARTICLE 28

Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation, restoration, and protection of the total environment and the productive capacity of their lands, territories and resources, as well as to assistance for this purpose from States and through international cooperation. Military activities shall not take place in the lands and territories of indigenous peoples, unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned.

States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands and territories of indigenous peoples.

States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented.

ARTICLE 29

Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property.

They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and performing arts.

ARTICLE 30

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories and other resources, including the right to require that States obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. Pursuant to agreement with the indigenous peoples concerned, just and fair compensation shall be provided for any such activities and measures taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.
PART VII

ARTICLE 31
Indigenous peoples, as a specific form of exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, including culture, religion, education, information, media, health, housing, employment, social welfare, economic activities, land and resources management, environment and entry by non-members, as well as ways and means for financing these autonomous functions.

ARTICLE 32
Indigenous peoples have the collective right to determine their own citizenship in accordance with their customs and traditions. Indigenous citizenship does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.
Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.

ARTICLE 33
Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive juridical customs, traditions, procedures and practices, in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards.

ARTICLE 34
Indigenous peoples have the collective right to determine the responsibilities of individuals to their communities.

ARTICLE 35
Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with other peoples across borders.
States shall take effective measures to ensure the exercise and implementation of this right.

ARTICLE 36
Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors, according to their original spirit and intent, and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements. Conflicts and disputes which cannot otherwise be settled should be submitted to competent international bodies agreed to by all parties concerned.
PART VIII

ARTICLE 37
States shall take effective and appropriate measures, in consultation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to give full effect to the provisions of this Declaration. The rights recognized herein shall be adopted and included in national legislation in such a manner that indigenous peoples can avail themselves of such rights in practice.

ARTICLE 38
Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to adequate financial and technical assistance, from States and through international cooperation, to pursue freely their political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual development and for the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized in this Declaration.

ARTICLE 39
Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to and prompt decision through mutually acceptable and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall take into consideration the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

ARTICLE 40
The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

ARTICLE 41
The United Nations shall take the necessary steps to ensure the implementation of this Declaration including the creation of a body at the highest level with special competence in this field and with the direct participation of indigenous peoples. All United Nations bodies shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration.

PART IX

ARTICLE 42
The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

ARTICLE 43
All the rights and freedoms recognized herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals.
ARTICLE 44
Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as diminishing or extinguishing existing or future rights indigenous peoples may have or acquire.

ARTICLE 45
Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations.
APPENDIX IV:

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
CONVENTION 169 CONVENTION CONCERNING INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL
PEOPLES IN INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,
Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour
Office, and having met in its 76th Session on 7 June 1989, and
Noting the international standards contained in the Indigenous and Tribal Populations
Convention and Recommendation, 1957, and
Recalling the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International
Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil
and Political Rights, and the many international instruments on the prevention of
discrimination, and
Considering that the developments which have taken place in international law since 1957,
as well as developments in the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples in all regions of
the world, have made it appropriate to adopt new international standards on the subject
with a view to removing the assimilationist orientation of the earlier standards, and
Recognising the aspirations of these peoples to exercise control over their own
institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their
identities, languages and religions, within the framework of the States in which they live,
and
Noting that in many parts of the world these peoples are unable to enjoy their fundamental
human rights to the same degree as the rest of the population of the States within which
they live, and that their laws, values, customs and perspectives have often been eroded,
and
Calling attention to the distinctive contributions of indigenous and tribal peoples to the
cultural diversity and social and ecological harmony of humankind and to international co-
operation and understanding, and
Noting that the following provisions have been framed with the co-operation of the
United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the United
Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the World Health
Organisation, as well as of the Inter-American Indian Institute, at appropriate levels and in
their respective fields, and that it is proposed to continue this co-operation in promoting
and securing the application of these provisions, and
Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the partial revision
of the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107), which is the fourth
item on the agenda of the session, and
Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention
revising the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957;
adopts this twenty-seventh day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-
nine the following Convention, which may be cited as the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
Convention, 1989:

PART I. GENERAL POLICY

Article I 1.
This Convention applies to:

(a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;

(b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

2. Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply.

3. The use of the term "peoples" in this Convention shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law.

Article 2

1. Governments shall have the responsibility for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, co-ordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these peoples and to guarantee respect for their integrity.

2. Such action shall include measures for:

(a) ensuring that members of these peoples benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population;

(b) promoting the full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions;

(c) assisting the members of the peoples concerned to eliminate socio-economic gaps that may exist between indigenous and other members of the national community, in a manner compatible with their aspirations and ways of life.

Article 3

1. Indigenous and tribal peoples shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and fundamental freedoms without hindrance or discrimination. The provisions of the Convention shall be applied without discrimination to male and female members of these peoples.

2. No form of force or coercion shall be used in violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples concerned, including the rights contained in this Convention.

Article 4

1. Special measures shall be adopted as appropriate for safeguarding the persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and environment of the peoples concerned.

2. Such special measures shall not be contrary to the freely-expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

3. enjoyment of the general rights of citizenship, without discrimination, shall not be prejudiced in any way by such special measures.

Article 5
In applying the provisions of this Convention:

(a) the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognised and protected, and due account shall be taken of the nature of the problems which face them both as groups and as individuals;
(b) the integrity of the values, practices and institutions of these peoples shall be respected;
(c) policies aimed at mitigating the difficulties experienced by these peoples in facing new conditions of life and work shall be adopted, with the participation and co-operation of the peoples affected.

Article 6

1. In applying the provisions of this Convention, governments shall: (a) consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly; (b) establish means by which these peoples can freely participate, to at least the same extent as other sectors of the population, at all levels of decision making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programmes which concern them; (c) establish means for the full development of these peoples' own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose. 2. The consultations carried out in application of this Convention shall be undertaken, in good faith and in a form appropriate to the circumstances, with the objective of achieving agreement or consent to the proposed measures. Article 7 1. The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly. 2. The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development at areas they inhabit. Special projects for development of the areas in question shall also be so designed as to promote such improvement. 3. Governments shall ensure that, whenever appropriate, studies are carried out, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact on them of planned development activities. The results of these studies shall be considered as fundamental criteria for the implementation of these activities. 4. Governments shall take measures, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to protect and preserve the environment of the territories they inhabit. Article 8 1. In applying national laws and regulations to the peoples concerned, due regard shall be had to their customs or customary laws. 2. These peoples shall have the right to retain their own customs and institutions, where these are not incompatible with fundamental rights defined by the national legal system and with internationally recognised human rights. Procedures shall be established, whenever necessary, to resolve conflicts which may arise in the application of this principle. 3. The application of paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall not prevent members of these peoples from exercising the rights granted to all citizens and from assuming the corresponding duties. Article 9 1. To the extent compatible with the national legal system and internationally recognised human rights, the methods customarily practised by the peoples concerned for dealing with offences committed by their members shall be
respected. 2. The customs of these peoples in regard to penal matters shall be taken into consideration by the authorities and courts dealing with such cases. Article 10 1. In imposing penalties laid down by general law on members of these peoples account shall be taken of their economic, social and cultural characteristics. 2. Preference shall be given to methods of punishment other than confinement in prison. Article 11 The exaction from members of the peoples concerned of compulsory personal services in any form, whether paid or unpaid, shall be prohibited and punishable by law, except in cases prescribed by law for all citizens. Article 12 The peoples concerned shall be safeguarded against the abuse of their rights and shall be able to take legal proceedings, either individually or through their representative bodies, for the effective protection of these rights. Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of these peoples can understand and be understood in legal proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other effective means. PART II. LAND Article 13 1. In applying the provisions of this Part of the Convention governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship. 2. The use of the term "lands" in Articles 15 and 16 shall include the concept of territories, which covers the total environment of the areas which the peoples concerned occupy or otherwise use. Article 14 1. The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised. In addition, measures shall be taken in appropriate cases to safeguard the right of the peoples concerned to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities. Particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic peoples and shifting cultivators in this respect. 2. Governments shall take steps as necessary to identify the lands which the peoples concerned traditionally occupy, and to guarantee effective protection of their rights of ownership and possession. 3. Adequate procedures shall be established within the national legal system to resolve land claims by the peoples concerned. Article 15 1. The rights of the peoples concerned to the natural resources pertaining to their lands shall be specially safeguarded. These rights include the right of these peoples to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources. 2. In cases in which the State retains the ownership of mineral or sub-surface resources or rights to other resources pertaining to lands, governments shall establish or maintain procedures through which they shall consult these peoples, with a view to ascertaining whether and to what degree their interests would be prejudiced, before undertaking or permitting any programmes for the exploration or exploitation of such resources pertaining to their lands. The peoples concerned shall wherever possible participate in the benefits of such activities, and shall receive fair compensation for any damages which they may sustain as a result of such activities. Article 16 1. Subject to the following paragraphs of this Article, the peoples concerned shall not be removed from the lands which they occupy. 2. Where the relocation of these peoples is considered necessary as an exceptional measure, such relocation shall take place only with their free and informed consent. Where their consent cannot be obtained, such relocation shall take place only following appropriate procedures established by national laws and regulations, including public inquiries where appropriate, which provide the opportunity for effective representation of the peoples concerned. 3. Whenever possible, these peoples shall have the right to return to their traditional lands, as soon as the grounds for relocation cease to exist. 4. When such return is not possible, as determined by agreement or, in the absence of such agreement, through appropriate procedures, these peoples shall be provided in all
possible cases with lands of quality and legal status at least equal to that of the lands previously occupied by them, suitable to provide for their present needs and future development. Where the peoples concerned express a preference for compensation in money or in kind, they shall be so compensated under appropriate guarantees. 5. Persons thus relocated shall be fully compensated for any resulting loss or injury. Article 17 1. Procedures established by the peoples concerned for the transmission of land rights among members of these peoples shall be respected. 2. The peoples concerned shall be consulted whenever consideration is being given to their capacity to alienate their lands or otherwise transmit their rights outside their own community. 3. Persons not belonging to these peoples shall be prevented from taking advantage of their customs or of lack of understanding of the laws on the part of their members to secure the ownership, possession or use of land belonging to them. Article 18 Adequate penalties shall be established by law for unauthorised intrusion upon, or use of, the lands of the peoples concerned, and governments shall take measures to prevent such offences. Article 19 National agrarian programmes shall secure to the peoples concerned treatment equivalent to that accorded to other sectors of the population with regard to: (a) the provision of more land for these peoples when they have not the area necessary for providing the essentials of a normal existence, or for any possible increase in their numbers; (b) the provision of the means required to promote the development of the lands which these peoples already possess. PART III. RECRUITMENT AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT Article 20 1. Governments shall, within the framework of national laws and regulations, and in co-operation with the peoples concerned, adopt special measures to ensure the effective protection with regard to recruitment and conditions of employment of workers belonging to these peoples, to the extent that they are not effectively protected by laws applicable to workers in general. 2. Governments shall do everything possible to prevent any discrimination between workers belonging to the peoples concerned and other workers, in particular as regards: (a) admission to employment, including skilled employment, as well as measures for promotion and advancement; (b) equal remuneration for work of equal value; (c) medical and social assistance, occupational safety and health, all social security benefits and any other occupationally related benefits, and housing; (d) the right of association and freedom for all lawful trade union activities, and the right to conclude collective agreements with employers or employers' organisations. 3. The measures taken shall include measures to ensure: (a) that workers belonging to the peoples concerned, including seasonal, casual and migrant workers in agricultural and other employment, as well as those employed by labour contractors, enjoy the protection afforded by national law and practice to other such workers in the same sectors, and that they are fully informed of their rights under labour legislation and of the means of redress available to them; (b) that workers belonging to these peoples are not subjected to working conditions hazardous to their health, in particular through exposure to pesticides or other toxic substances; (c) that workers belonging to these peoples are not subjected to coercive recruitment systems, including bonded labour and other forms of debt servitude; (d) that workers belonging to these peoples enjoy equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment for men and women, and protection from sexual harassment. 4. Particular attention shall be paid to the establishment of adequate labour inspection services in areas where workers belonging to the peoples concerned undertake wage employment, in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Part of this Convention. PART IV. VOCATIONAL TRAINING, HANDICRAFTS AND RURAL INDUSTRIES Article 21 Members of the peoples concerned shall enjoy opportunities at least equal to those of other citizens in respect of
vocational training measures. Article 22 1. Measures shall be taken to promote the voluntary participation of members of the peoples concerned in vocational training programmes of general application. 2. Whenever existing programmes of vocational training of general application do not meet the special needs of the peoples concerned, governments shall, with the participation of these peoples, ensure the provision of special training programmes and facilities. 3. Any special training programmes shall be based on the economic environment, social and cultural conditions and practical needs of the peoples concerned. Any studies made in this connection shall be carried out in cooperation with these peoples, who shall be consulted on the organisation and operation of such programmes. Where feasible, these peoples shall progressively assume responsibility for the organisation and operation of such special training programmes, if they so decide.

Article 23 1. Handicrafts, rural and community-based industries, and subsistence economy and traditional activities of the peoples concerned, such as hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering, shall be recognised as important factors in the maintenance of their cultures and in their economic self-reliance and development. Governments shall, with the participation of these people and whenever appropriate, ensure that these activities are strengthened and promoted. 2. Upon the request of the peoples concerned, appropriate technical and financial assistance shall be provided wherever possible, taking into account the traditional technologies and cultural characteristics of these peoples, as well as the importance of sustainable and equitable development.

PART V. SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTH

Article 24 Social security schemes shall be extended progressively to cover the peoples concerned, and applied without discrimination against them. Article 25 1. Governments shall ensure that adequate health services are made available to the peoples concerned, or shall provide them with resources to allow them to design and deliver such services under their own responsibility and control, so that they may enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. 2. Health services shall, to the extent possible, be community-based. These services shall be planned and administered in co-operation with the peoples concerned and take into account their economic, geographic, social and cultural conditions as well as their traditional preventive care, healing practices and medicines. 3. The health care system shall give preference to the training and employment of local community health workers, and focus on primary health care while maintaining strong links with other levels of health care services. 4. The provision of such health services shall be co-ordinated with other social, economic and cultural measures in the country.

PART VI. EDUCATION AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Article 26 Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of the peoples concerned have the opportunity to acquire education at all levels on at least an equal footing with the rest of the national community. Article 27 1. Education programmes and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented in co-operation with them to address their special needs, and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations. 2. The competent authority shall ensure the training of members of these peoples and their involvement in the formulation and implementation of education programmes, with a view to the progressive transfer of responsibility for the conduct of these programmes to these peoples as appropriate. 3. In addition, governments shall recognise the right of these peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources shall be provided for this purpose. Article 28 1. Children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most
commonly used by the group to which they belong. When this is not practicable, the competent authorities shall undertake consultations with these peoples with a view to the adoption of measures to achieve this objective. 2. Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the country. 3. Measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the indigenous languages of the peoples concerned. Article 29 The imparting of general knowledge and skills that will help children belonging to the peoples concerned to participate fully and on an equal footing in their own community and in the national community shall be an aim of education for these peoples. Article 30 1. Governments shall adopt measures appropriate to the traditions and cultures of the peoples concerned, to make known to them their rights and duties, especially in regard to labour, economic opportunities, education and health matters, social welfare and their rights deriving from this Convention. 2. If necessary, this shall be done by means of written translations and through the use of mass communications in the languages of these peoples. Article 31 Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbor in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples. PART VII. CONTACTS AND CO-OPERATION ACROSS BORDERS Article 32 Governments shall take appropriate measures, including by means of international agreements, to facilitate contacts and cooperation between indigenous and tribal peoples across borders, including activities in the economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental fields. PART VIII. ADMINISTRATION Article 33 1. The governmental authority responsible for the matters covered in this Convention shall ensure that agencies or other appropriate mechanisms exist to administer the programmes affecting the peoples concerned, and shall ensure that they have the means necessary for the proper fulfillment of the functions assigned to them. 2. These programmes shall include: (a) the planning, co-ordination, execution and evaluation, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, of the measures provided for in this Convention; (b) the proposing of legislative and other measures to the competent authorities and supervision of the application of the measures taken, in co-operation with the peoples concerned. PART IX. GENERAL PROVISIONS Article 34 The nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Convention shall be determined in a flexible manner, having regard to the conditions characteristic of each country. Article 35 The application of the provisions of this Convention shall not adversely affect rights and benefits of the peoples concerned pursuant to other Conventions and Recommendations, international instruments, treaties, or national laws, awards, custom or agreements. PART X. FINAL PROVISIONS Article 36 This Convention revises the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957. Article 37 The formal ratifications of this Convention shall be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration. Article 38 1. This Convention shall be binding only upon those Members of the International Labour Organisation whose ratifications have been registered with the Director-General. 2. It shall come into force twelve months after the date on which the ratifications of two Members have been registered with the Director-General. 3. Thereafter, this Convention shall come into force for any Member twelve months after the date on which its ratification has been registered. Article 39 1. A Member which has ratified this Convention may denounce it after the expiration of ten years from the date on which the Convention first comes into force, by
an act communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration. Such denunciation shall not take effect until one year after the date on which it is registered. 2. Each Member which has ratified this Convention and which does not, within the year following the expiration of the period of ten years mentioned in the preceding paragraph, exercise the right of denunciation provided for in this Article, will be bound for another period of ten years and, thereafter, may denounce this Convention at the expiration of each period of ten years under the terms provided for in this Article.

Article 40 1. The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall notify all Members of the International Labour Organisation of the registration of all ratifications and denunciations communicated to him by the Members of the Organisation. 2. When notifying the Members of the Organisation of the registration of the second ratification communicated to him, the Director-General shall draw the attention of the Members of the Organisation to the date upon which the Convention will come into force. Article 41 The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations full particulars of all ratifications and acts of denunciation registered by him in accordance with the provisions of the preceding Articles. Article 42 At such times as it may consider necessary the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall present to the General Conference a report on the working of this Convention and shall examine the desirability of placing on the agenda of the Conference the question of its revision in whole or in part. Article 43 1. Should the Conference adopt a new Convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new Convention otherwise provides - (a) the ratification by a Member of the new revising Convention shall ipso jure involve the immediate denunciation of this Convention, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 39 above, if and when the new revising Convention shall have come into force; (b) as from the date when the new revising Convention comes into force this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification by the Members. 2. This Convention shall in any case remain in force in its actual form and content for those Members which have ratified it but have not ratified the revising Convention.

Article 44 The English and French versions of the text of this Convention are equally authoritative.
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Abbreviations

ISEAS - Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
JFMSM - Journal of the Federated Malay States Museum
JMBRAS - Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society
JSBRAS - Journal of the Straits Branch Royal Asiatic Society
JRAS - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JHEOA - Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli
OUP - Oxford University press
Summary

Since the beginning of the 1980s several indigenous-minority groups, in the social hinterlands of mainland and insular SEA, began organising themselves in various socio-political struggles of sorts. These groups of people are commonly recognised as ‘indigenous minorities’ (or ‘Other Indigenous’ in official statistics) in numerical as well as in social terms. The latter indicates that they are demographically insignificant in their respective countries and as a result politically quite ineffectual and economically peripheral.

Their struggles are marked by:
- claims for cultural-political
- rejection of alliance with militant, anti-state, groups
- a global dimension in terms of the language used in their campaigns, their communication and solidarity links
- involvement of cultural, social, NGO, religion-based activists and social researchers
- a marked gender dimension to their strategies

How do we analyse and understand these indigenous-minority struggles? This is the central question of this research.

This question is addressed in the context of the Orang Asli (Aboriginal Peoples) struggles of West Malaysia. This study argues that the Orang Asli struggles are initiatives originating from and generated by circumstances within as well as beyond specific and concrete indigenous localities. The complex interplay of cultural-political dynamics surrounding the struggle are significantly constituting and changing indigenous relations and social identity. Local indigenous groups are reclaiming their history and tradition as current political strategies in their everyday struggle over the rights to land, resources and meanings. In other words, the indigenous movement is about a cultural-political struggle that is shaping and is being shaped by indigenous social relations.

How we tell the story of the Orang Asli struggle is an integral component of the story itself. In other words, how we conceptualize and represent the changing social relations of the Orang Asli vis-a-vis the struggle need to be scrutinized as much as the "raw data" of their situation. Moreover, the Orang Asli are not the only indigenous people involved in these types of struggle concerning land. Thus, while this research concentrates on the experiences of the Orang Asli there is a wider ambition. The more far-reaching aim of this study is to contribute to developing a methodology to study the processes of contemporary political struggles of indigenous peoples.
Samenvatting

Sinds het begin van de jaren tachtig zijn in het achterland van Zuid en Zuidoost Azië inheemse minderheden zich sociaal en politiek gaan organiseren. Deze groepen worden gewoonlijk aangeduid als ‘inheemse minderheden’ (of als ‘andere inheemsen’ in de overheidsstatistiek). De term heeft betrekking zowel op hun aantal als op hun status: inheemse groepen worden demografisch als onbelangrijk beschouwd, hebben politiek geen invloed en zijn economisch van marginale betekenis.

Hun strijd wordt gekenmerkt door:
- aanspraak op culturele en politieke eigenheid;
- verwerping van banden met militante, anti-regering groepen;
- een mondiale dimensie in termen van taalgebruik in hun campagne’s, hun communicatie en solidariteit in het algemeen;
- betrokkenheid van de zijde van culturele, sociale, NGO-georiënteerde, religieus gestemde activisten en van sociale onderzoekers;
- een uitgesproken gender dimensie in hun strategieën.

Hoe moeten we de strijd van deze inheemse minderheden begrijpen en analyseren? Dit is de vraag die aan dit proefschrift ten grondslag ligt.

De vraag wordt beantwoord in de context van de Orang Asali (Inheemse Vollken) van West Maleisië. Betoogd wordt dat de strijd van de Orang Asli is ontstaan onder invloed van omstandigheden van binnenuit maar ook van buiten de concrete inheemse gemeenschappen. Het ingewikkeld samenspel van cultuur-politieke factoren die de strijd kenmerken geven vorm aan veranderende inheemse relaties en sociale identiteit. Locale inheemse groepen eisen hun eigen geschiedenis en traditie op als politieke strategieën in hun dagelijkse strijd om land, hulpbronnen en betekenis. Met andere woorden, de inheemse beweging is een cultureel-politieke strijd die door inheemse sociale relaties wordt vormgegeven maar die omgekeerd die relaties ook een nieuwe vorm geeft.

Hoe we het verhaal van de Orang Asli strijd vertellen is een integraal onderdeel van het verhaal zelf. Hoe we de veranderende sociale relaties van de Orang Asli conceptualiseren en weergeven in het licht van de strijd moet daarom niet minder bekritiseerd worden dan de zogenaamde ‘feiten’ die hun situatie kenmerken.

De Orang Asli zijn niet het enige inheemse volk dat betrokken is in een dergelijke strijd om land. Hoewel dit proefschrift zich concentreert op de ervaringen van de Orang Asli heeft de studie een verdergaande pretentie: het uiteindelijke doel van dit onderzoek is een bijdrage te leveren tot de ontwikkeling van een algemene methodologie om de processen van hedendaagse politieke strijd van inheemse groepen te bestuderen.
Summary in Semai

Sejak zaman 80'an lagi jeoi seng-oi mai asal ku negeri-negeri timur laut asia bergelut kateh perjuangan sosial. Seng-oi adeh biasanya bi pangil sebagai kumpulan macok mai serag. Kebiasaan juga golongan adeh terpinggir baik rong segi ekonomi, fizikal juga politik.

Harok buleh hie faham perjuangan kumpulan macok adeh? Soalan adeh menjadi tajuk utama penyelidikan adeh.

Pertanyaan adeh bi tumpukan nu golongan mai serag (Mai Asal) Semenanjung Malaysia dan bagai harok enai adeh nai perjuangkan hak-hak teik. Kajian adeh berpandangan bahawa masalah/perjuangan mai serag timbul samada ada rong isu kateh dan juga isu-isu luaran. Perjuangan adeh juga merobah identiti dan juga hubungan mai serag. Sesetengah kumpulan mai serang nai gunakan faktor sejarah dan juga tradisi sebagai asas stategi enai untuk memperjuangkan hak teik, dan juga sumber-sumber lain. Adeh sebenarnya, pendekatan perjuangan politik-budaya yang mengacu dan diacu ya hubungan kumpulan mai serag.
