RESEARCHING SOCIETY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN SARAWAK
RESEARCHING
SOCIETY AND
SOCIAL RELATIONS IN
SARAWAK

EDITORS
KAMSIAH ALI
SHARIFAH S. AHMAD

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
Kota Samarahan
The edited volume on recent studies on Sarawak was part of an Adjunct Professor Series organised by the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). After few discussions it was decided that a title Researching Society and Social Relations is general enough to capture the multiplicities of research issues and challenges raised in the chapters. All the chapters here have been presented at a two-day colloquium held from 26 to 27 February 2014 in the Faculty. The editors would like to express their appreciation to Professor Abdul Halim Ali and Associate Professor Dr Ling How Kee who were present at the colloquium and were supportive enough to listen and dispense helpful advice to the presenters, all in the spirit of learning and exchange. Finally, we wish to extend our gratitude to the contributors who responded to our requests with good grace and efficiency.

Kamsiah Ali
Sharifah S. Ahmad
2016
# CONTENTS

**Acknowledgements**  
ix

**List of Abbreviations and Illustrations**  
xi

**Notes on Contributors**  
xiii

**Introduction**  
xix

1 **Keperluan hidup pesalah kanak-kanak di pusat pemulihan.**  
   *Kamsiah Ali dan Norba'yah Abdul Kadir*  
   1

2 **Teaching gamelan in silence?**  
   *Faizah Mas'ud and Nur Afifah V. Abdullah*  
   21

3 **Pemberijaga ‘Miss World’: Anjakan peranan jagaan kesihatan.**  
   *Zamri Hassan*  
   37

4 **Isu di sebalik ponteng dan keciciran pelajar sekolah.**  
   *Dolly Paul Carlo*  
   69
5 City migrants in but not of Kuching: A conceptual concern.
   Abdul Halim Ali 117

6 The impacts of bejalai on contemporary Iban women: A case of indai blues.
   Lucy Sebli 145

7 Will to order? Colonial reason in the 19th century Sarawak.
   Sharifah S. Ahmad 175

8 Kesan pembangunan tanah terhadap strategi kehidupan masyarakat Seping di Ulu Belaga, Sarawak.
   Dayang Hajrayati Awg Kassim 191

9 Being Malaysian: Identifying characteristics.
   Su-Hie Ting 217

10 Isu bak kut teh dalam media sosial: Sejauh manakah tahap toleransi mahasiswa di Sarawak?
   Malia Taibi, Siti Haslina Hussin dan Awg Ideris Awg Daud 245

11 The recuperators and ragpickers: A case study of Taman BDC, Kuching.
   Bemen Win Keong Wong, Siew Cing Teo, Siti Khatijah Zamhari and Kiky Kirina Abdillah 277

Index 289
ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS  Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AS    Amerika Syarikat
CBR  Community Based Rehabilitation
CSSR Colonial Social Science Research Council
CU  Cultural Unit
DFID Department For International Development
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICA  Immigrations & Checkpoints Authority Of Singapore
IDS  Institute Of Development Studies
IDS Institute of Development Studies
JAKIM Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia
JARING Joint Advanced Integrated Networking
JKM Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat
KPM Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia
MBKS Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan
MCA Malaysia Chinese Association
MIMOS Malaysian Institute Of Microelectronic Systems
NCL Native Customary Land
NCR Native Customary Right
NEP New Economic Policy
PITWITS Persatuan Ibu Tunggal Wilayah Tengah Sarawak
PL Provisional License
PWD People With Disability
RTM Radio Television Malaysia
STB Sekolah Tunas Bakti
UMNO United Malays National Organisation
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization
UNHCR United Nation Convention Of The Right Of A Child
UNIMAS Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
WHO World Health Organisation
ILLUSTRATIONS

Tables

Jadual 8.1 Strategi kehidupan penduduk Seping di Long Koyan daripada pelbagai sumber
Jadual 8.2 Perbezaan strategi kehidupan penduduk Seping di Long Koyan sebelum dan selepas tahun 1980an
Jadual 8.3 Isi rumah dan hasil pertanian yang diperolehi
Jadual 8.4 Kombinasi strategi kehidupan bagi isi rumah di Long Koyan
Table 9.1 Importance of characteristics of being Malaysian as rated by Malay, Indigenous group of Sarawak and Sabah, Indian and Chinese participants
Jadual 10.1 Tahap pegangan agama
Jadual 10.2 Jenis Sekolah Menengah
Jadual 10.3 Latar Belakang Responden dalam Temubual Berstruktur
Jadual 10.4 Tahap Toleransi Mahasiswa
Jadual 10.5 Kedudukan Tahap Toleransi Mahasiswa mengikut Pernyataan
Jadual 10.6 Tahap Toleransi Mahasiswa Islam dan Bukan Islam
Jadual 10.7 Tahap Toleransi Mahasiswa mengikut Jenis Sekolah Menengah

Figures

Carta 8.1 Peratus tahap pendidikan kaum Seping di Long Koyan
Rajah 10.1 Gambar Alvin dan Vivian yang telah dimuat naik dalam laman media sosial yang merupakan bahan utama dalam kajian ini
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Abdul Halim Ali** held the Chair of Nusantara Studies at the Institute of East Asian Studies in UNIMAS from 2003-2009. From 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013, he was appointed as an Adjunct Professor to the Faculty of Social Sciences UNIMAS. He is now retired and lives in Shah Alam.

**Awang Ideris bin Awang Daud** is a lecturer in the field of Industrial Relations and Labour Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UNIMAS. Educated in Resource Economics from UPM, and Human Resource and Industrial Relations from University of Minnesota, USA, Awang Ideris has a vast teaching experience of about 20 years and had taught many courses in Economics, Human Resource and Industrial Relations. Currently he is involved in research on migrant workers, persons with disability, new media and social issues, and ethnic Malay in Sarawak. He is also working on a book entitled *Nepali Migrant Workers in Malaysia*.

**Bemen Wong** is a lecturer at the Department of Development Studies. He received his M.A from the University of Adelaide.

**Dayang Hajryrayati Binti Awg Kassim** is a lecturer in Anthropology and Sociology programme at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Dayang completed her MPhil at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and her undergraduate studies in Universiti Malaya. Her research interests lie in the area of cultural anthropology, rural livelihood and indigenous knowledge.

Faizah Mas’ud is a lecturer in Social Work Studies Programme at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Her academic interests are on topics including family and child welfare, and social welfare policy. Her recent publication includes: Faizah Mas’ud. (2013). Bridging self and the research, researching and communicating. In Gusni Saat, Said. S. & Ahmad. S. S (Eds.), Issues in Development in Malaysia and Nigeria: Multi-Dimensional Approaches (pp. 165-178). Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS.

Hjh Siti Haslina Hussin is a senior lecturer attached to the Communication Department at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UNIMAS. Graduated with BA in English from Loyola University of Chicago, USA and MA in Applied Communication from Coventry University, United Kingdom, Siti Haslina has been teaching the undergraduate courses including Principles and Practices of Public Relations, Corporate Communication Campaign Strategies and Interpersonal Communication. Currently she is working on a book on interpersonal communication theories with other lecturers in the Communication Department.

Kamsiah Ali is a senior lecturer in Social Work Studies Programme at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Her academic interests are on topics including Criminology and Sociology. The most recent publication includes: Kamsiah Ali. (2013). Framing juvenile delinquents as the pathological individual. In Gusni Saat, Said. S. & Ahmad. S. S (Eds.), Issues in Development in Malaysia and Nigeria: Multi-Dimensional Approaches (pp. 125-144). Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS.

Kiky Kirina Abdillah is a lecturer in at Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, UNIMAS. She graduated from her Masters in Social Science (Development Science) UKM in 2013. Her
Lucy Sebli is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She is with the Department of Politics and International Relations of Faculty of Social Sciences. She is very active in a research on women and development in Sarawak especially on Single Mothers and Changes in the Structure of the bilik-family among the Ibans in Sarawak. In addition, She has also written on The Origin of Patron-Clientship in Sarawak (Sarawak Museum Journal, No. 86, December 2008); a book chapter in Factionalism in Iban Politics (UNIMAS Press, 2013) and Easy marriage, easy divorce: Adat and the rise of divorce amongst the Iban. In For Better or Worse: Marriage and Family in Sarawak, (ed). HEW Cheng Sim. 2015, Whiting & Birch Ltd. London; and several working series paper including, on Bejalai and its impact on Contemporary Iban Women; Hala Tuju Politik Iban di Sarawak and Easy Marriage, Easy Divorce: the Flaws of Iban Adat.

Malia Taibi is a lecturer with the Communication Department at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UNIMAS. Graduated from UiTM Shah Alam with a Bachelor of Mass Communication (majoring in Journalism) and MA in Communication and Media Studies from Coventry University, United Kingdom, Malia has vast working experience as a journalist and an editor with local newspapers before joining the academic profession. She has taught various courses including News Writing, Principles and Practices of Journalism, Corporate Publishing, Broadcasting Communication
and Communication and Society. Currently she involved in research on new media and social issues and is working on a book on interpersonal communication theories with other lecturers in the Communication Department.

**Nor Ba’yah Abdul Kadir** is a senior lecturer of School of Psychology and Human Development at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her research interests are on vulnerability to clinical depression among women, well-being and adult attachment styles. Her recent publication is: Nor Ba’yah Abdul Kadir. (2013). Insecure attachment style as a vulnerability factor: Recent findings in a community-based study of Malay single and married mothers. In *Psychiatry Research*, 210(3), 919-924.

**Nur Afifah Vanitha binti Abdullah** (Ph.D) is a senior lecturer at the Drama and Theatre Program, Department of Performing Arts and Technology Production, Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Nur Afifah has carried out research on the Malay Opera of Sarawak since 2002 and has completed her Ph.D dissertation entitled “Development and Change in the Bangsawan (Malay Opera) Performance in Sarawak, 1914-2004” in 2009. Currently her research interest is in the area of performance studies which focuses on indigenous and Malay traditional theatre, inclusion of the disabled in performance, and experimental performance.

**Sharifah S. Ahmad** is a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Her academic interests are in cultural studies and post-colonialism. Her most recent publication includes: Sharifah S. Ahmad. (2013). A question of ‘difference’ in autobiography, in Gusni Saat, Said. S. & Ahmad.
S. S (Eds.), *Issues in Development in Malaysia and Nigeria: Multi-Dimensional Approaches*. Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS.

**Siew Cing Teo** received her Bachelor of Social Sciences from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2013 and currently works as a Business Development Executive in Kuching, Sarawak.

**Siti Khatijah Zamhari** is a lecturer at the Department of Development Studies. She graduated from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in 2009 and continued her studies at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) where she received her M.A in 2013. Her research interest concerns on reducing the impact of waste generation on society and exploring household waste management practices. Apart from that, she also interested in rural development, environment and society and urban studies.

**Su-Hie Ting** is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Language Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. She graduated from University of Queensland with a Ph.D in Applied Linguistics in 2001. She has published in these areas: language use and attitudes, academic writing and strategic competence. She has recently published: Ting, S. H., & Rose, L. (2014). Ethnic language use and ethnic identity for Sarawak indigenous groups in Malaysia, in *Oceanic Linguistics*, 53(1) pp. 92-109.

**Zamri Hassan** is currently a senior lecturer in the Social Work Program of the Faculty of Social Sciences in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. He obtained his doctoral degree from the University of London. His areas of specialization are in health and social care in particular, HIV/AIDS related issues, virtual community and community development.
Social research constitutes the most visible value of practicality of social science. Since social science was conceived in the middle half of the 18th century, the discipline has been in all intent and purposes practical that seeks to raise problems in society and offer solutions to the problems. The problems identified at the outset of the Industrial Revolution such as labour, housing, health, unemployment, security, environment and social illness continue to be the topics for researchers in the current times.

While the problems remained true today, their concepts differ as one may perceived at the level of epistemology and method, namely the nature of the problem and the ways of investigating them. At the level of episteme, social research has witnessed varying degree of adaptation and competition, between positive approach of explanation (eklaren) and the interpretive approach of understanding (verstehen) or the combination of both. The philosophy underlines the different approaches pertaining to the limit of knowledge, in other words, the extent that knowledge can be accepted as true and objective. While Durkheimian school argued that society can only be studied as observable facts,
Weberian proponents would be more sympathetic to the role of motivation, desires and value-system as driving forces in society. What these differences amounted to points to the existence of different paradigm in thinking and seeing problem in society. To illustrate, in *Suicide*, Emile Durkheim found that not one action however personal that might be, can be completely free from social relations. What he saw as a problem was not the suicide *per se*, but the misrecognition of suicide as private matter that detached individual from its society. From Durkheim’s study, one can send a message to the policy-makers to investigate the factors and conditions that may lead to the problem, thereby eliminating the root-causes *in lieu* of the problem. From his analysis, one detects a causality principle underpinned his observation. The causal relations between external factors and individual actions provide powerful explanatory tools that appeal to the logic and observation of the investigator. Such thinking and method continue to dominate social research today.

While Durkheim study had sent ripple effects to the social science in the continent, there was a critical reception on the value of observation as the only reliable source of knowledge. What about individual intention, needs, spirits? Aren’t they too creating actions that have social significance? Here, Max Weber tried to demonstrate the role of religious spirit in creating a condition for successful entrepreneurship. Religious spirit fostered by Protestantism in the minds and hearts of its subscribers proved important to the flourishing of industry and merchants in certain parts of the Continent and the United States. By guaranteeing its members that industriousness would bring one closer to spiritual fulfilment became a motivation for a Protestant to strive for successful worldly activities as tokens for their journey to the hereafter. His study shows the value of depth to enrich analysis of
society, and not simply relying on the sophistication of patterns, trends and statistics as explanatory tools. Nevertheless, both Durkheim and Weber are committed to the vision of social science as practical science of society, with applied research as the bedrock for achieving such aim.

While the positivist and interpretivist orientation continue to dominate the orientation of social research, a recent paradigm has garnered considerable attention, followers and critiques too. The paradigm can be traced to the social and political upheavals in the 1960s that has witnessed new form of oppositional and anti-hegemonic cherished on the ideals of difference, indeterminacy and subjectivity. The politics and the intellectual tendency in the new paradigm is encapsulated in a term deconstructivism.

The paradigm urged for a rethinking of grand theories and designs in social sciences such as that of positivism and interpretivism. The problem with these grand designs was their unwavering faith in the rationality and individuality of subject. Individual is not an abstraction, and possess neither self-knowledge nor independent will. Rationality is imposed, so does our knowledge about it. They are part of the Enlightenment values created by European philosophes that announced a break from the theological-mystical orientation in politics, knowledge and society of the ancien régime. The values were explicit objection to the previous way of knowing and authority, making them far from being objective or value-free. By masquerading these values as scientific, the Enlightenment tradition found themselves in relentless contradiction, for example between their value for emancipation and the reality of exploitation and the value of progress and the reality of underdevelopment. This puts social science in an awkward position, being inextricably bound up with the history and visionary of the Enlightenment promoters.
The tradition of rationalism in social science was put under scrutiny, while grand theories that promote evolutionary progress such as modernisation thesis was dissected to lay bare its Eurocentric values.

As a result to the deconstructivist juggernaut, social research takes a form of revisionism. The early studies, especially done with the confidence of positive knowledge, are re-examined and recast in the light of the new episteme of difference while hybrids of tools from various fields and disciplines are appropriated to enrich understanding and appreciation of society in multi-faceted characters. Research becomes multi-disciplinary, with neo-, post- and critical-, become appendage to the existing paradigms used to reflect the revisionist orientation.

The new development has its positive outcomes. It opens up the exploration of new identities, new histories, new agencies and new voices that are unrecognised, unfitted or un-admissible under the previous episteme. A prime example of a study that reveals a new form of subjectivity is by Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. In this work, Foucault explored the system of punishment in the modern nation-state that predicated on the belief that individuals with criminal behaviour can be regulated and reformed. Therefore, prison system was designed with the most comprehensive surveillance technology that aimed for inmates to self-regulate their behaviour under the ‘all-seeing eyes’. The system regulated the behaviour to the precision of time, activity and movement as expected in all inmates. What his analysis tries to show is with the increasing knowledge of technology and human behaviour resulted in the more successful ways of prescribing, monitoring and controlling individual and social action. In this sense, knowledge becomes less about solving problem than about enforcing more and more control in the most effective manners.
Foucault’s study offers a compelling critique to the liberal tradition in social science and has influenced certain chapters in the current volume.

**Social Science Research in Malaysia**

Of late, social science research in Malaysia is typically informed by policy-making imperative. This is not surprising, as most of the available and attainable research grants are offered by the government agencies. This does not mean that social researches are not fundamental in terms of generating theory and original contribution to the corpus of knowledge. However, most of social researchers of fundamental nature are typically a product of PhD studies that are done in a period between 3 – 5 years, while a funded project takes a maximum of two years followed by a possible publication. Given the difference in time-frame has imposed foreseeable limit to researchers to allow adequate attention to reflect on epistemological discussion that characterised fundamental research. As a result, social research becomes result-oriented, more generative than substantive in nature.

There are researches done in the early 1970s and 1980s that were remained classics to this day, as they continue to illuminate crucial and persistent issue in society. Syed Husin Ali (1975) *Malay Peasant Society and Leadership* introduced the concept of class to the understanding of Malaysian society in the village and urban areas. The triple-structures of leadership consisted of landlord, party official and government machinery have further widen the income inequality in the village and until the web of leadership pattern is disentangle, the situation is most likely to remain. Another study further reinforced some of the observation earlier. Shamsul Amri's
From British to Bumiputera Rule (1986) showed the continuing role of party-government machineries in a Malay village. Through the New Economic Policy (NEP), the role became elaborated and systematic. The party-government machineries are playing roles in dispensing subsidies and contracts in exchange for political support. Thus, they foster a network of patronage that brings an ever-increasing dependency for government supports and rewards.

In Sarawak, according to most cited version, social science research began in 1950 Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSR) published a report about the prospect for social science research in Sarawak. The report was based on a reconnaissance survey carried out for a period of four months from early June to the end of October 1948. The survey aimed at exploring the potential areas and topics for future socio-economic research in Sarawak. The Council appointed Edmund R. Leach, a social anthropologist, a student and an associate of Raymond Firth (the first secretary of CSSR), to carry out a field survey in Sarawak. The objectives of the survey were twofold. First, was to provide instruction for planners and administrators about the functioning of economy, education, agriculture, health and local government. Leach presented the planners with a complex picture of society under the rule of foreign power, stating with urgency the need to explore the changes involved in the imposition of modern economic and political domination to the multi-racial native/traditional communities. The current contexts must therefore be studied in conjunction with the traditional values and practices, some of which were yet to be radically affected by the western contacts and encounters.

The second objective, closely related to the first, was to establish the practical link between the sociological knowledge with the actual practice of administration. Leach tried to strike a balance between the purely academic pursuit and the practical
fruits of the serious labour as he noted in several places in the report. He argued that social studies of the natives can provide the planners with a grounded and contextualised perspective which will greatly assist in planning for a suitable form of development. Unlike the previous tendency in replicating development model from colonies elsewhere in the Empire, local studies would be able to generate fundamental data, hence increasing the possibility for a successful planning and targets.

Shortly after the report publication, a slew of anthropological researchers had taken up interest in studying Sarawak, with names like Derek Freeman (1955), William Geddes (1954), Stephen Morris (1991) and Rodney Needham (1954) exploring topics and ethnic groups of Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau and Penan, respectively, as identified in the report. It has successfully carved the agenda and direction for future academic study grounded along the ethnic lines. This is what seems to be its main contribution both in terms of scientific progress and practicality for state administrators.

From the discussion on social science research in national and Sarawak contexts, one can identified the recurring imperative for practicality and policy-informed researches. The agenda for development is common for most post-colonial nations, in which economic development is closely intertwined with the question of national independence. It was believed that through economic wealth and development, a post-colonial nation can prove their worth and to be on equal standing along with the rest of the world. Social science is to assist in the vision by clarifying what the policy-makers intended to know so as to ensure development runs on its course without hindrance. Nevertheless, as evident in the chapters of the book, there remain researches committed to the values and visions in line with the conventional and new orientation of social science paradigms.
Organisation of the Chapters

There are eleven chapters in the volume written by academics in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The volume contained recent empirical research done on the theme of social relation in Sarawak. Some of the chapters are reflective in the sense that they revisiting former studies and raised new set of questions by applying new technique and conceptual constructs. The diverse orientation of the chapters points to the ongoing exploration of society from multidimensional perspectives in social science. They too remind us of the continuation of practical research that resonates with contemporary methodology and social concerns.

As indicated earlier, social science research since the early 1980s have consistently strive towards reviving the forgotten voices at the margin. While the tradition of social science has been one that was critical and anti-hegemonic, the assumption implicit in the researches done by colonial scholars and apologists was vexing and inclined towards power interest. The task now for scholars in the post-colonial nations is to rewrite those histories. To that end, the chapters here are responses to the invitation for emphatic and critical readings of the stories and perspectives of the (to borrow post-colonial term) muted subjects. This is the common theme that unites all the chapters in the volume.

The first chapter deals with the trainees in the rehabilitation school in Kuching. In the eyes of the society, the trainees who were sent to the institution were problematic and troublesome. Against this background of public perception, the authors have applied method that encouraged the trainees to “speak out” in order to obtain their version of story. It was no guessing that most of them talked about their pain and frustration that the institution
failed to understand their need and respond to them. From the carefully conducted interview, the authors offered suggestions about ways to improve the system in order for rehabilitation to succeed. The second chapter deals with the training of hearing disability. The authors have conducted a test study to see the feasibility of music therapy as a support for the disabled youth. The research on disability has been on the rise globally, partly as an effort to provide wider and equal access to disadvantaged groups and partly as a result of the revisionist tendency in social science.

Chapter three provides a unique view of the lesser known subject in society: the HIV/AIDS caregivers. The author explores the life of the caregivers (mostly males with no blood relation as compared to traditional caregivers who are mostly female relatives) who offered voluntary care for their friends and partners with HIV/AIDS. What was thought to be a helping hand assistance turned out to be a life-time sacrifice coupled with their daily battles with public ignorance and moral willy-nilly that tells us more to be done to deal with the common ignorance relating to HIV/AIDS.

Next chapter talks about the problem of skipping schools among students in Kuching. The author had interviewed the students, their parents and teachers to gain an overall picture of the situation. His study reveals that the cause of the problem was not the psychology or the attitude of the pupil per se. Rather it was a manifestation of structural breakdown in the state, schools and family structure. The author is correct to argue that the inability to recognise the root cause led to the “blaming the victim” scenario, thereby fails to deal with the issue head-on.

The subsequent chapters deal with the aspect of power play that affected the lifeworld of certain groups. Abdul Halim Ali wrote about the sentiment of the rural-urban migrant in Kuching. Their sentiment was marked with cynicism about the way life will
always be for the underprivileged. The migrants believed that system is not on their side, and therefore they would rather resort to non-institutional (although public sees it as counter-institutional) measures to cope with their depressing situation. The author conclude that only when the agencies responsible for the relief of the disadvantaged group extricate themselves from the state ideology that a considerable advance can be made to alleviate the situation of the squatters.

Next chapter talks about the phenomenon of bejalai or making journey out of the village abode. What was rarely heard about was the wife that these men left behind in their journey for wealth, power and fame. These wives - known pejoratively as indai blues- as argued by the author rebelled against the gender expectation of the customary Iban cultural practices. They engaged in extra-marital affair and did not seem to be bothered to be discreet. This alone led to a community outcry in a moral panic mode. From her research, the author discovered the huge responsibility and the tough life experienced by the desolate women, who have to struggle not only to feed their children but also close relative and at the same time have to endure emotional separation. Such study should be able to guide policymakers in identifying appropriate support system that can respond to the economic circumstances faced by the indai blues.

Meanwhile in chapter seven, the author revised the prevailing view on looking at the colonial history of Sarawak. In so far that the Brooke apologists - past and present- were concerned, the Brooke era represented the good old days, especially in the late 19th and the early 20th century. The chapter wished to debunk this notion by inviting the reader to consider the ideological dimension of power represented by a concept “will to order”. It is generally an exploration of a new concept that may be able to present a critical
perspective of power relations and knowledge produced in the period of colonial domination. In chapter eight, the author deals with an indigenous community of Seping which has one of the smallest surviving populations in Sarawak. It examines the reorientation of the community as a result of the land development, their livelihood strategies against the background of economic displacement and cultural survival in the ever increasing challenging socio-economic environment.

The understanding of being Malaysian among university students’ is a subject of chapter nine. The author’s study reveals three most characteristics perceived as important by the students, namely able to sing the national anthem, live in Malaysia and able to speak the national language. An important finding of the research was the use of national language as inter-ethnic communication shows the success of the national language policy aspired by the nationalists.

In chapter ten, the authors lead us to a media headline that borders on an issue framed by the media as sensitive and intolerance. The study examines the correlation between social media and university students’ perception of tolerance and religious sensitivity. However, in the context of limited media freedom, the lacked of equal coverage of competing views made certain perspective to predominate over others, hence, deprive readers of balanced perspectives.

Chapter eleven reveals the underside of urban development through the gazes of the scavengers, recuperators and the ragpickers in Kuching suburbia. Past studies have associated scavengers, recuperators and the ragpickers as poor people who collected recycle goods as a mean to earn a living or stay survive. However, the findings from the interviews with these groups have proved that they collected recycle goods for an
additional income as they already have primary job elsewhere. This study provides an interesting comparison with other disadvantaged groups who dwelled at the city.

Altogether, the variations of issues, people and spatiality explored in the volume reflected the breath and productivity of knowledge production relating to and centred in Sarawak.

References


KEPERLUAN HIDUP PESALAH KANAK-KANAK DI PUSAT PEMULIHAN

Pengenalan


Di Malaysia terdapat dua cara bagaimana kanak-kanak dihadapkan ke dalam sistem perundangan (Akta 611, Akta Kanak-kanak 2001). Pertama, kanak-kanak yang berumur 10 tahun dianggap telah mencapai umur tanggungjawab jenayah yang mungkin disabit dengan kelakuhan jenayah sebagaimana
The volume comprises eleven essays on current social issues and situations in Sarawak. The issues explored in the chapters are on deviance, disability, health, urbanisation, identity, indigenous community and post-colonialism. They are studied through the engagement of social scientific paradigms that framed the question and explanation raise in the respective chapters. Interesting though is the recurring preoccupation with agenda of ‘giving voice’ to the less visible actors or the undersides in social relations that merely underlined the asymmetrical power, equity and opportunity available for disadvantaged groups. Researchers and students of social sciences will find the works here illuminating and relevant for understanding present state of social research on Sarawak in the contemporary context of a rethinking of modernity and representation.

Kamsiah Ali is a senior lecturer in Social Work Studies Programme at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Her area of research interest includes Sociology, Criminology, juvenile delinquency, youth studies, media and crime and Women and Minorities Studies. The most recent publication includes: Kamsiah Ali. (2013). Framing juvenile delinquents as the pathological individual. In Gusni Saat, Said. S. & Ahmad. S. S (Eds.), Issues in Development in Malaysia and Nigeria: Multi-Dimensional Approaches (pp. 125-144). Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS. She loves to work with people and will always be opened to inputs, whether it is through email or in person.

Sharifah S. Ahmad is a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Her academic interests are social and political theory, cultural studies and colonial history. Her most recent publication includes: Sharifah S. Ahmad. (2013). A question of ‘difference’ in autobiography. In Gusni Saat, Said. S. & Ahmad. S. S (Eds.), Issues in Development in Malaysia and Nigeria: Multi-Dimensional Approaches (pp. 125-144). Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS.