THE ORANG ULU AND THE MUSEUM:

INVESTIGATING TRACES OF COLLABORATION AND AGENCY IN ETHNOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE SARAWAK MUSEUM IN MALAYSIA

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Acknowledgements

Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the awarding to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text. Where the work is based on joint research or publications, the contributions of the respective workers or authors are disclosed and referenced in the thesis.

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Signed   *Ch. Horan*   Date   01 / 04 / 2015

ABSTRACT

The archive of the Sarawak Museum in Malaysia is a little known but unique repository of thousands of photographic prints, negatives and slides from the region. From the early 1950s onwards, museum staff documented their work in local Indigenous communities by taking photographs of the people and their traditional practices, material artifacts and environments in the communities in which they worked. The project was initiated by museum curator Tom Harrisson during Sarawak's period as a British colony between 1946 and 1963. Harrisson's method, deemed unconventional by his peers, was to capture as much of everyday life as possible, with the expectation that researchers and the communities themselves would one day determine the archive's value. These photographs constitute an extensive ethnographic archive of the region that has received little scholarly attention until now. Colonial ethnographic photographs such as those from the archive of the Sarawak Museum have come under criticism by Indigenous activists and postcolonial thinkers who have pointed to their role in establishing cultural stereotypes and supporting the political frameworks of colonial domination and the unequal distribution of power that enabled their production. In this research I examine how this criticism applies to the Sarawak Museum material, and how the institutional origins of the photographs affect the ways the photographs are interpreted by the people featured in them. In addition, I investigate how the photographs relate to the cultural heritage of the people in the source communities and what role they play, as historical documents, for the people they represent.

The research involved the return of 1500 photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive to Orang Ulu communities located along the Baram and Tinjar rivers in the north of Sarawak. Research methods included photo elicitation interviews and group discussions with people in the source communities as well as practice-based approaches such as the public exhibition of the photographs and their publication in a book.

The interviews and discussions with participants in the source communities provided valuable insights into local historical narratives that differed from colonial records, producing accounts of acts of agency and cultural sovereignty on the part of local source communities. For people in the source communities, the photographs enabled local cultural heritage to be narrated, performed and recreated. These embodied, experiential and performative methods of contexualising photographs—resulting in the facilitation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage—suggest the continuing relevance of the photographs for both museums and source communities.

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INDEX

Figures

JABATAN MUZIUM SARAWAK

Maps

Figure 1.1) Construction of the Sarawak Museum, photograph part of the Museum Archive, 2011

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2006, I was working on a research project at the Sarawak Museum in Kuching when Abang, the museum's archivist and assistant to photographer Mr Voon, handed me a number of photographs of various sizes contained in a manila envelope marked 'Kenyah & Kayan'. The prints looked old, but were beautiful and of good quality: portraits of people, longhouse scenes, ritual performances, objects, views of buildings and landscapes. I asked Abang if there were any other photographs like these, and he pointed to a metal shelf covering the rear wall of the next room. It was filled with dozens of old, mangled document folders (see figure 1.2). The folders contained photographic prints glued onto sheets of paper, three or four prints on each page (see figure 1.3). Some of the folders held only a handful of pages, but others so many that it was impossible to close the metal brace holding the sheets together. The paper was brittle and discoloured, and

Figure 1.2) The photographic archive of the Sarawak Museum, 2010

some pages were torn and had been mended. I had found the photographic archive of the Sarawak Museum.

I had come to look for material regarding a specific region of the state, but as I explored the archive and the material it contained, I struggled to make sense of the collection. There was little descriptive or explanatory material accompanying the prints. Some handwritten comments had been added to the images in the print folders. Most of the photographs had no captions apart from the date of their creation and an index number noted on the corresponding negatives (see figure 1.4). These I located with Abang's help in the drawers of a filing cabinet nearby (see figure 1.5). The dates on the negatives indicated that the photographs had been taken from the early 1950s onwards.

Abang explained that the photographs were part of the large body of material through which museum staff documented their research and conservation work as well as exhibitions at the museum and artifacts of the collections as they were acquired and exhibited. The archive also included photographs of museum buildings, portraits of museum staff and events in and around the city (see figure 1.1). I was struck by the quality of the photographs as much as by the wide scope of the subject matter contained in the material. At the same time, I realised that I could not interpret most of the photographs because I did not know enough about what they contained. The photographs Abang had handed me showed practices, objects and environments specific to the small ethnic groups of the interior of the state, about which I knew hardly anything. Even Mr Voon and Abang could not contribute any additional information because none had been recorded when the photographs were taken. The lack of consistent information, together with the non-existence of an index and of descriptive or informative material, suggested that nobody had paid the material much attention in the decades during which they had been stored away at the archive. In discussing the material with Abang and Mr Voon,

we agreed that some of the people in the photographs might still be living in the villages and longhouses shown, and they would be the best-suited people to explain the photographs and their subject matter. It might still be possible, we assumed, to bring prints of the photographs back to the communities and to ask people there to identify the people and locations, to interpret the scenes and to describe the practices shown in the photographs. Since it seemed unlikely that anyone at
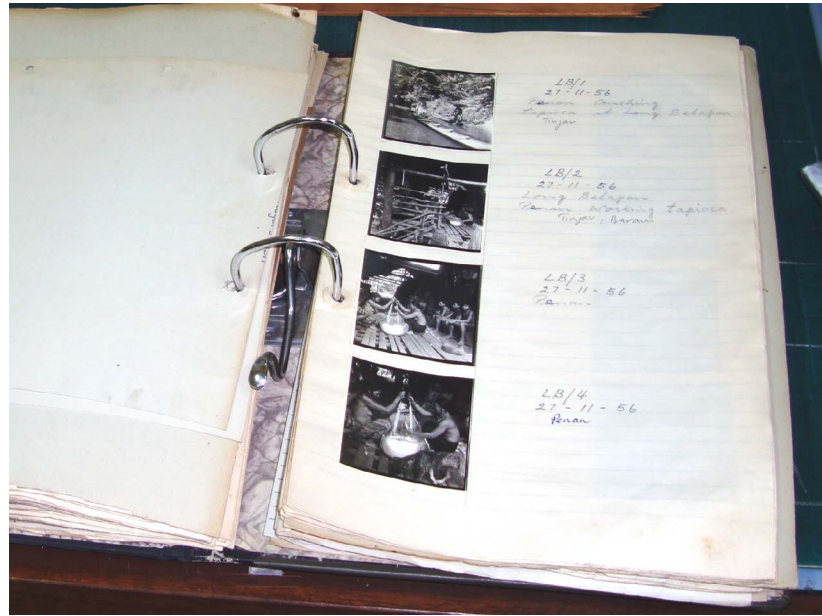
Figure 1.3) Contact prints at the archive, 2010

the museum would have the time to investigate the material further, I decided to explore the archive myself and to find out more about the photographs.

It took some years before I was able to continue with my investigation. When I was first introduced to the photographic archive of the Sarawak Museum, I was working on a research project for my Master of Arts degree at the University of Malaysia Sarawak or UNIMAS, Sarawak's state university. I had neither the time nor the resources to take my interest in the museum photographs any further, but I continued to work together with the Sarawak Museum on a number of projects. After completing my MA, I started working as a lecturer in the Faculty of Design at Swinburne University's campus in Kuching, and my students and I curated two exhibitions and carried out a number of smaller projects at the museum. Throughout this period the photographs from the archive continued to intrigue me. In 2010 I decided to act upon my interest and make the Sarawak Museum photographic archive the focus of this PhD project.

By the time I started the research, I had worked with staff from the Sarawak Museum for several years, and these working relationships enabled me to talk about the archive and the origins of its collections with former and current staff members. I found out that Tom Harrisson, the curator of the museum during the period of British colonial administration of Sarawak after the end of World War II, had introduced photography at the Sarawak Museum as a means to document his work and the work of other museum staff.

Figure 1.4) Negatives at the Sarawak Museum photographic archive, 2010

Harrisson believed that photographs were an important aspect of museological work (Harrisson 1947). He was critical of the ethnographic research methods of contemporary anthropologists, because in his view the results of such research were rarely questioned or verified. Neither was the research routinely repeated, "nor can it normally be read and corrected (as yet) by its subject matter" (quoted in Heimann 1999: 257). Harrisson's approach to the photographic documentation of museum work suggested that he assumed that the data he collected, including the photographs in the archive, would enable future research to take place with the advantage of historical hindsight, and might also give source communities the ability to verify or even contribute to the research outcomes.

1.2 The research question and approach

I set out to test Harrisson's assumption that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum would provide visual evidence of social and cultural change, and to investigate whether the photographs would provide a means for the communities to determine historical knowledge about Sarawak's Indigenous communities.

I sought to examine whether engagement with the photographs would enable the source communities to participate in the museum's representations of their own tangible and intangible heritage, and whether the collection could play a role in what Appadurai has called

Figure 1.5) Negatives at the Sarawak Museum archive, 2010

'cultural continuity' (Appadurai 1981: 218). The project required that I establish a dialogue with the communities about cultural change in order to understand how people viewed the ethnographic documentation that was created to represent them at the museum. Repatriating the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive to the source communities enabled me to develop such a dialogue, using the method of photo elicitation.

When I commenced the project, it was not at all clear to me what the people in the source communities would think of the photographs from the museum archive, or of the museum's project of ethnographic documentation of their traditional culture, customs and practices. As Susan Sontag (1977) has pointed out, photography can constitute an act of intrusion and even violence. In her words, "[t]o photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power" (Sontag 1977: 2). In addition to Sontag's acute evaluation, theorists have argued that ethnographic photographs taken as part of the projects of colonial governance, control and classification contain visual evidence of the social and political hierarchies that motivated their creation (Appadurai 1997; Landau 2002). Four questions thus framed the research:

1) How was the photographic archive of the Sarawak Museum produced?

2) How did the people in the source communities experience being the subjects of ethnographic investigation?

3) Did Harrisson's experimental museological methods influence the interpretation of the photographs by people in the source communities?

4) What would the return of the photographs reveal about the contemporary utility of the collection for the Sarawak Museum, as well as for the source communities, in their engagement with local traditional heritage?

The first half of this thesis, which is dedicated to the first question, provides a detailed description of the development of the archive, including the museum's history and the role of the curator, Tom Harrisson (Chapters 3, 4 and 5). The second question is dealt with most directly in Chapter 6 in relation to agency, while the third and fourth questions are dealt with in Chapters 7 (performing the archive) and Chapter 8 (photographs, modernity and Indigenous heritage) respectively.

In order to investigate these questions I selected around 1500 medium-format black and white photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive that were taken in small rural communities in the north of the state. As outlined in Chapter Two, I digitised, printed and returned the photographs to villages and longhouses along the Baram river and its main tributary, the Tinjar river, between 2010 and 2012 (see map 1.3). I made a number of trips to the interior of Sarawak and across its border to the Indonesian province of Kalimantan to visit the communities in which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum had been taken. In the beginning, my work was complicated by lack of information about the locations where the photographs were taken. However, over time I was able to identify the place of origin of almost all the photographs I had selected, to name most of the people shown in the photographs and even to meet a number of them personally. As Mr Voon, Abang and I had expected, the people in the source communities were able to recognise the people, places and scenes in the photographs,

Figure 1.6) Tom Harrisson with three Penan men, undated

and some of them even remembered the occasion when and the circumstances in which the photograph had been taken by a member of museum staff visiting their village.

In the communities, group discussions and in-depth photo elicitation interviews based on the photographs presented me with valuable and sometimes unexpected insights about the relationships between the source communities and Tom Harrisson (see figure 1.6), museum photographer Junaidi Bolhassan (see figure 1.7 to 1.10) and other members of the Sarawak Museum staff who worked in Sarawak's Indigenous communities. During my fieldwork I transcribed the information participants contributed regarding the content of the photographs, focusing on people's personal memories around the things they saw in the photographs, and about their encounter with the photographer. At the same time I continued to ask participants about their views on the institutional origins of the collection. Most people who viewed the material during my research had never seen any of the photographs before, and many were surprised to find their friends, family members or even their younger selves shown there. Only a few people from the source communities had had the opportunity to access the photographs at the archive. This motivated me to organise two exhibitions where the photographs were publicly shown for the first time. The photographs were also published in a book to make the material more widely available. Working with scanned copies of the photographs also enabled me to investigate a number of digital approaches to the material in order to engage with the source communities through interactive media, and to circulate photographs online in forums frequented by members of the source communities. My efforts to digitise the photographs were also motivated by the desire to make the material more easily accessible to museum staff, future researchers and the people in the source communities interested in working with the photographs.
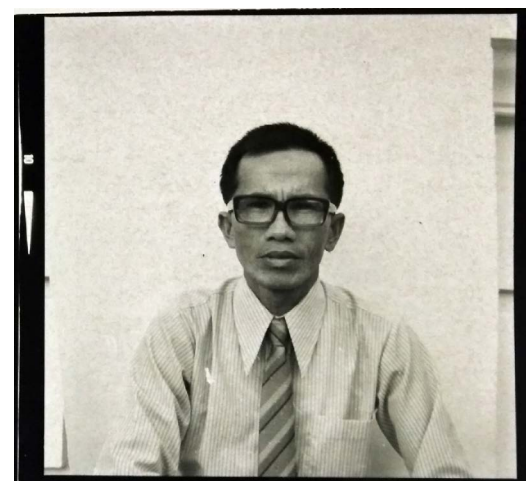
Figure 1.7 - 1.10) Junaidi Bolhassan 1960, 1978 and 1980

1.3 Critique of colonial and ethnographic photographs

The Sarawak Museum is one of the oldest museums in Southeast Asia. Founded in 1888, it specialises in the collection, research and exhibition of objects, specimens and artifacts related to the region. Museum staff have collected mammals, birds, insects and plants, as well as acquiring archaeological and ethnographic material throughout Sarawak. In the words of one of its early curators, "the task of the museum was from the beginning limited to Borneo, and first of all objects were to be collected which were indicative of Sarawak. 'Sarawak for the natives', such was the motto" (Mjöberg 1929: 141).

However, the role of the Sarawak Museum and its relationship with its local audiences was not as clearly circumscribed as Mjöberg suggested. According to critics, ethnographic museums during the period of European colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were part of the mechanism through which colonial governments investigated their subject populations in order to establish and extend frameworks of administration (Boast 2011; Shelton 2006; Barringer 1998; Bennett 1995). Through the choice and nature of the documents they contained, colonial archives illustrated and reinforced concepts of social evolutionism that supported colonial governance (Buckley 2005; Barringer 1998). Sarawak was not a British colony during that period. It was ruled by the Brooke family, a dynasty of White Rajahs or kings who governed the region from 1841 until 1946, and it became a British protectorate in 1888. However, the Brooke Rajahs had an interest in the scientific investigation of their kingdom, and of the people who lived in it. Sarawak resembled other colonial territories in that European engagements allowed access to the region for the developing field of anthropology and its specialists (Cohn 1996). The outcomes of such ethnographic investigation and research were presented to the public in museum exhibitions throughout Europe's capital cities, and, in the case of Sarawak, in the Rajah's capital, Kuching. These institutions became repositories of objects and specimens and disseminated the knowledge that their experts assembled about these objects. Photographic technology, which developed around the same time as the budding discipline of anthropology, was a suitable tool for anthropologists bent on the description and documentation of foreign peoples (Pinney 2011). Photography has been discussed as a tool for colonial governments to "establish and stabilise the

statistical and classificatory categories that constituted the population" (Poole 2005: 46). Colonial photographs have been described as "substantiating imperialist rhetoric that essentialised both peoples and places... while they perpetrated the myths of other races and their native environments" (Hight & Sampson 2002: 7). While colonial and ethnographic photographs from the colonial period are mentioned together here, they are in different categories. I use the term 'colonial photographs' to refer to photographs taken within a specific time period and within a determined locality. 'Ethnographic photographs' are more difficult to define as a category. Photographs have no inherent qualities that make them ethnographic (Scherer 1995). As Roland Barthes suggested, photographs can be interpreted in a multitude of ways; they are "polysemous" (Barthes 1980: 274). Therefore the ethnographic quality of photographs is reliant on "the social and material mechanisms through which they become ethnographic" (Edwards 2010: 70). These mechanisms include the use of photographs for illustrating anthropological research, their analysis within a scientific field such as anthropology, their reproduction in publications and exhibitions, and storage in museum or library archives. Photographs used in the ethnographic documentation of Indigenous people were interpreted by specialists, anthropologists or museum workers who constructed the texts that directed and confirmed the interpretation of the images according to the current theories of the discipline. As Landau suggested:

> The role of photography in the colonial project emerges not from
> who made images, nor even from the graphic content of the images
> themselves. Rather, it lay in the appropriation of tribal images into
> structures of distribution and interpretation (Landau 2002: 161).

Critical analysts of archival collections assembled by colonial governments have maintained that such photographs reflect the relationships between different actors as much as the ideas and assumptions that informed the creation of these documents (Cohn 1996; Buckley 2005). According to Appadurai, "[i]n colonial and neo-colonial settings it is easy to read the language of social hierarchy in the visual composition of photographs" (Appadurai 1997: 4). Ethnographic documentation of local communities in particular came under criticism by theorists who claimed that anthropological research from the colonial period was implicated in producing specific representations of people that

illustrated the ethnographic theories of the period, but which, according to its critics, held no relevance or benefit for the source communities (Smith 1999).

The assessment of the Sarawak Museum photographs according to post-colonial criticism of colonial archives calls into question the potential meanings that can be derived from such photographs, and their usefulness for contemporary engagement with cultural heritage for the Indigenous communities in which they were taken.

1.4 A unique case study of experimental colonial museum practice

With the exception of regions in which settler colonialism took place, few theorists have focused on the role of museums within colonial territories and the relationship of these institutions, their curators and staff with their local audiences (MacKenzie 2009; Longair & McAleer 2012). In this context, my investigation of the Sarawak Museum constitutes a unique case study. The Sarawak Museum was founded by the second of Sarawak's three English rajahs, Charles Brooke. During Sarawak's brief period as a British colony, the museum was headed by Tom Harrisson, who initiated the photographic archive. Many photographs discussed in my research date from this period. As discussed in Chapter Five, when Tom Harrisson became the curator of the Sarawak Museum in 1947, he was neither a trained anthropologist nor a museum curator. He had developed an interest in anthropology during his earlier work in the New Hebrides and through his later involvement with a research project called Mass-Observation. Mass-Observation's founders—Harrisson, Charles Madge and Humphrey Jennings—had undertaken an "anthropology at home" aimed at the investigation of British citizens and their habits, views and living conditions (Hubble 2006: 4). For their research, Mass-Observation's three initiators enlisted observers and contributors from among the people they aimed to investigate, namely the British working class. Harrisson, Madge and Jennings were opposed to the idea that research outcomes should only be available to an elite group of academics, and instead proposed that their contributors should be able to benefit from finding out more about how their own class lived (Mass-Observation 1943). With regard to the material collected during Mass-Observation, Harrisson argued that for an archive to become valuable for future research, it was important to collect large

amounts of material irrespective of whether the subject seemed interesting or relevant at the time. In his view it was impossible to anticipate what issues would become important for research in the future (Harrisson 1975). Because of this, Mass-Observation and the people who contributed to the project amassed large amounts of documents on a variety of subject matter (Calder & Sheridan 1984; Heimann 1999). When Harrisson became the curator of the Sarawak Museum he continued to work according to the principles he had established during his time with Mass-Observation. Harrisson employed Junaidi Bolhassan, a former museum driver, as staff photographer in the early 1950s. Bolhassan, Harrisson and other members of staff continued to document their work and travels in the remote communities through photographs. The collection grew to include thousands of images from around the state. As in his previous work, Harrisson was unwilling to set out on his research with a particular hypothesis and preferred to wait for the data to reveal its significance. As his biographer Judith Heimann wrote, Harrisson "wanted to collect more and more data rather than try prematurely to draw out underlying principles and patterns" (Heimann 1999: 258). During his time with Mass-Observation, Harrisson's aim in assembling a wealth of material was to provide data for researchers to investigate social, cultural and economic change with the advantage of historical hindsight. As Harrisson wrote with regard to the Mass-Observation archive:

Ideally it should be possible for another observer to go back to the same place at the same time on the same day of the year, years later, and repeat the same observation, whether in words or film, thus measuring change in a way which cannot be theorised about or preconceived (Spender & Harrisson 1975: 3-4).

Harrisson and his work with Mass-Observation has received considerable academic attention (Sheridan 1984; Calder & Sheridan 1984; Summerfield 1985; Richards & Sheridan 1987; McClancy 1995; Stanton 1997; Sheridan 2000; Good 2003; Hubble 2006; Hinton 2013; Pollen 2013). However, his role in the development of museological practices has not, so far, been examined by theorists in the museum field.

I seek to address this gap by discussing his practices in the context of both the museological theory of the time, and the paradigm shift that later led to the emergence of a new museology or critical museum theory (Marstine 2008; Witcomb 2003).

1.5 Value of the Sarawak Museum photographic archive and implications for museum practice

During the last two decades historians and other investigators of colonial archives have argued that photographs, like historical texts, need to be considered as the products of the specific set of circumstances at work during the time of their creation (Thomas 2009). I argue that Tom Harrisson's experimental approach to museology and research resulted in the creation of a photographic archive large in scope and focus, and not informed by developmentalist preconceptions nor created to visualise the social hierarchies and cultural categories evident in other material from the period. This made the Sarawak Museum archive a particularly salient subject for investigation of the historical value of practices common in contemporary museum practice. During my fieldwork, the collaborative evaluation and interpretation of the photographs together with people from the source communities resulted in detailed descriptions of the photographs by participants in my research. This allowed me to investigate the small and seemingly insignificant details in the photographs that were only legible and meaningful to the people in the source communities. The photographs lent themselves to such collaborative description, because their random inclusiveness (Bell 2008; Morton & Edwards 2009; Morton 2009; Edwards 2011), and their detailed reproduction of the elements in a scene that ultimately cannot be controlled, enabled viewers to derive multiple and indeed contrasting interpretations of the photographs. These interpretations, which related to local traditional culture as well as to historical narratives, complemented and at times contrasted with official historical accounts.

The re-assessment of colonial photographs in recent decades has led theorists to re-consider such material as a source of information. The colonial archive was reframed as a "site of struggle" (Pels 1997: 166) in which traces of the interactions between and acts of agency of different actors can be read (Stoler 2002; Manoff 2004; Maxwell 2008; Edwards & Morton 2009; Kuhn 2010; Banks & Vokes 2010).

Appadurai, who argued that colonial photographs are illustrative of the social mechanisms of colonial domination, noted that the technology can situate the photographic subject in a "potentially democratic visual public sphere" (Appadurai 1997: 5) regardless of the motive that prompted the creation of the photograph.

This approach has enabled theorists to read archives such as that of the Sarawak Museum "against their grain" (Stoler 2002: 99). In my research I substantiate this approach by indicating the acts of agency and collaboration through which local source communities negotiated and managed their relationships with Sarawak Museum staff, and provide examples from the photographic archive that support these assessments. Such traces of reciprocity and interaction visible in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were reinforced through the narratives of participants in my research who remembered their encounters with the Sarawak Museum photographer, and by the accounts of museum staff who were engaged in research in the source communities.

In recent decades, changes in museum theory have led to the emergence of an approach among museum specialists through which the role and responsibilities of the museum were re-evaluated. The shift towards a more reflexive and critical approach to museum methods resulted in a range of collaborative efforts between museums and their source communities. Ethnographic museums in particular moved towards inclusiveness by collaborating with the source communities from which objects in museum collections were originally acquired. The debate over ownership of colonial and ethnographic photographs sparked the discussion of such images with source communities (Binney & Chaplin 2003; Bell 2008; Smith 2008; Peers & Brown 2009). It has also raised questions about intellectual property rights to such photographs and similar ethnographic material (Brown 1998; Janke & Iacovino 2012; Morse 2012). Collaborations between museums and their source communities, such as community co-curation or co-production, enabled museums to tap into local knowledge while providing spaces for the communities to represent their own culture and create the narratives around such objects in exhibitions (Peers & Brown 2003; Lynch & Alberti 2010; Clapperton 2010; Davies 2010; Graham 2012). In light of the developments in museology and museum's quest to include audiences and source communities, my research examines how archival material can allow researchers and museum staff to establish new methods of collaborating with source communities in curating museum objects.

During my fieldwork I investigated people's reactions to the photographs, the meanings and interpretations participants derived from the photographs and the memories and narratives the photographs prompted. This was done in order to examine how the representations of the people in the source communities contained in the

photographs were reflected upon by participants in these communities. My research indicated that people in the source communities did not see themselves merely as the subject of the photographs, but described acts of agency, collaboration and contestation, and the relationships and negotiations that occurred during their encounters with the museum photographer. Through the ways they engaged with the photographs, people expressed a sense of ownership over the material which allowed them to re-contextualise the photographs and to assign meanings according to their own interpretations, regardless of the institutional background of the material.

During my fieldwork, participants' reactions to photographs varied depending on what kind of memories and meanings people derived from the material. At times participants spent half an hour looking at and talking about one photograph, and then glanced over the next without giving it much attention. However, a few photographs provoked intense and emotional reactions from participants. On several occasions people started to cry or to express strong feelings, often of sadness and nostalgia. In some cases the photographs showed relatives who had passed away, or locations, buildings and communities that had ceased to exist. One man discovered himself in a photograph when he was a baby (see figure 2.10); another found a photograph of his mother while she was pregnant with him (see figure 2.11). Participants' "affectively charged responses" (Jeffrey 2004: 1529) expressed in photo elicitation interviews indicated that the content of these photographs was perceived as very personal. Such photographs were, as Clark-Ibáñez has put it, "intimate dimensions of the social" (Clark-Ibáñez 2004: 1511). This suggested that the Sarawak Museum collection played another role for the source communities besides its role in the historical and cultural documentation of the communities. These responses to the photographs indicated that my own analysis of them was incomplete. I had aimed to assess the historical context of the images, their creation as part of colonial governance and the complex power relationships between local source communities, photographer and museum staff. I had also expected to examine the role of the photographs in the ethnographic description and representation of the communities at the Sarawak Museum. These aspects of the photographs, however, were not reflected upon by the participants in the source communities, even if I asked about them directly during interviews. This indicated that the background to the photographs, the reasons they had been taken, who had taken them and the uses to which they had been put did

not determine their meaning for the people in the source communities. As Harper has pointed out, the photographer "points a camera and exposes a frame, but the choices that led to the creation of that image may have had little or nothing to do with cultural meanings inside the image" (Harper 2002: 158). Instead, the meanings and interpretation participants derived from the photographs depended on people's own memories and knowledge about the scenes, places and people in the photographs.

My work in the source communities led to other important findings regarding the relationship between museums and source communities. Contributions by participants in the communities suggested that the photographs held cultural, historical and personal value for the people in the villages where they had been taken. Participants recounted how they had interacted with the photographer and how they had contributed to the creation of the photographs by posing, composing and otherwise arranging the scene for the photographer. In addition, people in the source communities re-interpreted the photographs during our discussions, assuming "photographic sovereignty" (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998: 42) over the material. In the communities the photographs ceased to be ethnographic documents, and instead became personal souvenirs, family photographs and historical evidence of local traditions and customs. The people in the communities provided a wealth of information about the photographs that had been missing from the archive, as well as the objects, places and practices they showed. But they did more than talk about the photographs. As Edwards has pointed out, photographs are closely related to embodied practices. In her words, "photographs are tactile, sensory things that exist in time and space, and thus in embodied cultural experience" (Edwards 2006: 28). During my work it became clear that the contributions from the people in the communities exceeded textual and oral descriptions, and included embodied and performative knowledge relating to the photographs (see Chapter 7). I examine these activities and the local 'Indigenous knowledge' to which they related (Kreps 2003; Phillips 2003; Pratt 2004; Isaac 2012) for their potential to contribute to co-operative methods of museum curation and co-productive collaborations between museums and source communities. As Kreps (2003) has suggested, non-Western people's methods of caring for and curating cultural artifacts are often not recognised as such by museum professionals. My examination of these local methods of curating and contextualising artifacts, which have in the past remained unaddressed within the space of museum

exhibitions, presented me with relevant insights into projects of community co-curation and co-production through which museums are increasingly collaborating with their source communities in the curation of artifacts in their collections. For my research I did not set out to conduct a visual anthropology, but rather to understand the value of the archive and the implications for museum practice. However, the outcomes of the interviews and group discussions based on photographs from the Sarawak Museum reflected social and cultural changes in the communities and shed light on how small Indigenous populations fit into larger frameworks of Sarawakian as well as Malaysian politics of development and modernisation (Aeria 2005; Porritt 1994, 2004, 2007; Majid-Cooke 1997, 2002, 2006, 2006a; Cramb 2007, 2011). These development strategies, I argue, have not contributed to cultural continuity or what Brown (1998) has called 'cultural sovereignty' in terms of local traditional customs, and have left local communities little room for self-directed development or engagement with their own cultural heritage. In Sarawak, as I will argue, Indigenous communities in the Ulu have struggled to reconcile their traditional culture and lifestyles with the development efforts promoted by the government. During my research, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were used by participants in the source communities to talk about and recreate elements of cultural heritage, and to define specific elements of local culture as heritage and through the strategic usage of heritage. Thus the research demonstrates that archival photographs can be used to investigate the colonial past of the region but they can also shed light on the contemporary relationship between Indigenous source communities and the state and federal government administration. During my research the photographs from the Sarawak Museum allowed viewers to engage not only with issues of cultural heritage but also with contemporary topics including economic development, modernisation and political participation. Although it is beyond the scope of this project, my experience in working with the archive suggests that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive could be used to examine current and ongoing social, economic and political systems through which Sarawak's Indigenous communities contest their role in contemporary Malaysia.

1.6 Thesis outline

This thesis is structured into nine chapters. Chapters Two to Five focus on theoretical and contextual concerns including a review of the literature on colonial and ethnographic photographs and visual archives through which this research is framed. These chapters also contain an analysis of the literature about Sarawak, the Sarawak Museum, the Orang Ulu communities and Tom Harrisson and his work used in this research. The empirical component, contained in Chapters Six to Eight, describes my fieldwork involving the return of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum to their source communities, and the insights derived from the photo elicitation interviews and group discussions and my practice-based approaches, including the public exhibitions of the photographs. The following paragraphs give a closer overview of the contents of each chapter.

In Chapter Two, 'Methodology', I discuss my approach to the assessment, selection and digitisation of the photographs used for my research. This chapter also includes details about the fieldwork structure and the methodology for individual and group interviews carried out during my fieldwork. I give an overview of the different groups of people interviewed, and the reasons for my choice of participants and the method of selection of interviewees. I also discuss the two exhibitions in which the photographs were shown publicly. Additional resources such as archival material are also covered here.

Chapter Three is entitled 'Museums, Colonialism and Photography'. In this chapter I introduce the literature that informed my interpretation and the analysis used to discuss my fieldwork, data collection and the review of my findings. I briefly review early anthropological theories that informed the representation of Indigenous peoples at museums, and the role of anthropology in colonial governance. I investigate how ethnographic photographs during periods of colonialism have been criticised for visualising the social hierarchies that supported and reinforced frameworks of governance. I then examine the recent theoretical re-evaluation of archives established by colonial governments and the concurrent re-assessment of anthropological photographs by theorists in the field of visual studies. I discuss projects where photographs were

returned to their source communities, which have in the past decade contributed to the theoretical understanding of how such archival material can be re-evaluated. This chapter examines how museum practices have changed, and the methods by which museums have endeavoured to become more inclusive of alternative voices in their work. The chapter situates my research within the field of new museology and museum studies and as part of growing body of research concerned with the co-curation of museum collections.

Chapter Four, 'Sarawak and the Sarawak Museum', assesses the history of the Sarawak Museum and its function as a research institution. The chapter traces the history of the museum from the time of its establishment by the second White Rajah of Sarawak, and the mission and objectives of its curators. I explore the historical background of the Orang Ulu who constituted the source communities to which the photographs used for this project were returned. I discuss anthropological research conducted in Sarawak and the role of anthropologists in the socio-political development of the state. This chapter covers the relationship between Sarawak's Indigenous communities and the government, covering the Brooke government as well as the British colonial administration and, after 1963, the state and federal government of Malaysia. The social and political effects of Sarawak's development policies on local Indigenous groups are also assessed here.

In Chapter Five, 'Tom Harrisson and the Sarawak Museum archive', I discuss Harrisson's role as curator of the Sarawak Museum and his establishment of the photographic archive. The chapter starts with an overview of Harrisson's earlier work with Mass-Observation, through which he and his collaborators attempted to assess public opinion in Britain and conduct "anthropology at home" to investigate the British lower and middle classes. I explore the parallels between Harrisson's earlier work with Mass-Observation and his later work at the Sarawak Museum. I also discuss the work of other photographers who documented Sarawak's Indigenous communities at the time, in order to put the Sarawak Museum collection of photographs into contemporary perspective. An earlier version of this chapter was published as an academic article in 2013 (Horn 2013; see also Appendix IV).

The sixth chapter is entitled 'Photographs, agency and the Sarawak Museum archive'. In this chapter I examine how the outcomes of my discussions and interviews

with people in the source communities reflected upon the project of photographic documentation carried out by Sarawak Museum staff. I assess how the photographs used in this research related to local oral history, and how they prompted participants to re-tell stories that complemented and sometimes conflicted with the archival records of government servants at the time. During my fieldwork, the interviews and group discussions with people in the source communities provided local accounts of agency and collaboration in the dealings between source communities and government agents as well as in the projects of photographic documentation undertaken by museum staff. I examine participant contributions in the context of Smith's (1999) critique of anthropological research in Indigenous communities, applying her criticism to the work of the Sarawak Museum staff. Contrasting Smith's arguments with the outcomes of my fieldwork, I examine the way in which people in the source communities re-interpreted the Sarawak Museum photographs to establish photographic sovereignty over the material.

Chapter Seven is entitled 'Performing the archive'. In this chapter, I discuss how, during my fieldwork, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum evoked responses ranging from oral history and the re-telling of stories related to local traditions and beliefs, to the embodied and performative responses through which scenes in the photographs were performed and re-created. This chapter establishes the value of such responses and activities for understanding the complex cultural frameworks that give objects their social significance. I argue that this is an important field of research that museums can investigate through collaborations with source communities. This chapter also engages with emerging literature in the field suggesting that the social and cultural meaning of material museum objects such as photographs, is tied up with a range of practices and experiential and embodied knowledge that are becoming increasingly pertinent in the field of museum studies (Classen & Howes 2006).

Chapter Eight, 'Photographs, modernity and Indigenous heritage', analyses the role of historical artifacts such as photographs for the definition and establishment of local heritage by the source communities. The engagements with local heritage that I encountered during my fieldwork with the Sarawak Museum photographs ranged from the re-creation of traditional artifacts to the transcription of oral history. In this chapter I examine the complex local approaches to cultural change, development, modernity

and cultural heritage that people in the source communities of the Sarawak Museum photographs elaborated upon during photo elicitation interviews and group discussions. I discuss the role of cultural Indigenous heritage in the social, economic and political development of the communities that were part in this research, and the ways in which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum provided the visual links for people to define and engage with that heritage. I also discuss the potential of digital technology in the dissemination and return of the photographs, which I carried out as part of this research.

In Chapter Nine, 'Conclusion', I summarise the findings of this thesis and the new insights my research generated in the field of museology and visual studies. I conclude with some indications for further research opened up by this thesis with regard to the material kept at the Sarawak Museum archive.

Map 1.1) Malaysia with the research area indicated

Map 1.2) Borneo with the research area indicated

Legend:
- City
- Town
- Kenyah village
- Kayan village
- Kelabit village
- Saban village
- Penan village

Seria

Miri

Brunei

Marudi

Beluru

Kuala Tutoh
Lg. Kiput
Batu Belah
Lg. Terawan

Sg. Tutoh

Lg. Seridan

Lg. Ikang

Lg. Teru

Lg. Banio
Umah Akeh
Lg. Puak   Batu Gading

Sg. Apoh

Lg. Wat
Lg. Atip

Lg. Bedian

Lapok

Loagan
Bunut

Lg. Laput   Lg. Lama
Sungai Dua

Sarawak

Lg. Jegan

Lg. Miri

Lg. Daloh
Lg. Anyat

Sg. Semadoh

Barom

Sg. Patah

Lg. Seniai

Lg. Batan
Lg. Loyang

Lg. Aya

Tinjar

Su ngai Akah

Lg. Liam

Lg. Tebangan

Lg. Sobeng
Leppo Leju
Lg. Selapun   Lg. Aton

Lg. Akah
Lg. San

Lg. Apau

Lg. Selatong

Sg. Lobang

Sg. Dapui
Lg. Buroi

Sg. Paong

Lg. Belapau

Sg. Nibong

Lg. Apu

Lg. Julan

Lg. Anap

Lg. Semiang
Lg. Sela'an

Lg. Palai

Lg. Moh

Btg. Belaga

Map 1.3) Communities documented in photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the research approach that guided my work with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum. In the first section I provide an overview of the archive and discuss my reasons for selecting parts of the archive to digitise for my research. I provide a short overview of the technical specifications and 'good practice' guidelines I established for the digitisation, and introduce the database system used for archiving the photographs and the information I gathered about them.

Figure 2.1) Surveying the Sarawak Museum archive, 2010

I used a range of research methods during this project, commencing with straightforward interview techniques in order to scope the project and plan the fieldwork. The fieldwork itself involved photo elicitation interviews and group discussions, which took place in the Orang Ulu communities along the Baram and Tinjar rivers. I also conducted two exhibitions (Miri in 2011 and Kuching in 2012), which served as information-gathering exercises as well as a means to 'give back' to the communities. The second exhibition in Kuching presented information gathered during the preceding fieldwork, and resulted in the publication of the photographs in a book (see Appendix IV). During the course of the research I also accessed written documents and publications from the period during which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum. These sources and their use are outlined towards the end of this chapter.

2.2. The photographs: Scope and selection

When I first started to work with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive, I was overwhelmed by the wealth and diversity of the material. Working at the archive was initially difficult because the photographs, although mostly in good

condition, were scattered around in drawers, on shelves, in plastic bags and in cardboard boxes throughout the archive (see figure 2.1). Like other visitors who wanted to access the archive, I had to rely on the assistance of the museum staff in charge of the material. The first staff photographer of the Sarawak Museum had been Junaidi Bolhassan, who had held this position from the early 1950s until 1985. When Bolhassan retired he was succeeded by Mr Lim, who in turn was replaced by Mr Voon. When Mr Voon retired in 2011, his position was not filled again. Abang, the archivist, and his superior, the head of the Exhibition section Zakaria Bojeng, assumed responsibility for the archive. Abang had been working in the archive for a number of years with Mr Voon, and knew the location of most of the material I requested. Little indexing or description had been supplied by his predecessors, so Abhang was often the only person who could find specific material for me. If he could not, he let me rummage through the archive on my own under his supervision. The only information consistently provided for most of the negatives at the archive was the date, marked in ink at the bottom of each negative. Locations were only recorded for some photographs, added as hand-written notes along with the contact prints.

When I started working at the archive I spent several weeks looking through folders, envelopes, books and albums to make sure I had viewed all available resources. Nevertheless, more photographs kept appearing out of unrelated folders, plastic bags, drawers and envelopes (see figure 2.2). After a preliminary survey of the archive I decided to base my research on photographs taken between 1951 and 1978 in the Orang Ulu villages of the Baram and Tinjar. This decision was informed by several considerations. The photographs I chose came from a relatively small ethnic group located in the north of the state, and it was possible to identify the general region if not the precise locations of the villages where the photographs had been taken.

Figure 2.2) Additional negatives at the Sarawak Museum, 2010

Figure 2.3) Negative booklet at the Sarawak Museum archive, 2010

This would have been more difficult with photographs from one of the larger groups, such as the Iban, who live in communities throughout Sarawak. Even so, many photographs were available. I selected a series contained in 12 negative booklets marked "Kenyah."

I chose only medium-format photographs and excluded later photographs taken with 35mm film to limit the number of photographs used.

The photographic technology used by Sarawak Museum staff changed from medium-format to 35mm film around 1978. The negative booklets I selected were indexed under the letter "J" which indicated their subject matter. The photographs were subdivided into categories such as "JF - Kenyah JF=Agriculture, Husbandry & Fishing 1-" or "JD - Kenyah JD=Men, Adat, Arts 1-99" (see figure 2.3). Additional photographs from the same communities were added from other sources within the archive if they belonged to the same series but had been filed away in a different section. For instance there was a series of photographs that showed Orang Ulu artists and community elders at the Sarawak Museum. I later discovered that most of the photographs had been taken in villages on the Baram and Tinjar river, and did not include any of the communities of the Rejang river, which is also home to Kenyah people. However, this only became apparent once the selection and digitisation of the material had taken place, as well as the initial interviews through which the locations in the photographs were ascertained.

From the dates on the negatives I was able to deduce that most of the photographs I had selected had been taken by Museum staff during two extensive trips, one in 1956 and one in 1968.

Figure 2.4) Adobe Lightroom database software, 2014

38

Other trips included a 1951 exploration led by Tom Harrisson and a 1975 trip by anthropologist Peter Metcalf to the Berawan communities. On another trip in 1976 the photographer accompanied a member of parliament on a trip to his constituencies, and added the photographs to the Museum archive. All together my selection included around 1500 photographs.

The negatives of these photographs were digitised using a slide scanner set to full colour and at a high resolution so that the photographs could be printed in large format. In instances where negatives had been damaged or discoloured, the photographs were digitally repaired so as better to identify their content or in order to maintain their original appearance. To organise the photographs I created a searchable database system in which photographs from different sources, folders and albums could be grouped and searched for according to date, location, keywords and other information.

Once I had digitised the photographs, I added all available information from the print folders to the image files as metadata. This information included the date of capture copied from the negative and the location of the photograph if it was available. To enable me to search the database, I also included a set of keywords relating to the content of the photographs and details about the people and scenes depicted (see figure 2.4). These keywords were based on my own observations and interpretations, but later during my fieldwork, I added information provided by participants. This information was embedded within the image file. A copy of the digital files including metadata was made available to the Sarawak Museum archive when the main fieldwork phase of my research was completed, together with the slide scanner for further digitisation.

2.3. Initial research

When I had digitised the main body of the material, I started to print the photographs and use them in initial interviews with museum staff and members of the Orang Ulu communities in Kuching. These interviews were semi-structured and in-depth, and each lasted an hour or more. Interviewees were asked to describe the photographs, name the people and communities and talk about the scenes and objects in the photographs. The initial interviews focused on identifying the locations shown

in the photographs, which enabled me to plan my subsequent trips to the villages and longhouses where the photographs had been taken. During the initial research I interviewed a number of Sarawak Museum staff including former and current museum directors, a former museum photographer, and other staff who remembered Harrisson during his time at the museum and who had contributed to the Sarawak Museum archive.

I also interviewed staff of the Majlis Adat Istiadat, who research and codify the native customary law or adat of Sarawak's Indigenous communities. Most of these interviews were conducted in Kuching and Miri, Sarawak's two biggest cities, and in Marudi and Long Lama, the provincial towns in my fieldwork area (see map 2.1). In Miri, Marudi and Long Lama I interviewed staff at the government district offices. These people were instrumental in providing me with further contacts and in organising transport to, and accommodation in, the rural communities (see figure 2.5). The interviews undertaken during this stage of my research provided background information on the Orang Ulu communities, the work of the Sarawak Museum and its staff and their curatorial and conservation activities in the villages. Further interviews were carried out with local academics and researchers at UNIMAS, the local state university, and with several political figures such as members of parliament and city councillors.

Figure 2.5) Interview at the Marudi District Office, 2011

2.4. Fieldwork itineraries

During my research I visited 15 village and longhouse communities in the north of Sarawak (see Appendix II). My preliminary trip was to the middle Baram and the villages of Long San, a Kenyah Lepo' Tau community, and then two communities further downriver, Long Sungai Dua and Daleh Long Pelutan. The next trips brought me to the

Tinjar, the major tributary of the Baram. I then travelled downriver to Long Loyang, one of the largest communities in the region. The following trip was to Long Teru and Long Jegan (see map 2.2).

Figure 2.6) Orang Ulu at the Baram Regatta, Marudi 2012

My next occasion to visit the region was the Baram Regatta. This biannual event held in Marudi was first organised by Government Resident Charles Hose in 1899, and has remained a permanent fixture in the local event calendar. For the 2012 regatta many people from the surrounding communities came to participate in or watch the races, to socialise and do their shopping in Marudi. Activities included cultural shows and performances, sape-playing contests and beauty pageants (see figure 2.6). Stalls throughout the city sold items traditional to local communities such as bead necklaces, traditional costumes and rotan hats (see figure 2.7). Most of the headmen, penghulus and other local political figures were in town, which offered me an occasion to meet several of them for interviews. In the traditional political hierarchies, the tua kampong or ketua kampong was the head of a longhouse, while the penghulu held the authority over several communities in an area or a stretch of river. A pemancha was placed above the penghulu, and the temenggong was the foremost authority of the region. The Brookes based their authority on these earlier systems (Colchester & Chao 2011).

My next trip was a visit to Long Nawang, a Kenyah Lepo' Tau community across the border in Indonesian Kalimantan (see figure 2.8). The trip across the green border was occasioned by a week-long cultural festival in which people from Lepo' Tau communities in Sarawak and Kalimantan came together to meet, reinforce cultural ties, hold speeches and perform

Figure 2.7) Stalls at the Baram Regatta, Marudi 2012

traditional dances and songs. While travelling with a group of Lepo' Tau Kenyah from Long Makabar and Long Moh along the rivers and logging roads of Sarawak's interior, we stopped in a number of logging camps and also visited Long Beruang, a Lepo' Tau community (see figure 2.9).

A final trip brought me again to Long Loyang and Long Batan and then to Long Atun, Long Nuwah and several smaller communities on the way to the abandoned longhouse site of Long Buroi. Many photographs in the archive had been taken here some years before the community moved downriver in the 1950s.

Figure 2.8) Cultural Festival in Long Nawang, 2012

Figure 2.9) Stopover in a logging camp near Long Beruang on the way to Long Nawang, 2012

42

2.5. Visual repatriation and return

As museum workers are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities with regards to source communities, more and more museum objects are returned to the source communities or exhibited and curated in collaboration with members from the source communities. In cases where photographs and other visual documents are returned to communities of origin the method is referred to as 'visual repatriation' by most researchers. In these projects the original prints and negatives usually remain in the institution, library, museum or archive, and prints or copies are

Figure 2.10) This participant found a photograph of himself as a toddler, Long Loyang, 2010

instead circulated. This means that visual repatriation is less controversial and more easily executed since the original object is not exchanged or removed. It also means that photographs used in this kind of project are not repatriated in the same way as objects such as sculptures or other tangible artifacts are repatriated, in the sense that the original object is returned to the care of the community. The terminology is therefore not entirely appropriate for this particular research because the term repatriation

Figure 2.11) This participant found a photograph of his mother pregnant with him, Long Teru, 2010

implies a return to the origins, the spatial relocation of an object. Some writers therefore apply a more inclusive definition of the term which is focused less on the process of return or on the material object which is the photograph and instead more on the process of reframing the returned photographs in collaboration and through discussions with people in the source communities (Dobbin 2013), for instance in Bell's (2003) and Smith's (2008), whose methodologies for visual repatriation included returning prints and photocopies as well as making the photographs available online. However, there are also more critical voices such as Lydon (2010), who points out that the creative rights to photographs under copyright law are limited to the creator or owner of the photographs, which denies any rights to usage and ownership to their subjects, because

Western law is grounded in a long-standing intellectual tradition that emphasizes the importance of individual property and the rights of the creative individual, and so often clashes with Indigenous views about collective ownership and responsibility (Lydon 2010: 174).

The term 'repatriation' is therefore questionable, since photographs returned to the source communities as prints or photocopies "have different relations of ownership and origination with their subjects' Indigenous descendants" (Lydon 2010: 177) which do not entitle the source communities to any ownership rights or responsibilities. According to this more nuanced view, the term 'repatriation' should be used

Figure 2.12) Group Discussion in Long Sobeng 2011

with care, as in most visual repatriation projects photographs are merely returned to the communities but not, in fact, repatriated. I will discuss the idea of returning photographs to their source communities, which is a result of ongoing developments in the museum field, in more depth in chapter three.

Working with photographs in collaboration with source communities has been the focus of a number of recent research projects in the field of museum studies (Bell, Lydon, Geismar). The method has become relevant also for museums aiming to make their collections available online, as this can entail a the use of digital files in particular for photographs. Circulating digital copies of photographs allows source communities to view material independently, to appropriate it to an extent in digital form, and to comment

Figure 2.13) Group Discussion in Long Nuwah 2011

Figure 2.14) Many people wanted to look at the photographs, Long San, 2010

on it interactively. For both archives and museums the question of access to their material remains critical. Are source communities able to view original collections if they are located in faraway countries, or if special permissions need to be applied for to see them? Can communities achieve intellectual property rights over material, and use photographs for economic or other purposes?

These questions need to be addressed for each project where photographs are returned to source communities according to the specific circumstances of the situation. If photographs have been previously published they may be accessible to the source community but subject to copyright limitations. If photographs are contained in museum collections they may be accessible to an outside audience, but if the collection is housed in a museum overseas the physical distance still limits usage by source communities. Researchers may leave copies of photographs behind when they conclude their research, but the survival of the copies within the community and their accessibility by other community members is not guaranteed.

During my research I followed a flexible strategy for disseminating photographs among participants and within source communities. In each community participants were informed about the provenance of the material, and that they were able to view the material in the archive in Kuching if they wished. The Sarawak Museum's requirement for allowing people to view the collection is the director's permission. As a multitude of handwritten comments in the file folders in the archive suggest, people have in the past successfully sought access to the photographs.

I also took orders from participants who wished to own a copy of particular photographs, for instance if they or their family members were shown. People marked each requested photograph with their name and address, and on my return to Kuching I sent out printed copies by mail, or sent them to the village with the headman or other visitors.

45

To make the photographs more widely available to people who may not have directly participated in the project I published a large number of the photographs in a book after having exhibited them at the Sarawak Museum in a public exhibition. Both the exhibition and the book publication were organised in the hope that people would be able to own the photographs if they wished to.

Figure 2.15) Speedboats in Marudi on the Baram and Tinjar, 2010

The Sarawak Museum holds the copyright to all photographs used for this research, and staff have in the past complained about people using the photographs without referencing the museum. However, the museum director allowed me to disseminate the photographs and it has in the past been museum policy to allow researchers to use photographs from the museum without charging them for the use as long as the museum is named as the copyright holder.

2.6. Photo elicitation

Throughout my research I conducted interviews and group discussions based on the photographs from the Sarawak Museum I had selected for my work. This method is referred to as 'photo elicitation' (Harper 2002). The use of photo elicitation facilitated initial contact with participants because the images were objects of interest (Samuels 2004). During my research many people were eager to look at the photographs from the Sarawak Museum and to talk about them, because few had seen them before. Their interest in the material made it easy for me to find interviewees willing to take part in my research. A list of interviewees is provided in Appendix I.

Figure 2.16) Marudi from the air on the way to Long San, 2010

Figure 2.17) Rural transport operator fixing a puncture, on the way to Long Sobeng, 2010

For my interviews I used photographs I assumed would resonate with the interviewee or interviewees. For instance, if I could identify them in advance, I chose photographs of people's home communities or extended families (see figure 2.10 and 2.11). Most interviews started with a set of questions about the photographs, about the locations and the identities of the people in them. The photographs provided visual cues for these questions. During the interviews, the answers to my initial questions prompted interviewees to talk about related topics they felt were pertinent.

From my initial questions onwards, most discussions were directed by the participants, who either spoke about their knowledge of the content or their memories about the scenes in the photographs. In group discussions, people debated these details with each other. Therefore participants took on both the role of interviewer and interviewee by prompting each other with detailed questions and remarks. This was useful because the interviews resulted in narratives about details I would not have been able to identify because I did not recognise their relevance. As Harper has pointed out, the meanings derived from a photograph "are not fixed, but emerge in conversations and dialogues" (Harper 2002: 158). Using photographs as the basis for interviews therefore helped me bridge the gap in my own assumptions and the experiences and memories of the participants.

For example, objects commonly used and understood in the source communities I visited were inexplicable to me until their significance and social context were discussed and explained by people in the communities. As Samuels has pointed out, using photo

Figure 2.18) Discussing photographs with airport staff, Long San, 2010

elicitation in interviews can foreground the experiences, opinions and memories of the interviewee, in particular when using images that reflect the social world of the participants (Samuels 2004). The photo elicitation interviews provided me with the opportunity to investigate these diverse assumptions about the photographs and to examine what Harper has called the 'cultural meanings' of the photographs (Harper 2002: 158).

My research was not aimed at the anthropological investigation of the communities I visited, but rather at understanding the role the photographs played as ethnographic, historical or personal documents for the people in the communities. I also sought to examine the ways in which people contextualised the photographs and related to their content. Through the photo elicitation interviews I gained valuable insights into people's interpretations of the photographs, into the historical narratives contained in them and into the sensory and embodied methods through which people communicated knowledge about the content of the photographs. I will discuss these processes and outcomes in Chapter Seven.

Liebenberg et al have argued that the method of photo elicitation lends itself to situations in which photographs provide a bridge between interviewer and interviewee, and where the narratives of participants are foregrounded in research (Liebenberg et al 2012). Their study suggests that when researchers make use of photo elicitation as a method for engaging participants, their analytical approach is often based on grounded theory. The researcher's limited use of direct questions, which is often replaced in photo elicitation by indirect prompts to describe or talk about photographs, suggests that the researcher is looking for patterns which emerge from the collected data rather than focusing on a pre-formulated research question or verifying an already established hypothesis. This is the case in projects where photographs are generated by participants, but also where existing photographs are used. According to Clarke, the foundations of grounded research lie in the attempts of researchers to implement

Figure 2.19) Exhibition at the Miri Library, 2011

a reasonable inductive approach to collecting and analyzing qualitative data that seriously [attempt] to be faithful to the understandings, interpretations, intentions, and perspectives of the people studied on their own terms as expressed through their actions as well as their words (Clarke 2005: np.)

and therefore to escape the subjective biases of the researcher which often direct interactions with interviewees. Since the topics addressed in photo elicitation interviews largely emerge from what the photograph evokes in the interviewee, grounded theory can be seen as a relevant approach to research based on photo elicitation (Clarke 2005). Even though researchers may not explicitly use grounded theory, an inductive approach is often perceivable as underlying methodological and analytical approach of projects where photo elicitation interviews are used. In spite of researchers' effort to let ideas, patterns and questions emerge from the data in this way, it is unlikely that preconceptions or expectations more generally can be entirely eliminated from the communication between interviewee and researcher as both enter their relationship with preconceived ideas about the nature of a specific project. Nevertheless, the method of photo elicitation enables shifts in authority to determine the content of issues discussed during an interview from the interviewer to the interviewee and can even result in collaborative analysis in which participants take part (Jenkings et al 2008).

Photo elicitation is focused around determining interpretations of things seen in photographs. As Harper has put it, the method "is fueled by the radical but simple idea that two people standing side by side, looking at identical objects, see different things" (Harper 2002: 22). The number of research projects using photo elicitation and other photo-voice methods in various disciplines to challenge dominant viewpoints suggests that the method does indeed foreground participant's own voices and narratives

(Clark-Ibañez 2004; Jeffreys 2004; Felstead et al 2004; Liebenberg 2008; Bell 2008; Didkowsky et al 2010; Appleton 2011; Croghan 2012).

2.8. Source communities

The term *community* is receiving increased attention in the museum field. In the museological context it is often used to refer to a museum's audience or public (Crooke 2006: 170). In this research, however, communities in Sarawak are both audiences to the museum, but more importantly they are contributors to its collections in various ways. The Sarawak Museum has an extensive ethnographic collection of objects manufactured in Sarawak's Indigenous communities. These communities, as the museum's source communities, have contributed to its collections, whether willingly, as paid collaborators, as generous donors, or having been coerced into letting go of artifacts. Importantly, the term source community in my research is important not only because the rural communities are where museum artifacts, including photographs, were created, but because the notion of a community in Sarawak is very strongly linked to individual identity, culture and history. Among the Orang Ulu, where this research took place, there are small ethnic groups of not more than a few hundred members which nevertheless have their own dialect, identity, customs and traditions. Moreover, as Metcalf has argued, the notion of cultural identity or community is closely linked to a specific place, for instance a longhouse where a group of people lived, who subsequently became known under the name of the place (Metcalf 2010). Among these are for instance the Long Wat group, who in fact still live in a place called Long Wat. Other communities have migrated but maintained their name, as Langub's work on the Kenyah subgroups suggests (Langub, undated).

Importantly for my work, location and identity are closely connected also for people who have already migrated out from

Figure 2.21) Preparing the exhibition at the Sarawak Museum, Kuching 2012

50

the village or longhouse from where their ancestors once came. These people still identify strongly with a place and group. As my interviews with people in the cities suggest, they were often very conscious of the need to preserve their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, for a variety of reasons (see chapter 8). Because of this close connection and the relevance of place and location for the identity of individuals, I use the term source community in this thesis to refer to people who identify with specific Indigenous groups or village community even if they do not reside there but live and work in one of Sarawak's larger cities or towns.

People's common identification with a community does not imply a common opinion or viewpoint, as Peers and Brown have argued (Peers & Brown 2003). However, the term does imply shared practices, history including oral history, and traditions. My research suggested how photo elicitation prompted the sharing of such traditions, both in narrative form and as embodied and experiential practices (see chapter 7).

Figure 2.22) Exhibition opening in Kuching, 2012. On the left, Sarawak Museum director Ipoi Datan, on the right the son of Penghulu Gau and his wife A'an Kuleh, shown in the photograph

2.9. Fieldwork methods

My fieldwork in the villages and longhouses along the Baram and Tinjar was based on group discussions and individual interviews during which I talked with people in the villages about the photographs. Upon my arrival in a community I usually introduced my project to the headman of the village. The headmen of the communities were my point of contact during most

Figure 2.23) Son of Penghulu Gau from Long Ikang talking to the press at the exhibition opening, Kuching 2012

visits and generally provided accommodation for the duration of my stay. On some occasions I came with other acquaintances from the community whom I had met in the city, or with people who ran the semi-official transport business. They helped me find accommodation and introduced me to people in the village whom they thought might be knowledgeable about the photographs. When I started to show the photographs to people in the villages, those people would call others over to have a look. Often large groups of people congregated to view, hand around and discuss the prints of the photographs I had brought (see figure 2.13 and 2.14). Following these discussions I arranged more formalised individual interviews with people who had either been recommended by my contacts or by others in the village who felt that they were particularly knowledgeable. Otherwise I approached people who I felt could contribute salient information. These individual interviews were also based on the photographs and usually lasted an hour or more.

Many of the smaller villages were difficult to reach, because they either had no road access or could only be reached via logging roads. The Baram and Tinjar are navigable by regular passenger speed boats up to Long Lama and Lapok respectively, since the river becomes too narrow higher up (see figure 2.15). Further up, travel has to be arranged with private boat owners. Among all villages I visited during my field work only Long San had a rural airport accessible by regular flights from Miri and Marudi (see figure 2.16). For villages accessible by logging road no scheduled transport existed,

and I had to arrange trips with private or semi-private operators (see figure 2.17). It was therefore difficult to organise travel to the specific communities that I wished to visit. Because of this situation, there were at least two communities that I failed to reach even though a number of photographs had been taken there, namely Long Makabar and Long Ikang on the Baram.

The lack of local infrastructure, both in terms of travel and communications, presented some limitations with regard to my choice of participants. It was difficult to organise interviews and group discussions before visiting a community because most communities had no telephone connection. I was therefore dependent on the people present in the villages during my visit. Fortunately this did not lead to a lack of participants. Almost everybody who saw the photographs commented on their content and explained details about them during the discussions and interviews I arranged on my visits. This included the drivers of the cars going up to the villages, fellow travellers and the security staff and personnel at the rural airports (see figure 2.18).

Although I spoke to a variety of people during these visits, my interactions with members of the different Orang Ulu communities in the village and the city were influenced by social structures. In the past, many of the Orang Ulu groups had hierarchical class systems that included an aristocratic class, a class of commoners and one of slaves. These distinctions are no longer formally recognised, but they still governed many social interactions in the villages during my research. Members of the aristocratic class were often wealthier, more literate, and more likely to speak several languages, and were more likely to volunteer to take part in my individual interviews. Most members of the communities were reluctant to talk about class difference, so it was difficult to establish the impact of this bias even after I became aware of it. It also became apparent that people from the former aristocratic class were over-represented in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, as similar social dynamics seemed to have directed the attention of the photographer who took the photographs for the Museum. For these reasons, interviews, group discussions and collaborative contextualisation of the photographs with members of the communities held an inherent bias. However, this was mitigated to an extent by the group discussions, in which everybody could participate (see figure 2.13). These took place in common areas around the villages or in the longhouses, and once I

started discussing a set of photographs with a group of people, more participants tended to congregate to have a look and contribute their opinion (see figure 2.14). Participation in group discussions was dependent on the interest of individual participants rather than on social status, and therefore participants in these discussions were more representative of different social strata.

The issue of language was an ongoing concern during my research. The people in the region where my fieldwork was based speak a number of different languages. Even small ethnic groups have their own language or dialect. Among the Kenyah, one language (Kenyah Lepo' Tau) is generally spoken and understood, but during my fieldwork I found many people who spoke either Bahasa Malaysia or English as well. Because of the local diversity of languages and because it was often difficult to identify in advance which communities I would be able to visit on a particular trip, I was often unable to bring a translator. However, my own knowledge of Bahasa Malaysia and the language skills of the people who participated in my research proved adequate for the purposes of my research. During my visits to the villages the people who were more conversant in either Bahasa Malaysia or English translated the comments and contributions of their friends and family members and explained more complex concepts and narratives to me on request.

2.10. MAKING THE PHOTOGRAPHS PUBLIC

Since the 1950s, rural-to-urban migration has had a significant impact on the demography of Orang Ulu communities. Through the return of photographs to the source communities I was able to contact participants in the villages, but not the significant numbers of Orang Ulu who had relocated to Sarawak's urban areas. Some of these urban Orang Ulu I met during my initial interviews in the first phase of my research. To approach and engage other people in the cities, I circulated a number of photographs in online forums where younger members of the communities exchanged information about events and news and chatted with each other. I tried to engage these online communities in discussions about the photographs, but this proved difficult.

The participants I contacted were reluctant to contribute information and most of them indicated that they did not know what the photographs were about, and were

unable to identify the people and locations shown in the photographs. After a number of trials with different online communities it became apparent that this method was unlikely to yield the information I needed for my research. As an alternative method of engaging urban members of the Orang Ulu communities, I exhibited the photographs in a public exhibition at the Miri State Library in November 2011. The photographs were later also displayed in another exhibition at the Sarawak Museum in April 2012.

The first exhibition in Miri was conceived as an interactive event and visitors were encouraged to leave remarks and comments related to the photographs if they recognised the content. During my fieldwork I carried with me material from the communities I intended to visit, but for logistical reasons I did not carry all the photographs I used in my research. In the first exhibition in Miri I presented almost all the photographs I had digitised in order to give the audience a more complete overview of the contents of the Sarawak Museum archive. My emphasis was to encourage the audience to interact with the photographs and with me, so as to encourage people to contribute information about the photographs. For this purpose I arranged note paper alongside the printouts mounted on the walls of the library, where I wrote down the information I had already acquired (see figure 2.19). On these sheets I left space for other notes to be added by visitors.

The aims of the exhibition were explained in the press releases and the posters announcing the exhibition within the library, and on the flyers and posters distributed in Miri (see figure 2.16). I also emphasised the interactive nature of the exhibition by explaining it during opening hours to visitors while showing them around the exhibition. As a means of making the photographs available to visitors, prints of them were offered for sale for a price of RM 2,- ($AU 0.80). Many visitors took advantage of this offer, and some spent hundreds of ringgits on prints. Some visitors asked for complete sets of photographs taken in their home communities and some even requested prints of the entire exhibition. The exhibition was covered by the local press and on the Kenyah language radio (see Appendix V).

The exhibition was conceived as a method of making the photographs available to the public, because the photographs had for the most part neither been previously published nor exhibited. By arranging the exhibition in Miri as an interactive event I also aimed to test this museological method for its potential in engaging the source communities in the process of exhibition-making.

The information I collected throughout my visits to the source communities and during the exhibition in Miri was put together in the second more formal exhibition in Kuching, which opened in April 2012 (see figure 2.22 and 2.23). The exhibition was produced in collaboration with Sarawak Museum staff who helped to mount and arrange the exhibits in the museum's art gallery (see figure 2.21). Along with the photographs from the museum archive, the exhibition showed artifacts from the museum's collections that related to objects shown in the photographs.

Information about my research project and a map were also included. A short text mounted alongside each photograph contained information about the photograph including the location and date of its creation. This was derived from the information noted on the negatives and from my fieldwork. In addition, the texts contained short excerpts from ethnographic literature and old travelogues written by visitors, researchers, missionaries and government servants about their experiences in the Ulu. I expected that most of my audience would be local Sarawakians, and that a large part among them would be Orang Ulu, as had been the case with the Miri exhibition. My goal was to indicate to the audience the ways in which outsiders had experienced their visits to the Orang Ulu communities. However, I aimed not to be too descriptive about the photographs in order to encourage the audience's own interpretations of the photographs and to tap into their own memories of the region and its communities (see figure 2.20).

In these two exhibitions many of the photographs were shown for the first time to the general public. During the first exhibition in Miri, the people who visited had a strong interest in acquiring copies of the photographs. As many told me, they considered the material as their family photographs, because they showed members of their extended families from closely-knit communities as well as the locations and environments that held significance for them. The texts were subsequently revised, an introductory text was added and Sarawak Museum director Ipoi Datan provided a foreword. The material was then published by a local Malaysian publisher under the title "Orang Ulu of Borneo". This made it possible for people to buy and own the photographs (see Horn 2012; see Appendix IV).

2.11. Archival sources and resources

During my research I used several document archives in Kuching. The material I accessed in these archives contained information about the historical background of the Sarawak Museum and its work, and provided official records on issues participants spoke about during my fieldwork and my interviews in the source communities. Juxtaposed with the narratives from the communities, this material constituted an important resource for my investigation of the photographs and their relevance for the communities and the museum.

Both the Sarawak Museum library and document archive and the Sarawak State Library provided printed material and publications related to Sarawak on issues ranging from politics through geology and languages to historical narratives. The Sarawak Museum library collected the Sarawak Gazette, the government journal published by the Brooke Rajahs from 1870 onwards. The Sarawak Gazette listed events at the Sarawak Museum, updates from all the district officers and other news from around Sarawak. In the Gazette the events in the different districts, longhouse fires, conflict between communities, techniques to improve farming, the introduction of cash crops and many other details were noted. The regular reports by district officers mirrored many of the narratives re-told by participants during my research. The comparison between these official accounts of local history and the oral narratives covering the same historical period from the perspective of the source communities are discussed in Chapter Six. In 2013, a large number of issues of the Sarawak Gazette were made available online by the Sarawak State Library in Kuching.

The Sarawak Museum library holds a complete collection of the Sarawak Museum Journal, in which research on Sarawak has been published since the first issue appeared in 1911. Produced by the Sarawak Museum, the journal articles cover a range of disciplines related to Sarawak such as anthropology, oral history, geology, archaeology, zoology and botany and many others. Articles were contributed by a range of people working throughout Sarawak, including government servants, missionaries, visitors, researchers and museum staff. The Sarawak Museum Journal published numerous articles on Orang Ulu culture, including stories on oral history, migration, the old religions, and other subjects. As with the Sarawak Gazette, I used a number of the articles

57

and papers from the Sarawak Museum Journal in this research to cross-reference the oral history accounts participants contributed during photo elicitation interviews and group discussions.

Between 1946 and 1963 the British colonial government published a yearly report on Sarawak called the Sarawak Annual Report, which I also accessed at the Sarawak Museum Library. It contained reports on the economic progress and the social and political situation in the state and included a regular section on the Sarawak Museum listing the events and developments during that year. These reports were instrumental in my assessment of the role of anthropological research in Sarawak and the work of the museum and its staff as part of the frameworks of colonial governance. They also helped me understand the complex web of government and museum responsibilities that had complicated Tom Harrisson's work during his curatorship of the Sarawak Museum.

The Sarawak Museum document archive holds many handwritten manuscripts, but unfortunately few of Harrisson's notebooks were accessible apart from his archaeological field notes. I was informed that Harrisson's personal notes had been included in the Sarawak Museum archive but had been lost or misplaced.

The Sarawak State Library includes a "Sarawakiana" section containing books published in and about the state, which was an important resource because many publications it contained were published in small volumes and are not in print today. The section also contains some of the publications of the Borneo Literature Bureau. From 1958 to 1977, this organisation collected and transcribed local oral history, folk stories, legends and songs, published works of fiction and organised literary competitions in Sarawak and Sabah.

2.12. Conclusion

As outlined in this chapter, my research into the Sarawak Museum photographic archive involved mixed methods, including photo elicitation, interviews, exhibitions, and archival research. However, the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 arose not only through my encounter with the archive, but in relation to theoretical advances relating to colonial archives and photography. These theoretical considerations, as well as related methodological shifts within the fields of anthropology and museology, are discussed in the next chapter.
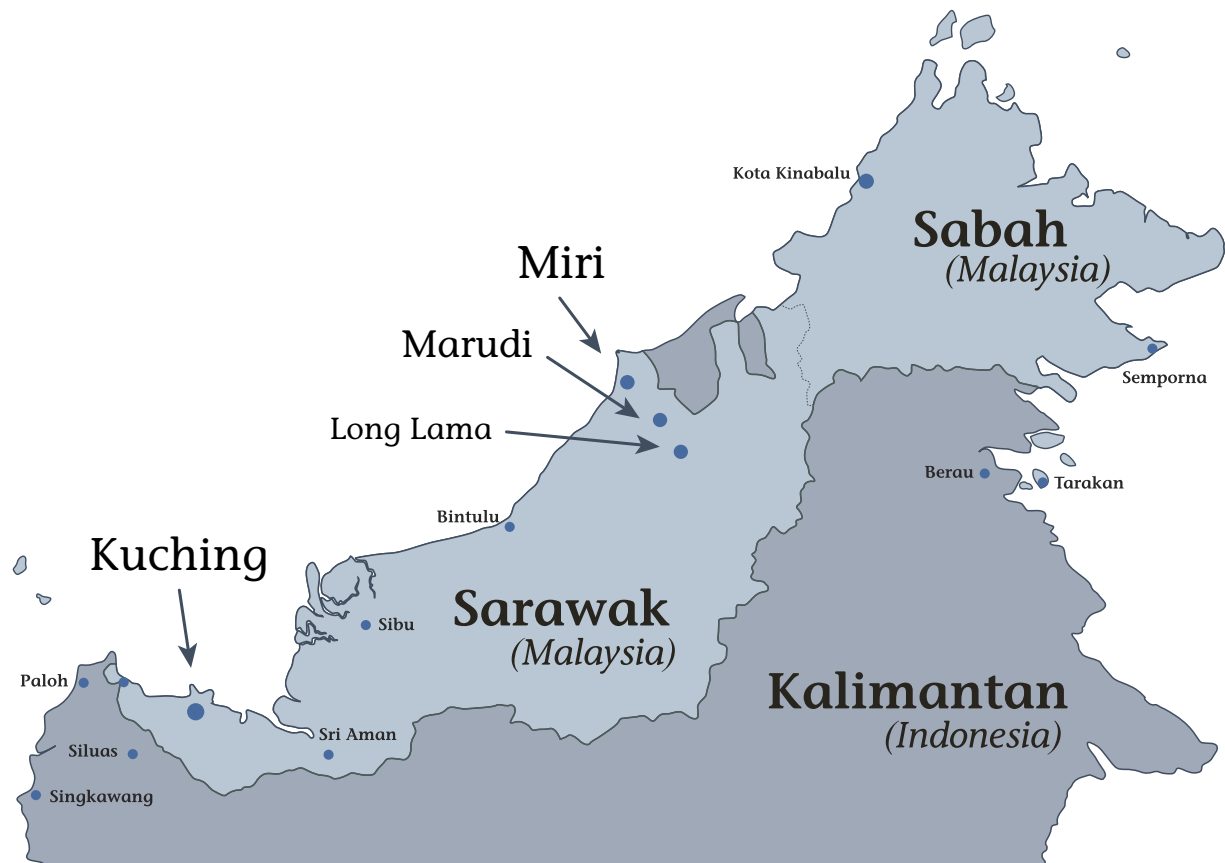
Map 2.1) Kuching, Miri, Marud and Long Lama
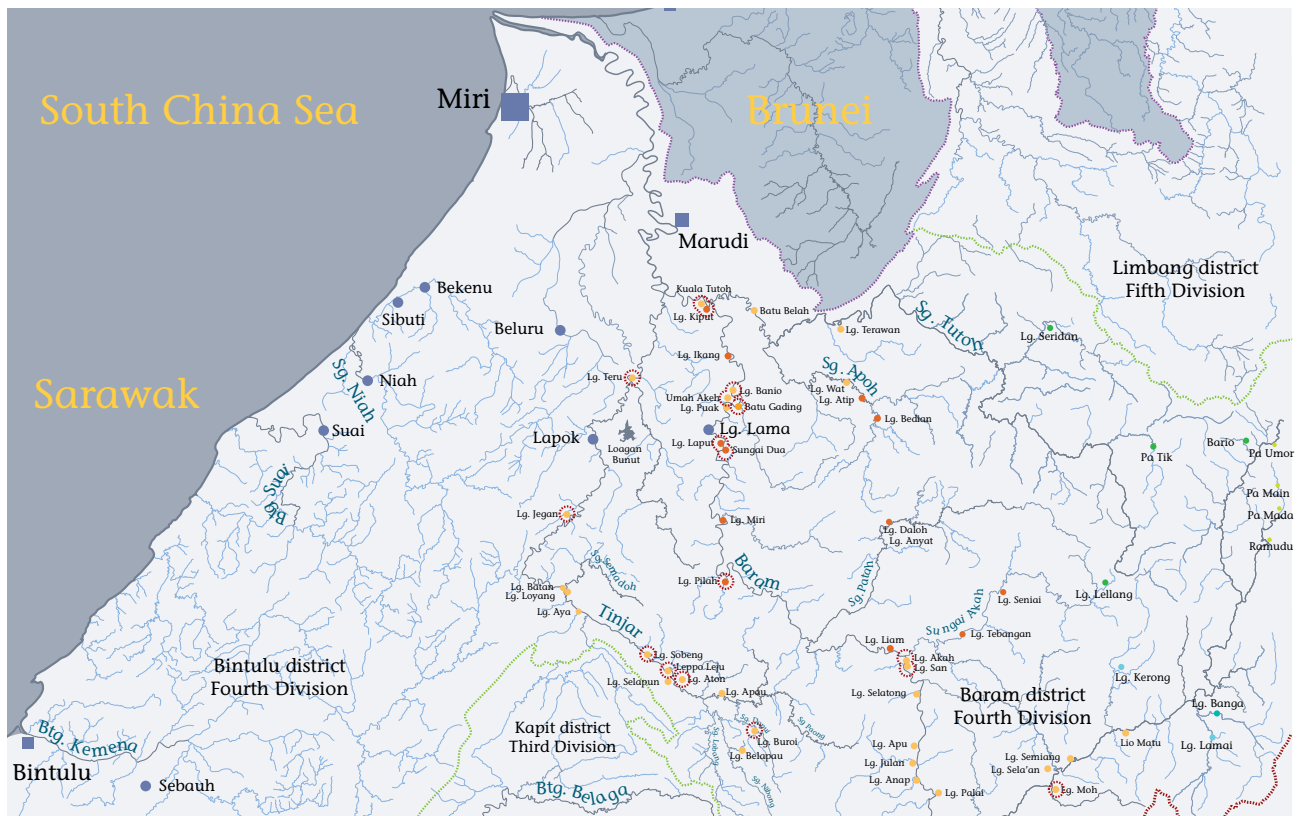
Map 2.2) My fieldwork trips, 2010 to 2012

Chapter Three: Literature Review - Museums, Colonialism, Photography

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature that informed the analytical analysis of my research. The literature relevant to my research includes theoretical approaches to museum practices. It also encompasses the critical assessment of the institution's reliance on anthropological research carried out in colonial territories, and the collection and exhibition of Indigenous material culture. I discuss the history of anthropology and the practice of photography by anthropologists during and after the period of colonial governance of foreign territories by Western governments in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. While the history of European colonialism goes much further back, it was from this period onward that the evolving discipline of anthropology, making use of novel photographic technologies, was employed in colonial territories for the investigation and documentation of the people who lived there (Pinney 2011). It is also the period when Sarawak came under foreign rule, as the first White Rajah became the ruler of Sarawak in 1841.

Sarawak was granted the status of a British protectorate in 1888 but was formally a British colony for a short period only, from 1947 until 1963. The Sarawak Museum archive, the collection at the core of this research, was created when Sarawak was a British colony and while its curator, Tom Harrisson, held the role of government ethnologist for the colonial government. Two questions therefore arise. The first concerns how the literature and theoretical criticism of colonial museums can be applied to the Sarawak Museum and its archive. The second relates to how this criticism affects the way in which the photographs from the archive were interpreted by people in the source communities. I explore the first of these issues in this chapter, and the second in Chapters 6 and 8.

According to critics, museums were among those institutions that supported and reinforced the social and political structures that enabled the colonial administration of people in far-off territories (Bennett 1995; Dibley 2005; Boast 2011). As Boast has put it:

> Museums were the premier colonial institutions—institutions that created the ordered representations that contained, objectified, and reduced the colonized world for the paternalistic imperialism that characterized the 19th and early 20th centuries (Boast 2011: 64).

The ethnographic displays in these museums, which represented the populations of colonial territories to the public at home, were based on the ethnographic research and contributions of travelling researchers and colonial government servants. The colonial occupation of foreign territories by Western powers was supported by theories of social evolutionism that suggested that less-developed people would benefit from the influence of the supposedly more advanced nations ruling over them (Jacobs 1996). Such theories "functioned both as lenses on the world and as mandates for conquering and exploiting it" (Perusek 2007: 1). As critics have argued, the resulting social hierarchies and cultural stereotypes were rendered visible through photographs produced by government servants, researchers, missionaries and other foreigners. These photographs that were used as ethnographic documentation or for museum displays, and consumed by audiences in the capital cities of Western nations, reinforced the essentialising representations of the differences between peoples (Appadurai 1997; Landau 2002; Poignant 2004).

Whether such colonial stereotypes are visible in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum is one of the underlying questions addressed in this chapter. By investigating the history of colonial and ethnographic photography I examine the theoretical assessment to which such material has been subjected, and apply it to the collection of the Sarawak Museum. Colonial policies as well as the practices and theories of anthropology started to shift towards the middle of the twentieth century, and in particular after the end of World War II. The British colonial administration increasingly envisaged the eventual self-government of its colonies, and focused their economic and social development policies on the preparation of this eventual outcome (Basu 2012). Simultaneously anthropologists became increasingly sceptical of the established theories and practices that had informed the discipline during the period of colonial imperialism of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Anthropologists started to question their own social and cultural presumptions previously taken for granted (Davies 1999; Reed-Danahay 2002). At the same time, a review of anthropological and historiological theories and methodologies led to a greater appreciation of historical sources outside the archive that differed from the established Western knowledge generated in the academy and at museums (Krech 1991; Chaves 2006; Harkin 2010).

The collections of museums that originated in the colonies became the subject of critical re-assessment, although the shift in museum theory unfolded later than that in the field of anthropology. Increasing self critique among museum workers and academics led to more inclusive and reciprocal practices. This shift has been referred to as the 'new

museology' or 'critical museum theory'. New museology can be broadly defined as the attempt by museums to become more multi-vocal, inclusive of their source communities, reflexive in their practices and critical of their own processes (Vergo 1989; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Witcomb 2003, 2007; Kreps 2003, 2008; Marstine 2008; Srinivasan et al 2009). In addition, museum staff, museologists and academics paid more attention to curatorial practices in different cultures that emulated museums' role of collecting and caring for cultural heritage. This approach has been termed 'comparative museology' (Kreps 2003a: 315). Some source communities contested the transactions by which objects had been acquired by museums and removed from Indigenous communities during the period of colonial administration, and in many cases objects and other cultural goods were returned to the source communities or repatriated (Clapperton 2010; Curtis 2006; Brown 2009; Simpson 2009). As part of these processes a number of photographic archives from the colonial period, re-examined for underlying traces of the interactions visible in the images, were made available to source communities through projects where researchers returned them to the communities where they had once been taken (Fienup-Riordan 1999; Binney & Chaplin 2003; Peers & Brown 2009; Bell 2003; Lydon 2010; Dobbin 2013).

Closer collaborations with source communities allowed researchers to investigate the meaning of such photographs for source communities. Museums have increasingly aimed to include non-professional stakeholders in the production of exhibitions and curation of artifacts (Peers & Brown 2003) as a means of collaborative curation or 'co-production' (Lynch & Alberti 2010; Davies 2010; Graham 2012). Collaborative investigation and documentation of photographs has enabled museums and archives to collaborate with source communities and to include different voices in the interpretation of their collections (Graham 2012).

Through discussion of the literature relevant to this thesis, I examine the origins of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, and apply the analytical approaches adopted by critics to assess ethnographic and colonial photographs to the material used in this research. I trace the shifts in the theoretical assessment of colonial archives that occurred from the 1950s onwards, and discuss how such material has been re-evaluated in recent decades.

Writers such as Edwards (2001, 2002, 2009), Morton and Edwards (2009), Morton (2009), Edwards and Hart (2004), Bell (2003, 2008), Buckley (2005), Poole (2005), Geismar (2009), Thomas (2009), Lydon (2010), Dobbin (2013) and Bradley et al (2013), as well as Indigenous activists and academics such as Tsinhnahjinnie (2003), have established alternative methods of assessing colonial and ethnographic photographs that go beyond

earlier critiques according to which such material reinforced social and political hierarchies. Colonial photographs became subject to more nuanced investigations of the relationships, acts of agency and collaboration between different actors from which they emanated. Through this discussion I frame my own work with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum and my theoretical approach to the work with the museum photographs I carried out during my research.

3.2. MUSEUMS UNDER CRITIQUE

According to a large and growing body of literature in the field of museum studies, the institution of the museum originated in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards as part of the developing rationalist worldview that has become known as the Enlightenment (Bennett 1995; Eriksen and Nielsen 2001). Museums were conceived as places where new scientific disciplines could to be promoted through research and where members of the educated and wealthy classes and the lower and working classes alike could interact and educate themselves (Bennett 1995).

The acquisition of foreign territories by countries such as Britain, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany, together with the establishment of colonial governments in these far-flung regions, opened up new spaces for scientific investigation. This led to increased interest by European researchers in the people and environments in these places. From its beginnings in the early nineteenth century, the discipline of anthropology provided the specialists and tools to undertake the investigation of colonised people (Asad 1973; Cohn 1996; Peers & Brown 2003). Anthropologists from England, France, the Netherlands and other countries holding colonial territories started to explore these regions, to which the colonial administration provided them access. In the eyes of critics, the history of anthropology is closely aligned with the history of the imperialism that facilitated it because "[t]he origins of anthropology as a distinctive form of knowledge lay… in the internal and external colonies of the Europeans" (Cohn 1996: 11).

During the early nineteenth century the ethnographic investigation and description of Indigenous peoples living in the colonies was informed by anthropological theories of social evolutionism that were at the core of scientific and popular concepts of race of the time (Shelton, 2006). Spurred on by the development of evolutionary theories, especially Darwin's 1859 publication of "The Origin of Species," a variety of hypotheses emerged to explain the

differences between human beings. Many of these theories supported the concept that social developments occurred on a temporal scale and that some societies remained in earlier stages of social evolution already surpassed by others (Jacobs 1996, Glick 2007). Ethnographic and natural history museums, which Bennett has called "evolutionary museums" (Bennett 1995: 5), adopted these theories of social evolutionism and integrated into their exhibitions the evidence of cultural differences considered characteristic of this chronological ascent. As British naturalist and rival of Charles Darwin in the discovery of evolutionary principles Alfred R. Wallace suggested in 1869, museums were to exhibit

> [t]he chief well-marked races of man … illustrated either by life-size models, casts, coloured figures, or by photographs. A corresponding series of their crania should also be shown; and such portions of the skeleton as should exhibit the differences that exist between certain races, as well as those between the lower races and those animals which most nearly approach them (Wallace 1869: 11).

Popular theories of social evolutionism supported the colonial expansion of Western influence in contemporary public opinion. Positioning imperial domination as "tutelage over so-called inferior people" (Shelton 2006: 69) justified projects of colonisation and masked the nationalistic and economic interests of the imperial powers (Jacobs 1996; Eriksen and Nielsen 2001). Ethnographic museums in the metropoles reflected these views and contributed the spaces for the narratives of social evolutionism. The results of the research conducted in the colonies was analysed and contextualised according to the contemporary views of museum and university specialists, who prepared the material for the museum's audiences.

Until now little academic literature has dealt with museums in British colonial territories before the 1950s, with the exception of settler colonies with large ethnic European populations such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (Nair 2012; McEvansoneya 2012). The role of museums within colonial territories has only recently become the focus of academic investigation, and literature on the subject is still emerging (MacKenzie 2009; Longair and McAleer 2012). The existence of institutions such as the Sarawak Museum raises relevant questions about the relationships between such museums and their local audiences. Most Indigenous populations under colonial administration were confined to the colonial periphery and were more likely to be the subject of museum research, exhibitions and displays than part of the museum audience. As Bennett has put it:

Cast in the role of the primitive, Indigenous populations were axiomatically denied the historical depth required for an archaeological layering of the self and were, therefore, just as axiomatically placed entirely outside the liberal reform strategies of evolutionary museums (Bennett 2004: 5).

For most metropolitan museums, Indigenous peoples were excluded as audiences and from the description and analysis of collections, to which they had often contributed as creators of artefacts. This was in part due to the fact that these museums were located at great distances from their source communities. Western researchers and academic institutions rarely acknowledged Indigenous collaborators, although much of the research outcomes they generated relied on Indigenous knowledge assimilated by researchers as scientific data (Pratt 2004; Smith 1999). Indigenous populations were the subjects of foreign research, but often had little influence on the results or the outcomes that represented them. Therefore, for critics such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (Smith 1999: 30).

The development of administrative practices varied between the different colonial territories (Cooper and Stoler 1997; Brown 2009; Pinney 2011; Boast 2011). Colonial policies also changed over time (Basu 2012). This renders problematic any generalised assessment of the role of anthropologists in the colonies as well as the policies of colonial administrations regarding the establishment of museums and the anthropological investigation of subject communities. Considerable theoretical literature has focused on the role of museums as institutions of colonial governance (Barringer 1998; Bennett 1995, 2004; Dibley 2005; Schildkrout 2006; Shelton 2006; Simpson 2006, 2009; Clapperton 2010; Boast 2011). In this context, the term 'metropole' has come to stand for the seats of administrative power within Western nations such as Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and Germany. The flow of objects and knowledge from the colonies to the metropole has been described as symbolic of the relationship between colonial territories and their administrative capital. This is because museums constituted the "three-dimensional imperial archive" by which the colonies were represented in the metropole (Barringer 1998: 11).

However, as we will see, these definitions and the divisions between museums, their staff, audiences and Indigenous source communities only apply to some extent to the Sarawak Museum. Here, local populations are the museum's target audience as well as constituting a large proportion of its staff (Mjöberg 1929). The Sarawak Museum, while it had

been established for the education and benefit of its local audiences rather than the public in a far-away metropole, nevertheless engaged in collecting and assessing knowledge about a region with which its administration was unfamiliar. The Sarawak Museum supported the administration under the Brooke Rajahs through the supply of information and data, but it was also an institution intended for the education of local people as well as for the investigation of the local environment for scientific purposes under the patronage of the Rajahs. The Brookes pursued a "paternalistic" style of governance (King 1988: 170), and conceived of the Sarawak Museum as an educational institution for its local populations. However, the museum's exhibitions framed local artifacts within the scientific hierarchies of disciplines such as anthropology, zoology, botany and geology. They were aimed at pursuing the education of its audiences according to Western scientific methods, as local audiences were taught to view their own environment through the scientific ordering of academic disciplines.

3.3. The role of anthropologists in nineteenth-century colonialism

The relationship between anthropologists working in colonial territories and colonial authorities was complex. Critics have pointed out that nineteenth-century anthropologists and anthropological theory reinforced the social and cultural hierarchies used to justify colonial control (Cohn 1996; King and Wilder 2003; Kuklick 2007a). According to Pels (1997: 165), the discipline of anthropology therefore "needs to be conceptualized in terms of governmentality as an academic offshoot of a set of universalist technologies of domination".

Relations between anthropologists and colonial administrators were not always amicable, however. Many colonial government servants were not convinced of the value of anthropological research, and in turn anthropologists, in particular from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, were critical of the effects of colonial governments on the people they studied (Kuper 2003; Metcalf, 2005). Nevertheless, while they may have clashed with the colonial administration, as Tom Harrisson did in Sarawak (see Chapter 5), anthropologists working in colonial territories relied on the frameworks of colonialism. Through these, they gained permission and access to the areas under investigation, and sometimes also material and financial support, and this has continued to problematise their role (James 1973).

Among the criticisms voiced by anthropologists against colonial administrations was their concern that small minority groups and their cultures were threatened by the outside

influence wrought by colonial governance (Poole 2005; Kuklick 2007). These societies were thought to have been inherently stable and averse to change, and therefore development and modernisation, for example in matters of health or education, could only be brought to them through outside influence. Proponents of this school of thought, referred to as 'structural functionalism' (Krech 1991; Metcalf 2005; Erickson & Murphy 2008), suggested that small ethnic communities were irrevocably changed by contact with foreigners and that their culture became inauthentic and contaminated by contact with outside groups (Cohn 1980; Tonkin et al 1989). As Maxwell has suggested, Indigenous people were considered to be "'vanishing races', a euphemistic term for those species of humans considered to be at risk of dying out because they were unable to compete with the fitter and more intelligent races of Europe in the evolutionary race for survival" (Maxwell 2008: 29). This assumption, although deconstructed and critiqued by post-colonial writers, still informs public perception as well as social and economic policy, as I will discuss in Chapter 8.

Because Indigenous societies were thought of as "inherently stable and changeless, and so timeless and history-less" (Tonkin et al 1998: 3), they were also deemed to be without relevant historical narratives, ahistorical or synchronic (Metcalf 2005). Such theories situated Indigenous societies in an unchanging ethnographic present (Fabian 1983; Davies, 1999). This "temporal compression" (Chua 2012) was reinforced through the methods used in anthropological fieldwork, as researchers investigated specific communities for predetermined periods but rarely carried out longitudinal studies or made repeat visits over time. This meant that narratives about the cultural and social development of Indigenous communities were not included in ethnographic accounts. As Davies has put it:

> Whereas the ethnographer moves on, temporally, spatially and developmentally, the people he or she studied are presented as if suspended in an unchanging and virtually timeless state, as if the ethnographer's description provides all that it is important, or possible, to know about their past and future (Davies 1999: 156).

Combined with the synchronic representation of Indigenous communities, the theory that Indigenous communities faced cultural extinction was reflected in museum exhibitions of artefacts collected from such communities. As Bennett wrote, in colonial museums

> ...the prospect of extinction was posed in many ways: through the depiction of the history of life on earth in natural history displays and,

of course, in the futures of non-existence that ethnographic displays projected for colonized people (Bennett 1995: 46-47).

The ahistorical representation of artefacts was only problematised by museum practitioners long after anthropologists had started to acknowledge the historical continuity of Indigenous societies and the importance of temporal context for Indigenous material culture (Schildkrout 2006).

3.4. PHOTOGRAPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND COLONIALISM

In Europe and its dependent territories, the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline can be traced to the 1830s, the same period that saw the emergence of photographic technology (Pinney 2011). Photography soon became a tool for the budding discipline of anthropology. For anthropologists, the technology enabled what were perceived as direct, detailed and unchanging documents with which scientific observations could be validated (Hartmann et al 1998; Grimshaw 2008). Compared with engravings and other manual illustrations or verbal descriptions, photographs were thought to depict their subject objectively and independent of human bias. This was because photographs were created through mechanical and chemical processes involving the exposure to light of a photo-sensitive surface (Sturken 1997; Frosh 2001; Edwards 2001). This process was understood to maximise impartiality and minimise human intervention in the creation of the image. Photography was therefore seen as well suited for the scientific method anthropologists were trying to establish (Bazin 1967). Photographs possessed an inherent truth-claim, the idea that there was an element of reality displayed in the image (Sontag 1973; Edwards 2004; Price 1994). However, even during the early years of the technology photography's claim to independent observation was not without critics (Tucker 2005). Victorians were aware of the effect of human slant, the influence of the photography and the possibility to trick the camera's chemical processes, Tucker argues, while experimenting with technological and scientific applications of the technology (Tucker 2005). Photographs were able to show what could not necessarily be seen with the bare eye, but the nature of photographic practices such as spirit photography remained subject to debate among scientists, academics and the general public (Tucker 2005). This ambiguity has continued to concern writers and academics (Sontag 1977; Batchen 2000, 2004; Pinney 2008). In spite of these uncertainties, photography became a

valuable asset for scientists, among them anthropologists, and administrators (Tagg 1988; Edwards 2011).

Early anthropological photographers were limited in their work by cumbersome machinery. Cameras were large and unwieldy and photographic plates required the subjects to remain motionless during lengthy exposure times, and did not allow photographs to be taken under low light conditions. Thus many early ethnographic photographs were either taken in studio settings or had to be meticulously staged. Such early ethnographic photographs and the way they were composed illustrate one of the main criticisms scholars have levelled against such material, namely their engagement in the "classificatory" ordering of local populations through photographic documentation (Appadurai 1997: 2). The focus of such images was on general traits in preference to individual identities. They were not intended to show the unique personality of the individual, but to establish a common type showing the most characteristic features of a particular group, class or caste (Landau 2002; Banks 2003). Described as *type photography* (Appadurai 1997; Banks 2003; Poignant 2004; Maxwell 2013), this kind of photograph presented its subject as a placeholder for his or her culture, group or community.

This feature of colonial photography led to another critique directed at the use of photography in the strategic organisation of local peoples for purposes of colonial governance. As Appadurai has pointed out, photographs were documentary evidence of the oppressive practices of colonial governments and their hierarchical ordering of local people, and therefore "decidedly classificatory, taxonomic, penal and somatic" (Appadurai 1997:2). Appadurai has called this photographic viewpoint "the imperial gaze" (Appadurai 1997: 1). Whether the photographs were taken by foreign anthropologists, colonial administrators or local photographers who had been employed for the task was secondary to the ideology that informed the photographs and through which their meaning was supplied. As Paul Landau has put it, "[t]he forces that marshalled and distributed images were the same ones that propagated the dominant interpretations of what the images were taken to mean" (Landau 2002: 159).

Across different genres and photographers, the descriptions that accompanied type photographs focused on the generalised illustration of characteristics instead of featuring the individual character of the person in the portrait, who in the process became "deindividualised and nameless" (Landau 2002: 151). The omission of the names of subjects in ethnographic photographs can have a dehumanising effect,

adding to the representation of type over person (Bradley 2013). It also suggests that the creators of such imagery were more focused on the effect of the photographs on their audiences at home rather than on the subtleties of other people's culture. Often, people were photographed against suitable backgrounds or in characteristic activities or environments, which situated them within the environment of whichever kind of group the photograph was meant to represent (Appadurai 1997). These simplified, essentialised representations of local people served to reassure the public in the metropole as well as the colonial administrations in the colonies. This was in spite of the awareness that these representations of visual types and their relationship with each other or with Western governments did not necessarily correspond to reality (Landau 2002).

In recent years, this interpretation of colonial photographs and their complicity in the hierarchical power structures of colonial regimes has been questioned by researchers pointing towards the acts of agency and multiple interpretations which can be derived from photographs (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998; Geismar 2009; Edwards 2010; Lydon 2010). As I will argue in the following chapters of this thesis, different colonial contexts and circumstances such as the relationships between photographers and photographic subjects also need to be taken into account.

3.5. Paradigm shifts in museum studies and anthropology

With the eventual independence of colonial territories after the end of World War II, the established theories or meta-narratives (Lyotard 1984) of anthropology, history and the social sciences came increasingly under critique. The theoretical deconstruction and re-appraisal of over-arching truth claims in these disciplines, driven by "the rise of subaltern positions" (Bhambra 2012: 653) and vocal contributors from previously-colonised territories, focused on theories that had justified colonial authority and the methods and techniques that had supported it. Among the disputed meta-narratives was the theory that the "paternalistic imperialism" (Boast 2011: 46) practised by Great Britain would propel colonial territories towards development and modernity (Mathur 2000). In the eyes of critics, the dichotomy between modern and backward that had equated colonial domination with progress amounted to a kind of outdated social evolutionism that informed the policies of colonial administrations "with only the concept of evolution substituted for that of progress" (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 121).

In the course of these shifts anthropologists were compelled to review their methods and theories as their work came under critique for its role in colonial domination and control. The review of the field was driven by the acknowledgement by its practitioners that anthropology was intrinsically entangled with colonialism, and had played a role in the domination and exploitation of peoples under colonial control (Kuklick 2007a). Critics increasingly questioned the implied objectivity of knowledge generated in academic institutions, and argued that the outcomes of anthropological research had been appropriated to maintain unequal power relationships, discrimination, and scientific racism (Glick 2007) because the "information and understanding produced by bourgeois disciplines like anthropology [were] acquired and used most readily by those with the greatest capacity for exploitation" (Asad 1973: 17). This shift signalled the dismantling of such universalist knowledge as well as academia's "positivist explanatory paradigms and their presumed associations with power" (Bhambra 2012: 654).

Anthropologists increasingly interrogated their findings for traces of social and cultural bias. Such self-critique resulted in the awareness among practitioners that anthropologists needed to address their interpretive bias and position themselves in their research so as to avoid positivist claims to knowledge (Davies 1999; Reed-Danahay 2002; Chang 2007; Butz and Besio 2004). Among anthropologists the consensus was emerging that "ethnographic texts should be polyvocal" (Aronoff and Kublick 2013: 41).

The critique of anthropological theory and practice led anthropologists to question the ahistorical nature of Indigenous communities and to pay increasing attention to the historical narratives of Indigenous peoples. In 1950, Evans-Pritchard suggested that anthropology was "a kind of historiography" (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 121). He urged anthropologists to conduct ethnography as a way of writing history instead of trying to draw out the patterns and principles governing human societies, thereby "adding to a naive determinism a crude teleology and pragmatism" (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 120). Evans-Pritchard's critique resonated with many who felt that Indigenous history, in spite of a lack of the conventional resources of historical research such as written documents, was a valuable subject of investigation. Evans-Pritchard's views, although strongly refuted by other anthropologists at the time, were taken up again by a later generation of anthropologists, academics and writers. Cohn echoed Evans-Pritchard's criticism in 1980 by suggesting a new approach to history as well as anthropology, and proposed that history should be conducted "from the bottom up" (Cohn 1980: 214).

According to Cohn, written historical sources were limited because they did not represent a large portion of the population. In his view, historians needed to focus on these alternative historical narratives, studying

> the masses, the inarticulate, the deprived, the dispossessed, the exploited, those groups and categories in society seen by earlier and more elitist historians, not as protagonistic but as passive, and therefore not a proper historical focus (Cohn 1980: 214).

By fusing the two disciplines of history and anthropology, Cohn suggested that "history can become more historical in becoming more anthropological, that anthropology can become more anthropological in becoming more historical" (Cohn 1980: 215). A result of this paradigm shift was the emergence of the discipline of ethnohistory (Chaves 2008), whose practitioners used oral history, memory and other personal and individual local narratives to establish alternative local histories (Marcus 1998). Researchers started to investigate resources such as oral history, including Indigenous myths, legends and genealogies, to access narratives of the past of Indigenous peoples while juxtaposing these sources with historical documentation from archives and museums (Chaves 2008). As a field of inquiry, ethnohistory was subjected to the same criticisms as anthropology, namely that both were biased and Western-centric approaches to culture, and that their main achievement was to "reveal the biases that have distorted Euroamerican views of native people from the sixteenth century until the present" (Trigger 1986: 253). Nevertheless, ethnohistorians affirmed the necessity for understanding the history of Indigenous peoples as an analytical field.

The development of anthropological thought through social evolutionism towards a more critical and reflexive discipline was set in motion during the time when Sarawak Museum staff started to engage with the photographic documentation of Indigenous communities, with Tom Harrisson at the helm. Harrisson, the curator during Sarawak's period as a British colony, was also an early and vocal, if erratic, critic of anthropological thought at a time when his contemporaries, in academia as well as in the administration, were still convinced about the validity of the social evolutionist theories criticised by Evans-Pritchard.

With regard to the changing theories of anthropological thought discussed in this chapter, I argue that Harrisson's work with Mass-Observation indicates his doubts about the synchronic and ahistorical nature of the communities he investigated (Stanton 1997).

His methods also suggest his early concern for providing a voice for what Cohn called the "inarticulate" (Cohn 1980: 214) who were, in the context of Harrisson's later work in Sarawak, the Indigenous groups who had in the past been represented by others through ethnographic publications instead of representing themselves and their culture (Heimann 1999). Harrisson's work at the Sarawak Museum also indicated his shift towards the critical and reflexive approach in anthropology that only fully emerged in the discipline much later. Therefore, the photographic archive he created at the museum shows the traces of these emerging theories in anthropological thought, which makes the archive a unique repository of material relevant for tracing these changes in the discipline.

3.6. Changing relationships between museums and source communities

The critical questioning of established theoretical frameworks in anthropology and the social sciences during the second half of the twentieth century had a profound, if delayed, effect on museum practices and practitioners and caused a period of theoretical and practical repositioning in the early 1970s (Srinivasan et al 2009). Critiqued as "a hegemonic discourse in which claims about knowledge are presented in absolute terms" (Witcomb 2003: 103), the creation of positivist knowledge in museums was questioned by its critics. They argued that the meaning of museum objects was dependent on their social role in society and on individual interpretations, and subject to change over time (Marstine 2008). Critics also argued that the presence of museum workers needed to be acknowledged in exhibitions so that audiences could put the narratives presented to them into perspective. As Marstine suggested, "museum workers commonly naturalize their policies and procedures as professional practice [but] the decisions these workers make reflect underlying value systems that are encoded in institutional narratives" (Marstine 2008: 5). Culturally exclusive museum practices prevalent in many museums disregarded other people's ways of collecting and preserving cultural heritage because, as Kreps put it, "[p]rofessional Western museology has rested almost exclusively on one knowledge system, namely the modern Western one" (Kreps 2003: 962). Kreps pointed out that the collection and care of historical artefacts, for instance heirloom objects and other material goods, is not limited to any specific cultural group or context but is common to many societies. In spite of this, according to Kreps,

[t]he notion that the museum is a uniquely modern, Western cultural invention has become deeply rooted in Western museology to the point of neglecting other cultures' models of museums and curatorial practices (Kreps 2003: 958).

Such criticisms provoked much debate, significantly altered practices among museum practitioners and led many to reconsider the functions and responsibilities of the institution, and to recast museums "from a collection of singular expert accounts to a site of different educational engagements" (Srinivasan et al 2009: 266).

To acknowledge these considerations and to encourage alternative approaches, museums increasingly included different contributors in the curation of exhibitions. According to the growing field of practice broadly labelled 'new museology', source communities were to become the producers not only of objects but also of knowledge, and an increasing number of collaborative projects were initiated (Fienup-Riordan 1999; MacDonald 2006). New museology, also referred to as 'new museum theory' or 'critical museum theory' (Marstine 2008: 5) developed around criticisms of ethnographic representation, access and participation at museums, and the critique of what Dibley has called a "legacy of exclusionary practices" (Dibley 2005: 7). Museums explored methods of collaboration with source communities in the creation and contextualisation of exhibitions through projects involving co-curation and co-production (Peers & Brown, 2003; Phillips, 2003). In Pratt's view, museums had the potential to become contact zones (Pratt 1991). The term, coined by Pratt, denoted

social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (Pratt 1991: 1).

Revising the role of museums would enable source communities to contribute to and collaborate with museums, and would enable both to address past and present injustices such as the stereotypical and racist representations of Indigenous peoples (Lynch and Alberti 2010). The collaborations between museums and source communities involved the conceptualisation and formation of 'expert communities' (Srinivasan et al 2009) made up of museum specialists, anthropologists, historians, source communities and other stakeholders concerned with cultural heritage and history. Source communities were included in the creation of cultural knowledge along with museum staff and academic experts, and shared responsibility for the care and contextualisation of artefacts.

As Peers and Brown suggested, the role of museums continues to change as museums become stewards of artefacts on behalf of source communities. They are no longer the sole voices of authority in displaying and interpreting those objects, but acknowledge a moral and ethical (and sometimes political) obligation to involve source communities in decisions affecting their material heritage (Peers & Brown 2003: 2).

This transformation of museums into places where the previously disaffected would find a voice was among the motives of museum specialists in the critical reassessment of the institution. As Andrea Witcomb has put it, "[i]n giving voice to the powerless, a process of self-discovery and empowerment will take place in which the curator becomes a facilitator rather than a figure of authority" (Witcomb 2007: 133). In the eyes of museologists, participatory museum practices and co-curation projects held the potential to address the ahistorical representation of Indigenous communities by those museums that ignored the historical embeddedness and continuity of Indigenous culture and cultural traditions (Schildkrout 2006). Through collaborations with source communities, current and contemporary cultural practices could be represented as organically developing from historical practices and constantly evolving. Moreover, co-curation or co-production projects led to an increased awareness of cultural heritage within source communities, and of the cultural continuity of their communities (Peers & Brown 2003).

3.7. Museums as contact zones?

These co-operations between museums and source communities, which Phillips has called "a typical hybrid product of the post-colonial era" (Phillips 2003: 159), have been problematic. Boast has argued that even in collaborative efforts between museums and communities the final authority remains with the museum and its staff, which makes equal participation impossible. As Boast has put it, when museums collaborate with source communities, "dialogue and collaboration are foregrounded, but the ultimate suppression of oppositional discourse is always effected" (Boast 2011: 64). Because of this, Boast has argued that some museums have become part of neo-colonial frameworks that reinforce inequality. Other critics are concerned with the proprietorship over Indigenous knowledge and wary of the reasons why co-productive projects are initiated. They argue that clearly-defined benefits for both sides must be

a prerogative for collaborations (Phillips 2003). Other writers have suggested that any attempt at reframing museums as spaces that enable democratic collaboration, dialogue and collaboration must not neglect their historical entanglement with oppressive colonial regimes. This is a past from which the institution cannot be separated (Dibley 2005). In order to address past iniquities,

> [a]ny formulation of museums as sites of exchange, as relations of reciprocity, has to be informed by a history of museums that is attentive to the entanglement of the projects of democracy and those of colonialism (Dibley 2005: 17).

As Dibley has pointed out, in spite of projects aimed at collaboration and exchange between museums and source communities, many of these "relations of reciprocity look more like those in which the marginal and dispossessed are to be reconciled to the historical structures of their marginalization and dispossession" (Dibley 2005: 17).

Museums work to acknowledge Indigenous voices in exhibitions, and transfer descriptive and analytical authority to source communities. However, some museologists have also pointed out that there are a range of practices and methods through which communities engage with cultural artifacts that differ from the methods and techniques practised at museums. In the past, these have resonated little within the space of museum exhibitions (Kreps, 2003). These practices through which source communities contextualise artefacts include oral, performative and experiential practices rarely acknowledged as being pertinent to museums and their activities. I use the term 'contextualisation' to refer to the provision of explanatory and descriptive information, the arrangement of exhibitions and the juxtaposition of objects and artefacts. I also refer to the integration of an object into a wider context of social and cultural practice, which can be embodied, performative or sensory. Museums are still finding ways to engage with methods of contextualising artifacts that fall outside the established methods used by museums and which have been described as "contrasting and fluid ontologies" (Boast et al 2007). These kinds of Indigenous knowledge and ways of transmitting information have remained largely unacknowledged by museum workers because in spite of the shift towards more inclusive museum methods, "knowledge, authority, and modes of framing/classification have always been culturally distributed and have frequently been epistemologically incommensurable" (Boast et al 2007). I will discuss this issue in detail in Chapter Seven. Collaborative museum practices are still evolving through this debate.

The assessment of the role and responsibility of museums is complicated by the fact that many different kinds of museums with different histories exist that fulfil a variety of social functions (Clapperton 2010). Many of these overlap with other scientific, cultural or educational institutions. In addition, there are other institutions in a variety of environments and locales that emulate the functions of museums. Curation of and care for material culture is not confined to museums but extends to places of worship, commerce or social interaction (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1997; Kreps, 2003a). Conceiving of museums as being exclusively Western therefore dismisses cultural practices of other people, because "although the museum is generally construed as a modern western cultural form, museological-type behaviour is a long-standing, cross-cultural phenomenon" (Kreps 2003:4).

3.8. Photographs and new museum practices

By the middle of the twentieth century, after the end of World War II, a period of de-colonisation saw the independence of numerous colonial territories previously governed by Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany and other Western nations. One of the outcomes of this process and part of the assertion of local identities was an emerging debate about the acquisition of cultural heritage by colonial museums. Source communities contested the ownership of museum collections and rallied for the return of cultural artefacts (Simpson 2009; Clapperton 2010). Often, artefacts had been removed forcibly or against the will of the communities, or through coercion by individuals linked to colonial administrations (Simpson 2009). Not all source communities, however, demanded the return of their cultural heritage artefacts. Some communities expressed appreciation of the role of museums in the conservation of heritage, and saw the inclusion of Indigenous artefacts in museum collections as a sign of appreciation of their material culture and traditional heritage (Fierup-Riordan 1999). In other cases, dialogue between museums and source communities resulted in the sharing of information about the storage, access to and conservation of objects between museums and source communities (Simpson 1996). Some museums declined to repatriate their artefacts, and instead insisted on the importance of their collections remaining accessible to the public (Curtis 2006). The argument against repatriation was that museums act as custodians of objects that might otherwise have ceased to exist, and that they should continue to hold this responsibility.

Confronted with the complex questions of conserving and safeguarding cultural heritage, some academics and researchers in the field have proposed to re-consider the meaning of cultural property. As Busse has argued, thinking about "less proprietary forms of curatorship" (Busse 2008: 193-194) could allow museums and source communities to share the responsibilities of curating and conserving cultural heritage.

The return of photographs to their source communities has been less contentious than the repatriation of artefacts. Unlike objects, prints or copies of photographs can be returned while the original negatives remain safely in an archive or museum. As material artifacts, photographs were less likely to be imbued with spiritual significance as were other museum artifacts, most notably human remains (Curtis 2006). As in the case of the Sarawak Museum archive, photographs were often created not by the communities themselves but by museum staff or anthropologists, and thus questions of material as well as intellectual ownership were more complex.

Many collections of photographs, taken by colonial administrators or Western anthropologists, were held in European and American metropolitan museums where they were interpreted and exhibited. In other cases they were filed away and forgotten (Chua 1999). People in the source communities often did not know such collections existed and because the photographs were spatially removed from the place where they had been taken, people were unable to access them even if they had known of their existence. With the increased use of new media and interactive technology, this situation is now changing (Newell 2012).

The social biographies of collections of colonial photographs varied widely. Some collections became part of archival collections overseas, far away from their source communities, while others remained in their place of origin after the region achieved independence. Some photographic archives in post-colonial countries received little attention from either source communities or local researchers as new nations struggled to come to terms with their colonial past (Buckley 2005). Some formerly colonial territories established their own museums and collected images taken in the communities to make them available to the public (Geismar 2009; Alivizatou 2012). Some such collections have been re-appropriated as historical documentation by Indigenous peoples who actively collect, view and comment on historical photographs of their own communities (Tsinhnahjinnie 2003; Bala, 2000).

3.9. MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHS AND SOURCE COMMUNITIES

In the past two decades a range of archives holding ethnographic or colonial photographs have made their collections available to be returned to their source communities. Researchers have increasingly developed collaborative projects with source communities based on the interpretation of colonial and ethnographic photographs from the period. These projects suggest a thriving interest in visual research in the social sciences and humanities over the past three decades reflected in the growing theoretical fields such as visual anthropology and visual sociology (Grimshaw 2008; Morton and Edwards 2009; Margolis and Pauwels 2011; Pinney 2011; Pink 2012). The realm of visual documentation has remained a dynamic field of investigation as the multiple interpretations that can be derived from photographs and other visual material are examined by researchers in the area. My research seeks to contribute to this growing body of research.

Returning photographs to their source communities allows researchers to remove ethnographic photographs from the mechanisms that make them ethnographic, enabling their role to change. To facilitate this, researchers sometimes withhold descriptions added to the photograph by the photographer or researcher, in order to reinforce the removal of the photograph from the context in which it had acted as ethnographic evidence, and to make the photograph available for renewed interpretation (Bell 2003). In the case of Bell's work, the lack of captions including the names of people portrayed was linked to a fear of disclosing one's claims to ancestry, as this may cause jealousy and prompt others to use sorcery as a result. As Bell notes, this reluctance has in turn affected local communities' claim to ancestral land and recompensation to the use of the land by logging companies active in the area (Bell 2003). During my research some photos prompted similarly complex narratives, many of which provide clues to the communities' struggle to reconcile traditional practices and beliefs with contemporary issues. However, Bell's stated objective in removing the captions, including names of subjects, from his photographs had been to focus the attention of participants on the content of the image rather than on a preconceived explanation (Bell 2003). Other researchers had similar concerns. As Geismar has put it, when she presented written captions with historical photographs to source communities, "[t]he perceived veracity of text overwhelmed the potentiality of images to construe meaning in place" (Geismar 2009).

The removal of photographs from the ethnographic context and their insertion into the historical category redefined their social and cultural role. Opening their archives to source communities and enabling community members to access their photographs signalled the endeavour of museums to redistribute expert authority over the content of the photographs and share with the source communities the responsibility for defining the meaning of photographs, if not the rights to the material itself. For communities traditionally represented by foreigners and outsiders, this was an important shift. Native American photographer Tsinhnahjinnie called her own re-interpretation of ethnographic photographs 'photographic sovereignty' (Tsinhnahjinnie 2003: 42), as she re-interpreted photographs according to her own narratives and culturally- and communally-derived knowledge. Photographic sovereignty is the ability of viewers to override previous contexts and captions in which photographs were explained and narrated through institutional experts and specialists as well as the photographer who created the images. Photographic sovereignty relates to the assumption of intellectual proprietary rights over historical material by Indigenous communities, even if the copyright is still held by an institution. It is therefore part of what Brown has called a community's "cultural sovereignty" (Brown 1998) over traditional heritage. However, cultural sovereignty has no impact on copyright or usage right. With regards to copyright laws, photographs commissioned by a museum, as in the case of the Sarawak Museum, lie with the institution and therefore the use of the photographs for people in the communities remains limited. According to most countries copyright laws, photographs may only be reproduced, published and used commercially by the copyright holder, for instance. As a photographer's copyright expires after a specified number of years after the death of the creator, some ethnographic photographs have already come into the public domain. For more recent material or material belonging to institutions, copyright laws limit contemporary and economic engagements which source communities may be interested in. As Lydon (2010) has suggested, this limitation is the result of the application of Western legal frameworks where a more collaborative or communal approach may be more appropriate to the cultural context of the material.

Another criticisms levelled at new museology's community co-curation projects is that collaborations are often confined to the methods and techniques and the space of museums, which constitute, as Marstine has put it, "an 'assertive environment' that impacts on the viewing experience" (Marstine 2008: 15). When photographs are returned to their source communities, photographs are relocated and while they may remain

under the care of researchers the museum's ownership of the material is mitigated. Historical prints and negatives forming the original collections usually stay in the care of museums, but prints and reproductions circulate easily; even if they are damaged or destroyed in the process of returning them to a community they can be reproduced again. For communities, the difference between the original print and a copy is not a central issue in most cases. The content of the photograph and its interpretation is more important than the material object. As Dobbin has argued, "[w]hat is repatriated in these initiatives is not necessarily the physical photographs themselves but rather elements of history, memory, and identity that are associated with the images" (Dobbin 2013: 129).

Ethnographic photographs can fulfil important roles for the source communities regardless of the original intent that motivated the photographer. This is demonstrated by the interest shown by source communities in reviewing historical photographs, and the uses to which they have been put after becoming accessible to the communities (Binney & Chaplin 2003; Bell, 2003; Smith, 2008; Peers & Brown, 2009; Lydon, 2010). The communities in which anthropological research and photographic documentation were carried out were at times small and remote and the people who lived there did not always have access to photographic technology (Geismar 2009). In such cases, ethnographic museum collections are often the only existing historical records beyond oral sources from the communities and written documents from government archives.

This is the case for many of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, since the archive with its thousands of prints, slides and negatives constitutes the largest collection of material from the region available at a public institution and unlike most other collections is publicly accessible in Sarawak. The rarity of the material augments the importance of such photographs for source communities. In places where ethnographic photographs have been gathered by museums after the end of the colonial period, for example in Vanuatu, they have led to diverse contemporary projects in which material culture and cultural heritage is re-created, and in which contemporary and historical cultural practices have fused into new contemporary forms (Geismar and Tilley 2003; Geismar 2009; Alivizatou, 2012). In other cases, for example in Papua New Guinea, historical photographs have been used to solve contemporary problems such as arguments over the control of economic resources and contested communal leadership (Bell 2003). As Bell notes with regards to his research, engagement with the photographs with their source communities has "helped re-vitalize inter-generational communication

by giving the past a new *presence*" (Bell 2003: 112) but which has also entailed conflict over ownership as well as the threat of sourcery, and other contemporary complications. Bell's accounts suggest that eturning archival photographs to source communities is not a guarantee for establishing reciprocal relationships between communities and cultural institutions such as museums. However, it reintroduces photographs to contemporary communities which causes the photographs to take on new roles within the social environment of the community in various ways. As I have noted, inequalities in the process of photographic return may arise as communities establish new hierarchies of access and rights to documentation.

The collections of the Sarawak Museum have remained part of Sarawak's cultural heritage. They are available to local audiences as well as source communities, if only on request rather than as part of a public display or exhibition. However, few projects involving community participation or co-production have as yet been carried out (Appleton 2011). This may be due to the fact that the museum is staffed by members of the source communities and thus the distinction between source community and museum practitioners is not clear cut. Moreover though, the implementation of such museological practices as community co-production is dependent on institutional funding and on the policies of the museum administration. At the Sarawak Museum, the inclusion of source communities in the production of exhibitions has, so far, not been a priority. However, museum staff and administration allow community contributions and engagement with its collection and the museum has in the past been open to community-driven projects. This suggests that criticisms voiced by writers such as Dibley and Boast only partly apply to the museological practices of the Sarawak Museum. in the past, the Sarawak Museum has had close working relationships with its source communities which were also its audiences and made up its staff. While this complicates the theoretical assessment of the institution and its history, the Sarawak Museum and its collections are well positioned to extend and elaborate upon potential collaborations with people in the source communities. During my research I therefore sought to examine the potential of such practices for the Sarawak Museum and the insights that can be derived from community co-production in collaboration with source communities.

3.10. Museums, photographs and embodied practices

One of the relevant additions to museological research offered when photographs are returned to their source communities is the contextualisation of objects by source communities. In exhibitions, museum artefacts are commonly framed through exhibition narratives, explanatory texts and other reference material. When they are returned to the communities, photographs are contextualised through the kinds of stories and narratives, reactions, memories and emotions they evoke when they are discussed with people in the source communities. As Edwards has put it, photographs are directly related to oral expression and performance, so much so, she argues, that

> photographs operate not only simply as visual history but are performed…
> as a form of oral history, linked to sound, gesture and thus to the
> relationships in which and through which these practices are embedded
> (Edwards 2006: 28).

Edwards argues that asuming oral history to be another kind of textual interpretation of photographs is not enough. Instead it is necessary to understand such oral narratives as embodied, and to take a closer look at their performative aspects. By referring to "oral, tactile and embodied ways of thinking through photographs"(Edwards 2006: 36) she indicated that a "marginalization of the sensory" (Edwards 2006: 37) that foregrounds textual analysis has directed academic thinking away from embodied and experiential ways of engaging with photographs. As Edwards has suggested, Western "occularcentrism" and the "primacy of the visual" (Edwards 2006: 28) has led to a focus on the visible over the embodied. Photographs and the responses they prompt can be understood as a performative manifestation of knowledge and memory (Geismar 2009). While Edwards particularly notes the sounds and vocalisations that arise when people view and contextualise photographs, there are other activities through which people in source communities can provide context to images. The methods for interpreting and contextualising photographs exceed verbal or textual description because "photographs are complex materialisations of the subjective and experiential as well as the objective and evidential" (Geismar 2009: 48).

The literature discussed above suggests that the return of images to their source communities and photo elicitation interviews reveal different perceptions, views and ways in which people think about traditional culture. It also shows how photographs

and the objects and scenes they contain can be contextualised, and how photographs relate to lived experience when they are not only described and narrated, but when their context is reproduced, performed and experienced. For museums that facilitate the return of photographs from their collections, these practices represent alternative methods of repositioning collections as cultural resources. In the words of Srinivasan, these different cultural practices or 'ontologies' (Srinivasan 2012: 3) have in the past been excluded from museums, but are an important aspect of how people relate to cultural heritage. I will examine these aspects photography in Chapters Seven and Eight.

For museums, the return of photographs to their source communities offers the opportunity to engage with some of the objectives of new museology, such as reciprocity, democratic exchange and inclusion of multiple voices, through the co-operation with source communities. Like other collaborative projects, there are inherent problems in the approach including the questions of who finances such projects, how the material is chosen, and which community members collaborate. These and other questions must be addressed anew for each project. Nevertheless, as my research suggests, museums can gain valuable knowledge about different ways of engaging with photographs and communicating knowledge about them. In turn, their origin in the institutions of colonial governments is an important part of what Edwards has called the 'social biography' of a photograph (Edwards 2002). The origins of a photograph, its creation as part of a colonial institution and its usage during the existence of the photographs as a material object influence the potential meanings inherent in a photograph. The knowledge of the circumstances in which a photograph was taken and the uses to which it has been put are therefore relevant to the interpretation formed by the viewer. As Edwards has pointed out, "an object cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but rather should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of meaning, production, exchange and usage" (Edwards 2002: 68).

3.11. Conclusion

In my discussion of the theories and histories of anthropology, photography and the field of museum studies I have outlined the literature that has informed this research. The intention has been to examine early instances of ethnographic photography as well as the developments that occurred in anthropology and museology during the

second half of the twentieth century, new theories in these fields and their application in projects where photographs are returned to the source communities. I have focused on the methods by which anthropologists, museum workers and writers in the field have critically questioned the theories, methods and practices of their disciplines. This critique prompted projects of reflexive anthropology and collaborative museum projects in which the shortcomings of earlier practices were addressed. These projects continue to produce important additions to the theoretical field, and to developing museum practices. In this chapter I have established the trajectories that led to these theoretical and methodological shifts.

As I have outlined, colonial photographs and the museums and archives in which they were kept came under strong criticism for reinforcing the social stereotypes and hierarchies of local populations, thus supporting regimes of colonial governance. The visualisation of this theoretical approach, grounded in social evolutionism, was provided by "evolutionary museums" (Bennet 1995: 5). As I have suggested, colonial archives and the policies governing access to and participation in the construction of these archives as well as their interpretation, reflected the unequal power structures on which these systems of governance were based. According to critics, the British colonial administration established these institutional frameworks for the acquisition of knowledge as a means of exerting control over their colonial territories through compiling information about them (Richards 1992).

As we will see, the Sarawak Museum was among the institutions of the British colonial government. By the time Sarawak became a British colony, the museum's facilities had been used for over half a century by foreign researchers as a point of access to carry out research in Sarawak, and as a repository for specimens and artefacts, documents and photographs that had resulted from these investigations. However, by the end of World War II, the role of museums in British colonies had changed, as British colonial agencies worked towards the eventual independence of the territories under their control (Basu 2012). Tom Harrisson's work at the Sarawak Museum falls into this time frame. This is one reason why the Sarawak Museum archive and its photographic collections merit closer investigation to determine in what ways theoretical critique of colonial ethnographic photography can be applied to the collection.

As I have discussed in this chapter, the unique history of the Sarawak Museum and its curator during Sarawak's period as a British colony are not the only reasons why

its collections lend themselves to investigation as well as collaborative community work. Photographs such as those from the Sarawak Museum archive have been subject to critique because they rendered the social injustices of the colonial period visible and thereby reinforced them. However, more recent research has shown that photographs contain many more subtle traces of interaction, negotiation and agency, and allow for alternative interpretations that do not always reinforce the original intention of their creator.

In order to investigate these alternative interpretations I chose to engage in a discussion about the photographs with people from the source communities to find out how the photographs were viewed by the people whom they represented, and to contrast their view with the findings of writers reviewed in this chapter. As my discussion of the relevant academic literature has indicated, a closer and more nuanced investigation of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum in collaboration with the source communities provides insights both for the communities and for the museum in the interpretation of ethnographic photographs from colonial museum collections such as that of the Sarawak Museum. I have drawn on the work of Binney and Chaplin (2003) and Peers and Brown (2009) as well as the work of Geismar (2009) and Bell (2008) to argue that in spite of the theoretical criticism that has been levelled at such photographs for their entanglement in the social frameworks of colonialism, colonial and ethnographic photographs are important cultural resources for source communities as well as museums.

As we will see in the next chapter, an examination of Sarawak's history and that of the Sarawak Museum suggests that the state and its institutions developed along a trajectory different from that of other colonial territories, although many parallels are evident. The political history of the region and the relationship between local Indigenous communities and the colonial government are relevant for evaluating the role of the Sarawak Museum as an institution of the government, and for the assessment of the photographic material. In the next chapter, I examine the establishment of the Sarawak Museum by the second White Rajah in 1888, the colonial history of the state after cession in 1946, and the creation of the photographic archive under its curator during the colonial period, Tom Harrisson. I will discuss how the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were created, and provide an overview of the communities in which the photographs used in the project were taken.

MUSEUM
New wing (completed 1911) and Old wing
Photo about 1912
The Verandahs were enclosed and a new porch and
entrance made in 1940.

Figure 4.1) Sarawak Museum, undated

Chapter Four: Sarawak and the Sarawak Museum

4. 1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the location of this research and the historical and environmental context in which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were created. The chapter begins with a short introduction to Sarawak, its geography and its history, to provide the background to the region discussed in this thesis. I introduce the Kenyah communities in which the photo elicitation interviews were conducted, and their social and physical environment in Sarawak's remote inland region. I then explore the history of the Sarawak Museum, its inception and its practices during the government of the Brooke Rajahs, throughout Sarawak's period under British colonial administration and after Sarawak became part of Malaysia. In this section, the theories about museological practices during nineteenth-century colonial imperialism explored in the previous chapter are applied to the practices of the Sarawak Museum.

I then examine the period in which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were taken, when Sarawak was governed as a British colonial territory. Under the colonial administration, anthropological research became an important tool for social and economic development projects carried out in Sarawak. I examine the work of E.R. Leach on behalf of the Governor of Sarawak and his contribution to shaping development policies in Sarawak in order to clarify the role of applied anthropology in Sarawak during the period. Leach's work in Sarawak, similar to that of Harrisson, indicates that changes in anthropology were emerging in the discipline. As was demonstrated in the last chapter, anthropological theories were indeed changing. Anthropologists started to refute cultural evolutionism and structural functionalism, and moved towards more inclusive and reflexive practices that took into account the voices and opinions of source communities. Leach and Tom Harrisson, the curator of the Sarawak Museum, were at the forefront of this shift, as their approaches to anthropological research in Sarawak suggest. Harrisson's work, his methods and the theories on which his practices were based will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

I also investigate the social, political and economic developments in Sarawak after its incorporation into the federation of Malaysia in 1963. The 1970s marked the beginning of intensive utilisation of economic resources in the interior of Sarawak, first through the extraction of timber and more recently through the establishment of large-scale plantation projects and the proposed construction of several hydroelectric dams. The economic exploitation of this formerly remote region inhabited by the different Orang Ulu groups impacted on the relationships between the communities and the Government. Positioned as backward and in need of development and modernisation, the rural communities continued to be the focus of development policies and projects. The inhabitants of these communities had little influence on the nature and direction of such programmes. As Majid Cooke has put it, rural Indigenous people were persuaded "that globalisation... is inevitable and that those who stand in its way will suffer the dire consequence of being left behind." (Majid Cooke 2002: 189-190). These practices, I argue, closely resembled the kind of revived evolutionist preconceptions that justified projects of imperial colonialism, and the domination of Indigenous peoples by others who considered themselves more advanced. Indigenous peoples were deemed to be technologically and culturally backward, and in danger of vanishing or extinction, and therefore needed to be developed with the assistance of more advanced societies.

4.2. Sarawak

The Malaysian state of Sarawak shares the land mass of the third largest island in the world, Borneo, with the Sultanate of Brunei, the Malaysian state of Sabah in the Northeast and the Indonesian provinces of Kalimantan in the South (see map 1.2). With the equator running across Borneo, the climate is tropical and most of Sarawak's land surface was once covered in lowland and montane dipterocarp forests, peat swamps and coastal mangrove forests.

Sarawak covers an area of 124,000 square kilometres, with a population of 2.47 million in 2010 (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2010). Sarawak thus has 37% of the territory of the whole of Malaysia with less than 10% of the population, and the lowest population density of all Malaysian states (Sarawak State Planning Unit 2010). Sarawak's coastal regions are its population centres, and the rural interior is sparsely populated. The main cities are Kuching, the capital, and Miri in the north near the border with Brunei. In between these two lie the smaller towns of Sibu and Bintulu.

Figure 4.2) The hilly interior of Sarawak, near the Tinjar, 1956

The ethnic distribution varies between the different states of Malaysia. In West Malaysia, ethnic Malays make up the majority, followed by ethnic Chinese and Indians, many of whom migrated to the region as labourers encouraged by the British colonial administration when the region was a British crown colony (Stenson 1980). Less numerous in terms of population are the different Indigenous groups called Orang Asli, who are the Aboriginal or Indigenous people of West Malaysia. In Sarawak, ethnic Iban make up the largest percentage of the population at 29%, followed by ethnic Chinese at 25% and ethnic Malays at 22%. A further 8% of the population is made up of the different groups of Bidayuh in the southwest around Kuching.

Figure 4.3) Long Jegan longhouse on the Tinjar, 1956

A further 5.5% of Sarawak's population identifies as Melanau and 5.6% as any one of numerous smaller groups, including Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah, Lun Bawang, Penan and several others (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2010).

These numerous groups are collectively referred to as Orang Ulu, which translates from Malay as 'people from upriver', because most of them live in the middle and upper reaches of the great river systems in the centre and north of Sarawak, the Rejang and the Baram and their tributaries. The fieldwork for this thesis was carried out in this region, mostly with one group among the Orang Ulu referred to as the Kenyah. Before the arrival of the Brooke Rajahs, the whole area today referred to as Sarawak was under the rule of the Sultan of Brunei (Goldman 1968; Porritt 2007). In 1841, the English trader and adventurer James Brooke established himself in Sarawak as the first of three English rajahs, or kings, by quelling a local uprising that the envoy of the Sultan of Brunei

had not been able to contain (Porritt 2007). Brooke governed the region by what Reece has called "an exercise in freelance imperialism" for over 20 years and, in 1868, was succeeded by his nephew Charles (Reece 2003). Charles continued to extend the territory of the kingdom by annexing parts of Brunei, and consolidated his rights as Rajah. Charles Brooke founded the Sarawak Museum in 1888. The northern regions of Sarawak including the Baram and its tributaries, the fieldwork areas for this project, were under the control of the Sultan of Brunei until 1882, when Charles Brooke acquired the area for an annual payment (Hose and McDougall 1912; Hazis 2012). In 1888, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak signed a protectorate agreement with Britain after years of negotiations (Kaur 1995).

Charles Brooke's rule ended with his death in 1917. He was succeeded by his son Charles Vyner Brooke. During World War II Japanese military forces gradually occupied most of Southeast Asia and eventually entered Malaya and Singapore, and Charles Vyner Brooke left Sarawak for Australia (Runciman 1960). Japanese military troops landed in Sarawak on the 15th of December 1942 in Miri and reached Kuching on Christmas Eve in 1942 (Ooi 1999, 2010). The period of Japanese governance was one of upheaval; while some Sarawakians supported the Japanese, others, particularly ethnic Chinese, suffered violence and injustice (Ooi 1020). Australian forces landed on the island in June 1945, and several months later all Japanese units stationed in Borneo surrendered (Ooi 2010). Vyner Brooke returned to Sarawak, but decided not to take up his former role again and ceded the territory to the British Crown in 1946 (Seitelman, 1948; Ooi, 2013).

The cession was strongly opposed by some Sarawakians, in particular sections of the Malay community (Walker 1994; Hazis 2012; Ooi 2013). Nevertheless, the cession went ahead, Sarawak became a British crown colony, and the protests culminated in the assassination of Sir Duncan Stewart, the second Governor of Sarawak, in 1949 (Ooi, 2013). In spite of this initial resistance Sarawak remained under British colonial administration for 17 years. The 1950s saw the emergence of a strong communist movement in the region, especially among the ethnic Chinese, which delayed the process towards independence from colonial rule for Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. A state of emergency was declared in Malaya in 1948, followed by Sarawak in 1952. After some delay, Sarawak finally achieved independence on July 22, 1963, and on 16 September 1963 Malaya, Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore formed the new federation of Malaysia. A number of preconditions

guaranteed Sarawak's status and secured some independence over economic activities and immigration control (Means 1963). Singapore was expelled from the federation two years later due to political friction. Malaysia subsequently became one of the more economically successful new nations in Southeast Asia, although its economy suffered along with that of other countries in the region during the economic downturn in the 1990s.

According to its constitution, Islam is Malaysia's state religion, but Malaysia it is a multi-cultural and multi-religious country. Many among

Figure 4.4) The longhouse verandah of Long Buroi, with bundles of dried leaves, 1956

Malaysia's Indian population practise Hinduism, while Chinese Malaysians are often either Buddhists or Christian. Most of its Indigenous populations, who before practised animist religions, converted to Christianity. In Sarawak, with its Indigenous majority, Christianity is the predominant religion at 44% of the population before Islam at 30%.

4.3. THE ORANG ULU COMMUNITIES

The Baram River joins the South China Sea north of Miri in Sarawak's Fourth Division. Its main tributaries are the Tinjar, Apoh and Tutoh Rivers (see map 4.1). The people who live here were traditionally swidden agriculturalists and planted an annual crop of *padi*, or rice for subsistence, as well as fruit and vegetables and a variety of cash crops, predominantly rubber. In the past, a whole community lived together in a single large longhouse raised on stilts and built near the bank of a river (see figure 4.2). These longhouses contained apartments for each family, usually arranged around the home of the headman and his family in the centre of the building (King 1993; Whittier 1994). The longhouse was structured into individual family apartments as well as a communal covered verandah where people gathered and walked, and an outside area used for drying produce (see figure 4.3). Longhouses could be inhabited by

Figure 4.5) Madau Musup at Long Jegan painting a Berawan shield, 1956

over a hundred families. Most families also had farm houses where they stayed during the *padi* season before moving back to the longhouse after the harvest. The end of the *padi* harvest was celebrated with a harvest festival, an important event for the community.

The Kenyah form one of the largest groups among the Orang Ulu. The term 'Kenyah' includes a number of subgroups, each with its own history, dialect and customs, such as the Sebup, Lepo Tau, Lepo Anan and Berawan. Although these people are collectively known in Sarawak as Orang Ulu, they identify with specific smaller groups. Some of the smaller groups are made up of as little as a few hundred members and their ethnonyms are not commonly known. Most thus identify with the term Orang Ulu when they are not talking to other Orang Ulu. As one observer has put it,

> [i]t is in the cities like Kuching and Miri that non-Iban and non-Bidayuh Dayak adopt the label 'Orang Ulu', literally 'up-river people', for the purpose of collective identification in the multi-ethnic society, in which the names of smaller groups are hardly known (Tan 1997, n.p.).

The Kenyah trace their origin to the Usun Apau highlands in Sarawak, from where they migrated towards the upper Rejang, Tinjar and upper Baram regions (Ngau 1966). Some of the groups moved in different directions and today live in both the Malaysian and the Indonesian parts of Borneo, for example the Kenyah Lepo' Tau. These migrations are an important part of Orang Ulu oral history, and many of their legends and stories recount the routes via which these highly mobile people moved from their ancestral homelands into the areas where they live today (Ngau 1966; Laing 1966).

Preceding the reign of the White Rajahs, the people of the Baram and Tinjar Rivers traded with Malay merchants from the Sultanate who travelled upriver to barter

Figure 4.6) Anyi Wan from Long Laput with heirloom artifacts, 1956

fabrics for clothing and objects such as gongs and jars for jungle produce (Metcalf 2005). These links between the Sultanate and the Orang Ulu are still evident in the heirloom objects, the arts and the oral histories and genealogies of the Kenyah and other Orang Ulu groups (Tingang 1974; Okushima 2006; Usang 2002; see figure 4.5). When the Baram became part of Sarawak, the town of Marudi was established as the seat of the local Resident's office (Hazis 2012), although it was then known by the name of Claudetown after its first resident, Claude de Crespigny. While the Brooke Rajahs emphasised the need to protect the rural communities from outside influence, the British colonial Government focused on development and education of the region after cession in 1946 (Leach 1950; Kaur 1995). The first schools opened in the Ulu in the late 1940s, and in the

following decades primary schools were built in the vicinity of many larger communities, and children attended secondary school in larger villages or towns, where they boarded during the week and returned to their villages on weekends or during school holidays.

The Kenyah were known in Sarawak for their artistic skills (King 1993). Their decorated *parangs* (broad, cleaver-like knives used for a variety of purposes from agriculture through food preparation to warfare), shields and other items show a distinct ornamental design system (see figure 4.4). The motifs of the designs—dogs, hornbills, tigers or human figures, or monstrous faces with big eyes and long teeth were combined with interlocking tendrils and spirals and stylised to the point of being almost unrecognisable (Sandin 1980; Munan 1998). Many of the groups among the Orang Ulu were socially stratified, with an upper class or aristocracy, a class of commoners and one of slaves (Tan 1997). The use of some of the Orang Ulu designs, in particular those showing human forms, was restricted to the aristocratic class, while other designs could be used by all (Metcalf 1974; Jalong 2001). Among the objects created by Orang Ulu artists were painted and decorated bark clothing (used before woven fabric was available), sculptures, furniture such as tables carried by dog figures, carved longhouse posts and doors and painted wall panels. One example is the mural that decorates the walls of the ethnographic section of the Sarawak Museum.

Another aspect of Orang Ulu material culture were the mats and basketry produced in the longhouses (Klausen 1957; Munan 1989). The hats, baskets and mats showed complex patterns, a range of colours and the use of multiple natural materials. People produced specialised baskets for sowing, harvesting and carrying firewood or durian. They also made mats for sleeping, drying fruits or *padi*, and many other designs and patterns (see figure 4.6). Local crafts included the building of boats, the construction of longhouses, *padi* storage huts and farm-houses.

Figure 4.7) Mitang Kurong making a bamboo mat, Long Buroi, 1965

95

Figure 4.8) Lungan Pusa with her nephew in Long Buroi, 1956

These were built by hand with locally-made tools. Carvings and paintings were part of local culture and also part of the old religion of the Kenyah and other Orang Ulu groups. Many of these elements of tangible local culture and heritage were acquired by travelling staff of the Sarawak Museum and became part of the large collection of artifacts of the museum, including material culture and heirloom objects such as jars and brassware. Other aspects of Orang Ulu traditional practice were the tattoos women wore on their forearms and legs, and the elongated earlobes of Orang Ulu women (see figure 4.7). The Sarawak Museum owns a collection of artifacts used for tattooing, mats, baskets, large sun hats, and other highly specialised objects such as the Orang Ulu baby carriers which were made from wood and the bark of trees, and which were often highly decorated with beads or painted with monstrous figures to ward off evil (see figure 4.8).

Figure 4.9) Sagau Kuleh with her baby, Tejung Kalang, and mother, Nyimau Nyeluing, 1956

4.4. The Sarawak Museum

The Sarawak Museum in Kuching is one of the oldest museums in Southeast Asia. Since the inauguration of its temporary facilities by Rajah Charles Brooke in 1886 and its formal opening in 1888, it has operated as a museum, archive and research institution, with a short interruption during World War II. On the day of its inauguration, the Sarawak Gazette noted:

> The temporary Museum was formerly (sic) opened at 10.am on the 30th October by H.H. The Rajah, in the presence of a few of the Europeans, and some of the Native chiefs of the town... His Highness explained to the Natives the object of a Museum, and hoped they would assist in adding to it (The Sarawak Gazette 1886: 73).

97

The museum specialised in Zoology, Entomology, Botany and Ornithology. Alfred Russell Wallace, the British naturalist who visited Sarawak in 1855 and who took an interest in museology, suggested to Rajah Brooke the idea of creating a museum in Kuching (Banks 1983). Wallace conceived of the idea for his "Sarawak paper" in the James Brooke's bungalow near the foot of Mount Santubong not far from Kuching. However, it took one more rajah and over 30 years for the plan for the museum in Sarawak to come to fruition. Once the Sarawak Museum had its own purpose-built premises, its first curators, appointed by the Brooke Government, started to organise the growing collection, and initiated the museum's research activities (Cranbrook and Leh 1983). Specimens and artifacts were acquired by the museum staff or donated (Sarawak Museum Annual Report 1906). Apart from donations by government servants, missionaries and foreign researchers, local contributors added many pieces to the museum collection. In 1911, the museum started to publish its own research journal, the Sarawak Museum Journal. The journal is still published today, focusing on academic articles related to research carried out in Sarawak and the work of the Sarawak Museum. Visiting the museum was free of charge and it was a popular destination for Sarawakians from Kuching and those visiting from other regions. As curator Mjöberg wrote in 1929:

> According to counts carried out in the years 1915 - 1923 which I had the
> doubtful pleasure to work on, the museum was visited during this time
> by 1785 Europeans and 144 681 natives, that is by 7 Europeans and 1500
> natives as monthly average. Every day groups of natives were streaming up
> to the museum built on a little hill and watched, admired and discussed in
> their childlike way the wonders on exhibit (Mjöberg 1929: 141).

These numbers and the above citation from the Sarawak Gazette suggest that the museum was conceived as an educational institution intended for local Sarawakians. Subsequent visitor counts listed in the Sarawak Gazette confirm that these numbers were made up of urban residents as well as rural visitors from around the state (The Sarawak Gazette 1911). Contrary to Bennett's suggestion that Indigenous people were "placed entirely outside the liberal reform strategies" of museums (Bennett 1995: 5), it was Sarawak's local populations rather than the European elite who formed the primary audience of the museum, as the numbers of visitors suggest. At the museum they were to be educated on matters of their own culture and environment. The Rajah's instruction of his "native chiefs" about the role of the museum suggests that the

collection, description and conservation of natural and cultural heritage carried out at a museum were part of the emancipatory and educational projects of Charles Brooke who governed his kingdom with "a heavy dose of paternalism" (Ooi 2013: 52). As Ooi has suggested, the Brooke Rajahs "saw themselves as enlightened monarchs entrusted with a mandate to rule on behalf of Indigenous people's interests and well-being" (Ooi 2013: 52). The moral and intellectual education of their citizens was therefore one of the objectives of the Brookes' museum. The institution's scope, according to curator Mjöberg, was "to present to the sons and daughters of the land the productions of their homelands" (Mjöberg 1929: 141).

The museum was almost entirely staffed by locals, but much of the description and analysis of the material that could not be undertaken at the museum was carried out abroad. The local environment was the focus of all museum activities, but local objects and specimens were in many cases explained and reframed through the knowledge and expertise of foreign specialists. The authority to synthesise information about the collection was entrusted to specialists overseas, to whom specimens were sent out. The curators of the museum also carried out research and published on their specialist topics (Cranbrook & Leh 1983). Local audiences were the targets for information on the objects on display, although these were objects, plants and animals frequently encountered in their daily lives. Animals and plants were classified according to the phylogenetic theories of the natural sciences, while ethnographic artifacts were subject to anthropological analysis of foreign institutions and individuals.

Numerous collaborations of the Sarawak Museum with institutions such as museums and universities throughout Europe, listed in the annual reports of the museum curator, provided the expertise that helped to classify and describe the collection assembled by the museum staff. The Sarawak Museum worked with scientists and researchers in London, Sydney, New York, Washington, Amsterdam, Bologna, Berlin, Hamburg, as well as Hanoi, Manila and Singapore. According to the museum's annual report, 40 different contributors helped to describe the museum's collection of insect specimens in 1910 alone (Sarawak Museum Annual Report 1910: 11). As Cranbrook and Leh have put it,

> [t]he Sarawak Museum by this means undoubtedly remained in the
> main stream of international zoology, so long as it continued to provide

specimens of new or little known species to attract the attention of taxonomists in the major European or North American museums (Cranbrook & Leh 1983: 24).

Not only botanical and zoological expertise was contributed by foreign institutions. The Sarawak Museum also exchanged objects and information with the Anthropologische Gesellschaft of the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria, the Riiks Ethnographische Museum in Leiden in the Netherlands, the Musée d'Ethnograpie in Neuchatel in Switzerland and the Anthropological Society of Tokyo in Japan (Sarawak Museum Annual Report 1925). During Sarawak's occupation by Japanese soldiers in World War II, the Sarawak Museum was placed under the authority of the Japanese officers, and museum curator Edward Banks was interned as a prisoner of war. The Sarawak Museum survived the occupation relatively unscathed (Cranbrook and Leh 1983). The museum reopened only a few days after the occupation ended (Sarawak Annual Report, 1948).

Shortly afterwards Charles Vyner Brooke ceded Sarawak to British colonial rule, Sarawak became a British colony, and the position of museum curator was taken over by British national Tom Harrisson.Harrisson had visited Sarawak previously, for the first time in 1932 on an Oxford University expedition. He had returned to Sarawak on a special mission during World War II, during which he parachuted with a team of soldiers into the interior of the state to incite the local communities loyal to the previous Government into a resurgence against the Japanese (Harrisson 1959).

Harrisson was a prolific researcher and writer, and expanded the research fields of the Sarawak Museum in several directions. He created the photographic archive and was the first curator to employ a staff photographer. Harrison's methods for conducting visual research were established through a previous project in Britain before and during the war. This project, called Mass-Observation, and its impact on his work in Sarawak are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Harrisson remained the curator of the museum until 1963, three years after Sarawak had become independent from British colonial authority and had joined the federation of Malaysia. He was the last foreign head of the Sarawak Museum, and was succeeded by Benedict Sandin, who had worked at the museum under Harrison for several years.

Since 1963, the museum has been under five government ministerial portfolios successively: the Ministry of Local Government; Welfare, Youth and Culture and Local Government; again Local Government; Welfare and Culture and finally the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. The Sarawak Museum is today a part of the Jabatan Muzium Malaysia, the Department of Museums Malaysia. In 2012, the Sarawak Museum was organised into ten departments: Archaeology, Ethnology, Zoology, Conservation, Enforcement, Public Relations, Display, History and Reference, Security, Administration and the Turtle Board. The Turtle Board, a seemingly incongruous section for a museum, was in the past charged with the conservation of marine turtles on Sarawak's coast and, while this was permitted, with the sale of turtle eggs (see figure 5.3) The museum's research continued to focus on anthropology and archaeology, as many projects in zoology and conservation were undertaken by the Forestry Department or the Department of Agriculture. The focus of the Sarawak Museum increasingly shifted to displays and exhibitions as more buildings were added, filled with artifacts and opened for the public.

The museum increasingly attracted national and international tourists as tourism became an important economic activity in Sarawak. Visitor numbers at the museum peaked in 1996 when over 1,560,000 visitors were counted (Louise Macul, personal communication). While the Sarawak Museum remains popular among local audiences, some Sarawakians like Dr Abdul Rahman Junaidi, son of the Museum Photographer Junaidi Bolhassan, think that the museum should focus more on its local audiences instead of foreign visitors:

> Now the museum is the place where tourists or visitors should go. But what about our people, can you go to the museum to learn about your own history? You should [be able to] go and see how your own grandfather lived and your parents (Junaidi, Interview 28.01.2011).

4.5. ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE ORANG ULU

The Brooke Government, charged with governing the subjects of its "private kingdom" (Walker 2002, xvi), limited access to the remote regions for outsiders based on the view that rapid development, modernisation and religious conversion would

be harmful to local people (King 1988; Kaur, 1996). Charles Hose, Government Resident in Marudi and a strong supporter of the Brooke Government, quotes Sir James Brooke as stating that "[w]e aim at the development of native countries through native agency" (Hose 1900: 56). The Brookes initiated only a few changes in the rural communities, apart from outlawing the practice of headhunting, introducing door taxes paid in rice due to a lack of currency in the villages, and the cultivation of cash crops such as rubber. The Government did not establish a public school system, infrastructure developed slowly, and economic development was left to the communities (Leach 1950; Kaur 1996). Through this lack of modernisation, local infrastructure and economic production in particular in the

Figure 4.10) Lirong (Klemantan) youths of the Tinjar river, from: Hose, 1912

rural communities remained undeveloped until the territory was ceded in 1946 (Kaur 1996).

The Brooke Government integrated pre-existing local political structures into their administrative system and, in order to maintain military control, at times played off the animosities and interests of different groups (Metcalf 2010; Ooi 2013). The Sultan of Brunei, the previous political authority and nominal ruler over much of northern Borneo, maintained trade contact with the rural inland groups, but his authority did not extend to the remote regions or impact the sovereignty of the people living there

Figure 4.11) Longhouse Verandah, from: Hose, 1912

(Metcalf 2010). This changed when the region came under control of the Brooke administration. Government officials who travelled in the Baram region, even before the acquisition of the region by the Brookes, provided the Rajah with information about the people who lived there and their relationships with the Sultan of Brunei (St John 1863; Ling Roth 1892).

Figure 4.12) Smoked heads of slain enemies, from: Hose, 1912

After the acquisition, government residents provided detailed accounts about the people who lived along the river (Ling Roth 1892; Hose 1894, 1900, 1901, 1912), and these contributed to the classification and naming of Indigenous groups. Because the ethnic identities among the Orang Ulu were complex, these official ethnonyms were often based on superficial similarities that held little relevance for the subjects. For example, a group classified as 'Klemantan' was found by later researchers not to exist but instead seemed to have been "a category covering any group that wasn't rated as something else" (Leach 1950: 49). Another term, 'Murut', included several groups in both Sarawak and Sabah, some of which have since become known as Kelabit and Lun Bawang respectively, while the Murut in Sabah have retained that name (Tan 1997). Some of the groups subsumed under the term Kenyah identify more readily as Berawan or Sebup.

However, classifications were central to interactions between individuals and the Government, such as tax and legal issues, and therefore had practical significance for the people to whom they referred from the Brooke period onwards. For 13 years, the main representative of the Brooke Government in the region was Charles Hose, the Government Resident in Marudi, which was the administrative capital of the Baram region. During this time Hose contributed extensively to the museum collection (Durrans 1993). He wrote a two-volume ethnography on the Kenyah entitled "The Pagan Tribes of Borneo" (Hose and McDougall 1912), which remained widely used until the 1970s. Hose was an aspiring anthropologist, but without

Figure 4.13) The mausoleum of Kuling, the daughter of the Kenja Dayak Bui Djalong in Central-Borneo, from: Nieuwenhuis, 1904

academic qualifications (Durrans 1993). He was also an avid naturalist and contributed to the knowledge about Sarawak's flora and fauna by sending specimens not only to the Sarawak Museum but also to the British Museum in London (Cranbrook and Leh 1983). He collaborated with internationally acknowledged scientists such as A.C. Haddon, who visited Hose in Marudi on his way back to England from his field research during the Torres Straits Expedition (Rouse 1998). Haddon later wrote about the policies of the Brookes with regard to local customs, for instance the prohibition of head-hunting, a practice that had been followed by most Orang Ulu as well as other Indigenous groups in Sarawak. Haddon commented on the Brooke management of local headhunting practices, noting that the resulting shortage of skulls for ceremonial purposes

> has been overcome, I have been informed, by the villages borrowing a skull from the collection kept at certain Government forts for this purpose. These skulls are labelled A, B, C, etc., and a record is kept of each borrowing transaction. When all the ceremonies are over the skull has to be returned to the fort, where it is available for another occasion (Haddon 1901: 215).

Charles Hose was the first to document the Kenyah people in his district through photographs, and many photographic plates appear in his publications (see figure 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11). On the other side of the mountain ridge, in Dutch Kalimantan, medical researcher Anton Willem Nieuwenhuis travelled in the Kenyah communities in the region and also took large numbers of photographs to document his travels (Nieuwenhuis 1904; see figure 4.12 and 4.13).

4.6. Sarawak as a British colony

During the reign of the Brooke Rajahs, numerous travelers visited Sarawak and wrote about its various ethnic groups and their customs

Figure 4.14) Portrait of Dahei Kwing, a circa 18-year-old Kajan woman, from: Nieuwenhuis 1904

and traditions. The story of the White Rajahs and of their tropical kingdom excited the interest of Westerners (Hanna 1957). Sarawak held a special place in the imagination of Western audiences, among other things because of its people's reputation for headhunting (Haddon 1901). On the whole, however, the Brookes did not pursue anthropology for the purpose of strategic social or economic change. Local populations were "to be known, governed, but ultimately protected from modernization" (Bissonnette 2011: 341).

After cession, anthropology and ethnographic research became a central aspect of the development efforts of the colonial Government. In 1948, the new governor of Sarawak, Sir Charles Arden Clark, suggested that a survey should be carried out to determine what kind of socio-economic projects would be suitable to develop the region. The investigation was aimed both at identifying potential development projects and gauging the reactions of the local people who would be affected by the projects (King & Wilder 2003). Dr Edmund R. Leach was put in charge of the research and he identified eight key projects in his report, which was published in 1950. Following his recommendations, several projects were initiated. J.D. Freeman conducted the research on the Sea Dayak or Iban, W.R. Geddes on the Land Dayak or Bidayuh, H.S. Morris worked with the coastal Melanau and T'ien Ju-K'ang on a project focused on the urban Chinese populations. In addition, Rodney Needham set out on a research project on the social organisation of the nomadic Penan in 1951. These projects were directed at assessing the potential for economic development. The administration wanted to move towards more indirect rule and increased self government, which was to rest on a mixture of pre-existing structures and "Native Authority" (Leach 1950: 52) made up by a new generation of local leaders. Colonial authorities were thus interested in the political frameworks of the different communities. This was in accordance with British policies from 1941 onwards, reinforced by the post-war UN charter that mandated the development of self-government in colonial possessions (Basu 2012; Ooi 2013).

Leach focused his investigation on the economic development potential of local communities rather than on their ethnographic interest. He stated that the Baram region showed little potential for generating revenue, and so these regions were low in priority for projects of economic development. He therefore did not suggest any immediate further research (Leach 1950). In his view, sound anthropological investigation had already been undertaken; he felt that the work carried out by Charles Hose four decades earlier covered these groups adequately (Leach 1950).

The British colonial Government's development schemes were structured into several phases, the first of which covered the 1947-56 period (Cho 1990). This first development plan included proposed improvement in the communications, infrastructure and agricultural sectors, but issues such as health, education and other social services were also addressed. Developments in the agricultural sector were aimed at increasing the production of wet *padi*, so the state could become independent of rice imports. Also, agricultural production was to be diversified through the introduction of new cash crops (Porritt 1997: 182). Increased export volumes of products such as rubber and pepper were also encouraged. In the first phase, the Brooke policies supporting native smallholder production in favour of larger-scale plantation projects were generally maintained by the British colonial administration. A number of development plans were successively implemented in the 1950s (Cho 1990).

From 1960 onwards, development priorities shifted towards the establishment of more productive plantation agriculture, deviating from previous plans that had followed the Brooke policies. Subsistence farmers, the majority of agriculturalists in Sarawak, were increasingly seen as "under-employed and inefficient users of natural resources" (Porritt 1997: 183). The results of these shifting development aims varied; for the more remote regions, neither the cultivation of wet *padi* nor the large-scale production of other cash crops took hold. Factors such as lack of infrastructure, a complex system of land titles, the traditional approaches by Sarawak's inhabitants to agricultural production and poor soils made large-scale agricultural projects difficult. Realising this, the Department of Agriculture decided in 1962 to focus on the improvement of existing practices and "the proper utilisation of natural resources, meagre though these may be" (cited in Porritt 1997: 183). These development paradigms were to prevail when the last British development roadmap, the Sarawak Development Plan 1964-68, was phased into the First Malaysia Plan.

While some of the development objectives of the British colonial Government such as self-sustained rice production failed to materialise, the production of timber as an export product developed steadily. Before World War II, exports in timber had been below 1% of total exports (Porritt 1997). In 1950, Leach wrote that

> [i]n the past the timber resources of Sarawak have been something of a wasting asset... The existing methods of extraction involve the subletting of logging contracts to small parties of Dayaks, who possess no capital resources or equipment (Leach 1950: 11).

Leach underestimated the economic potential of the upriver areas, home to the Kenyah, Kayan and other Orang Ulu groups, because he failed to foresee the economic potential of timber as a resource that had not yet been exploited. This was to change in the following years. The income generated through the export of timber rose steadily until it became Sarawak's second-largest export product after rubber, as exports grew from 2% of all exports in 1950 to almost 17 % in 1959, and continued to rise. The timber trade was by then mainly in the hands of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs, who could command the resources necessary for the operations (Porritt 1997). The importance of timber as an export product grew, and the spread of shifting cultivation was increasingly seen as a wasteful use of land (Leach 1950; Porritt 1997; Cho 1990). Critique of rural agricultural practices was a theme of the colonial period and a focus of local development policies after independence.

While the Leach report in 1950 was commissioned to facilitate the development of Sarawak's resources, infrastructure and political structure, Leach's work was focused on economic and political projects. In his report, he stressed the "administrative utility" of the research he proposed (Leach 1950:7). Anthropological investigation for the sake of scientific documentation, he advised, should instead be carried out by a "scientifically trained archaeologist and museum worker rather than the social anthropologist" (Leach 1950: 7). The archaeologist and museum worker evoked by Leach was presumably Tom Harrisson, the director of the Sarawak Museum, with whom Leach had collaborated in the course of his work in Sarawak.

4.7. Sarawak becomes part of Malaysia

With the end of the colonial period, the Sarawak Museum fell under the authority of the newly-established Malaysian State Government. In 1966, remaining expatriates in the Sarawak Administrative Service were expelled in a move supported by the Federal Government to reduce foreign influence. This move entailed the removal of the Chief Minister and the reconstitution of the State Government (Aeria 2005). At the Sarawak Museum, Tom Harrisson was succeeded in the role of curator by Benedict Sandin, an Iban from Saratok, who had been working at the museum for several years. Sandin retained the role of Government Ethnologist, but he was the last museum director to hold this post. A later curator, Lucas Chin, suggested that

[i]t has been a tradition for the Director to be the Government Ethnologist as well. But such a set-up had proved unsatisfactory as the Director, apart from his other responsibilities, could not devote adequate time in this specialised field. It was for this reason that sociological and other anthropological studies on the people of Sarawak were primarily conducted by foreigners in the past. Realising this situation, the Government took the initiative to train up a local anthropologist who took up the position to head this research section in the museum in September 1973 (Chin et al 1983: 10).

For Sarawak, becoming part of Malaysia brought profound social change. Ethnic and religious identification became increasingly important in Malaysia, as its policy makers struggled to come to terms with the region's cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Race riots in Singapore in 1964 and in Kuala Lumpur in 1969 were an early example of this. Following this conflict the Malaysian Government tried various approaches to address the situation, among them the affirmative action policies under the New Economic Policy (NEP) launched in 1971. Through this policy the *bumiputera*, or sons of the soil in Malay, were given economic advantages and incentives over more recent arrivals like ethnic Chinese or Indians (Mah 1985). Indigenous people in Sarawak were included among the *bumiputera*, but did not benefit to the same extent as other groups and came to be seen, and see themselves, as "second class bumiputera" (Hazis 2012: 54). Rural poverty remained high (Majid Cooke 1997; Hazis 2012). The NEP was aimed at addressing the economic gap between different ethnic groups. Other efforts, such as the Rukun Negara [National Principles] were aimed at ameliorating the inter-ethnic tensions between

Figure 4.15) Man with a 1Malaysia rotan headdress, Long Nawang, 2012

different groups and furthering ethnic harmony. Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad introduced an alternative policy approach in 1991 through his concept of Bangsa Malaysia [Malaysian Nation] in which a pan-ethnic national identity was promoted (Muis et al 2012). In 2010, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak implemented a new campaign called 1Malaysia, which emphasised cultural and ethnic unity and Malaysian identity (Saad 2012; see figure 4.14). The Malaysian Government thus promoted nation-building based on inter-ethnic harmony, although these had to function alongside pre-existing NEP policies which discriminated against some of these ethnic groups.

Malaysia became a nation with Islam as state religion and with Muslim ethics and values at its core, and its dominant Malay national party, or UMNO, "adopted Malay culture and Islam as a basis" for its national identity (Hazis 2012: 48). In Sarawak, unlike in Peninsular Malaysia, Muslim Malays were not the majority of the population. Sarawak had its own constitution dating from the Brooke era, and while it had been granted special rights when joining Malaysia, these had to give way to the overriding concerns of the Federal Government. As Porritt has put it,

> [b]y 1988 the basic tenets of the Federation of Malaysia, Malay as the national language and the pre-eminence of Islam, had been firmly entrenched in Sarawak by amendments to the 1963 constitution (Porritt 2007: 166).

4.8. Development in the Ulu

On a political level, development policies in Sarawak after the merger with Malaysia became increasingly linked with political patronage, acquiescence to economic projects of the Government and pre-determined trajectories towards modernity prescribed by government institutions. When Sarawak became part of the British Empire, logging was not considered a major economic activity in the region by the British colonial Government (Leach 1950). Nevertheless, by the end of the colonial period in 1963, timber had increased considerably in importance as an export product (Ross 2001: 137). These economic developments affected rural populations in a variety of ways, providing economic opportunities and improving local infrastructure while at the same time diminishing the natural resources on which many communities had previously depended.

In the years following cession the amount of timber exported rose constantly. In 1970, Rahman Ya'akub was elected Chief Minister of Sarawak not long after a new Ministry of Development and Forestry had been created and charged with issuing logging licences. The forestry portfolio, which Rahman himself oversaw, included the allocation of logging concessions and timber licences (Aeria 2005; Ross 2001). When Rahman's nephew Taib Mahmud was elected as Chief Minister in 1981, he retained the privilege of issuing and allocating logging concessions, and added the functions of the forestry ministry to those of the Ministry of Resource Planning, of which he was in charge. Demand from countries like Japan increased after timber resources in Sabah and the Philippines were gradually exhausted, and in Sarawak more and more concessions were leased out (Ross 2001). The contractors, constrained by the short duration of some licences, aimed at maximising allocation benefits, and logged the forests at unsustainable rates (Majid Cooke 2006: 6). Both Rahman and Taib used the control over logging licences to enrich themselves and their families, gain political support and maintain administrative control (Ross 2001; Dauvergne 1998; Hazis 2012). Politicians also channeled financial revenue generated through these activities overseas to evade income tax (Aeria 2005: 181).

The impact of logging practices in Sarawak has been discussed by a number of critics (King 1988; Ross 2002; Aiken & Leigh 2011). For the Indigenous communities in the region, the effect of these economic activities has been ambiguous. Men from local communities were employed as logging drivers earning substantial incomes, but work was temporary and ended when companies withdrew from a region or logging coupe, and the economic benefits from these activities was short-lived.Logging roads, which people from the rural communities were free to use, connected previously remote regions to the urban centres. As Majid Cooke has suggested, these practices were equated with modernisation. In her words,

Figure 4.16) Logging roads in the interior of Sarawak, on the way to Long Nawang, 2012

Figure 4.17) Oil palm nursery and plantation near Long Loyang, 2012

[s]een as pioneering development (for example through road construction and employment creation) the timber industry fits into what is perceived to be modern. Conversely, native subsistence lifestyles are perceived to contradict modernisation (Majid Cooke 1997: 222).

However, the development of infrastructure brought on by logging was often neither sustained nor regulated. Smaller logging roads were abandoned after the closure of coupes and soon became impassable once maintenance had ceased (see figure 4.15). Lack of regular transport on existing roads gave rise to other social friction, for instance the alleged abuse of Penan school children by drivers of logging trucks (Stickler 2009; Hew 2011). Logging affected the availability of wildlife for local communities as new roads allowed access to hunters from other communities and the coast. Runoff from exposed soil was washed into rivers and caused siltations that affected fish populations (Then 2009). Commercial timber species formerly used for longhouse and boat construction became rare. Logging companies compensated villagers on a personal and unregulated basis, handing out individual payments at irregular intervals. This caused allegations over corruption and mishandling of funds within village communities, and led to

conflict within communities (Tan 1997; Colchester & Chao 2011). After the slow decline of logging during the last decade, logged-over areas were leased out by the government and converted into oil palm plantations (figure 4.16). As with logging, the expansion of oil palm had an ambiguous effect on the economies of local Indigenous peoples. Oil palm plantation workers were predominantly migrant workers from Indonesia, who worked for much lower wages than did local employees (figure 4.17). As Cramb noted,

> wages for local oil palm workers are MYR 20–30 per day [while] Indonesians are paid MYR 12–15 per day, yet are widely acknowledged to perform the same task much more efficiently, as well as being willing to work longer hours and six to seven days a week, while living in simple barracks on the estate (Cramb 2011: 281).

Some Indigenous farmers started planting their own oil palm and benefited from the proximity of the mills, as palm oil fruits have to be processed soon after being harvested. Local communities were able to use the roads built or maintained by plantation companies, and sometimes shared other facilities such as telecommunications towers installed at camps and headquarters. Nevertheless, the large-scale economic activities in the Ulu meant that control over land became increasingly contested, and blockades were constructed as recently as October 2013 by villagers intent on upholding what they perceived as their traditional rights.

In addition to plantations, the interior of Sarawak increasingly supplied another important resource: Electricity. In 2008, the Sarawak government launched the so-called "Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy" or SCORE, an industrialised zone on the coast meant to draw foreign industry to Sarawak. To make the region attractive for investors by offering cheap and renewable energy, a number of hydroelectric dams were constructed, blocking the large rivers in the interior to form reservoirs. Several more dams are planned. One of these is situated the area where the photographic sample from the Sarawak Museum archive

Figure 4.18) Indonesian oil palm workers on a plantation near Long Loyang, 2012

112

used during my research was taken, the Baram river region. It is projected to flood 34 indigenous communities and require the resettlement of several thousand people (see map 4.2).

The project is highly controversial in the villages, and grassroots organisations are protesting on a national and international level against the project (see figure 4.18 and 4.19). Many villagers are worried that resettlement will not provide them with sufficient land or infrastructure, and point to earlier resettlement schemes in which promised land allocation and infrastructure provision failed to materialise (Hew 2011; Sibon 2012).

Critics have pointed out that the economic development driven by government projects in rural Sarawak has not benefited the local population (Tan 1997; Aeria 2005; Majid Cooke 2006; Aiken & Leigh 2011; Woon 2012). Instead, their low population density and relative remoteness from urban centres made such regions well suited for economic development from which the rest of the population, in the view of the Government, could benefit. As Majid Cooke has put it, "[t]he combination of economic poverty and natural resource wealth provides prime sites for 'development', mostly for the good of the majority or the national good" (Majid Cooke 2006a: 3). The relative isolation of remote communities and rural poverty was not relieved through the economic development in the region (Aeria 2005; Aiken & Leigh 2011). Instead, the division between the urban centres and the under-developed and so-called backward rural communities became a common and stereotypical theme in public discourse, and was regularly referred to in the media (Cramb 2007).

Concepts of rural and backward, urban and modern were established in opposition to each other through the media, but also on the basis of historical approaches to minority cultures formulated by anthropologists, missionaries and colonial government servants in Sarawak. As one researcher has put it, "[b]ringing natives into development or 'bringing development' to rural communities emphasises the static nature of the community, in time and in place" (Bissonnette 2011: 349). As Evans-Pritchard remarked 60 years earlier, this duality was a thinly-veiled extension of cultural evolutionism, in which advancement was framed in terms of modernity and development, and where modernity and development were seen as desirable, necessary and even inevitable (Evans-Pritchard 1950: 121).

After Sarawak became part of Malaysia, resistance to predetermined development was discouraged by the Sarawak government through its promotions of government projects. As Aeria has suggested, in Sarawak "development must… take precedence over politics and indeed even democracy" (Aeria 2005: 188). Development projects, however, are not equally distributed but depend on whom the government chooses to support. As Majid Cooke has put it,

> development in Sarawak is considered to be a "gift" from the government to the people… People are made to understand that wanting development means supporting political parties in power, so that the continued provision of development gifts is conditional on sustained support for these parties (Majid Cooke 2006: 38).

Figure 4.19) Posters protesting against the Baram Dam, Long San, 2013

Through these policies and practices, development and the governing party coalition were conflated in Sarawak. In October 2012, the Minister of Public Utilities launched a project aimed at connecting rural villages to the electricity grid, saying: "Only with BN [Barisan Nasional, the ruling party coalition] could we move way forward" (Lim 2012, n.p.). The practice of buying political support through development extended to the outright buying of votes during election times (Sukumaran, 2011). Moreover, the dichotomy established around concepts of modernity and development has made it more difficult for Indigenous people to pursue cultural development and continuity and establish self-directed methods of development and modernisation beyond the definitions promoted by the Government. Majid Cooke has remarked that

> [i]n the hierarchy of development priorities in Indonesia and Malaysia, community development in political and social terms is at best pushed to the background, at worst something to be controlled, manipulated or watched over (Majid Cooke 2006a: 10).

As a result, Indigenous groups were often unable to reconcile cultural continuity and their traditional customs and traditions with modern livelihoods and lifestyles. Sarawak's rural communities were not disadvantaged because of their specific ethnicity, but because of the economic and political interests invested in their environment and traditional lands which became increasingly valuable, and with which they were closely connected. There is a close association between definitions of Indigeneity and people's relationship with their land (Gomes 1999). As Majid Cooke pointed out, Indigeneity is defined as "not being able to objectify place, or of not being able to regard place as a commodity" (Majid Cooke 2006a: 12).

Thus, Indigenous communities in Sarawak depended on their land and were also defined by it through the narratives that connected them with their own history and linked to features in the land, and their agricultural and horticultural practices. The cultural marginalisation of Indigenous communities in Sarawak was thus a by-product of their economic and political situation. I will discuss this in more depth in Chapter Seven. As Majid-Cooke has suggested, in the context of these developments that have made land and traditional rights to land increasingly contested, the social and cultural continuity of Indigenous groups has not been the focus of the attention of the Government and its departments (Majid Cooke 2006, 2006a).

4.9. Conclusion

Figure 4.20) Posters protesting the Baram Dam, Long San 2013

Since its inception in 1888 the Sarawak Museum has remained a repository of historical artifacts and documents, and its collections are an important source of historical material from Indigenous communities. As we have seen, the collections comprise a wealth of artifacts collected by numerous contributors since the establishment of the museum by the second Rajah Brooke. A product of the paternalistic

reign of the Brooke Rajahs, the objective of the museum was to make Sarawak a point on the scientific map of the world, and at the same time to enlighten and educate the Sarawakian people regardless of their ethnicity or rank. Until Sarawak's independence the museum was headed by foreigners but employed local staff, many of whom came from the communities from which the museum acquired artifacts for the collections (Datan, Interview 23.02.2011). The communication between museum staff and source communities was unproblematic, and no issues over the museum's methods of acquisition or the repatriation of objects have been raised.

The relationship between the Sarawak Museum, its audiences and source communities, which are at times one and the same, has been consistent with the aims of the museum as stated by curator Mjöberg in 1929. However, the museum shows little engagement with concepts of new museology or community co-curation or co-production. This may be in part explained by the museum's changing focus, which since the 1960s has slowly shifted away from its earlier emphasis on research as other institutions took up that role, for instance the University of Malaysia, Sarawak. I suggest that this is one of the reasons why the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive and numerous other objects in the museum's large storage facilities have not been investigated, indexed, described or exhibited. Moreover, within the context of Malaysian nation building, the Government's efforts since 1970 to build up a culturally and socially-cohesive nation may not have encouraged individual ethnic minorities to pursue the continuation of their own traditional culture and heritage. Instead, modernisation and progress have been advocated as development aims by the Government. However, these aims have not been easily reconcilable with the traditional lifestyles of Indigenous groups. This political context, I argue, has not been favourable for co-production and co-curation projects that focus on traditional Indigenous culture. The economic efforts of the Sarawak State Government in the rural regions have led to conflict with the traditional rights of Indigenous groups. This means that the strengthening of Indigenous people's social and cultural identity and their identification with cultural heritage and traditions, linked to the environment and traditional land, might obstruct the Government's plans for economic development in the region.

These political and economic processes in Malaysia and in Sarawak may explain why the Sarawak Museum collection, in particular its photographic archive,

has received relatively little outside attention in the past. However, the museum has remained open to individual researchers and has made the photographic material kept in its archives available to be returned to the communities (Appleton 2011). Regardless of the current research focus or agenda of the Sarawak Museum, these photographs are therefore potentially available for future research and co-productive projects. During my research and the attendant return of photographs to Orang Ulu source communities in Sarawak, I aimed to engage with local source communities to initiate a discussion about local heritage and its role for Indigenous communities in Sarawak. I also wanted to investigate people's views and narratives about the photographs. Through their engagement with the museum photographs, people in the source communities reflected not only upon the traditional heritage in their communities but also on the changes that had occurred since the photographs were taken. This included a period of pervasive environmental upheaval in the region that affected the social, cultural and economic development in the communities.

In the next chapter I will examine the photographic collection of the Sarawak Museum, how the material came into being and the theories that informed its creation.
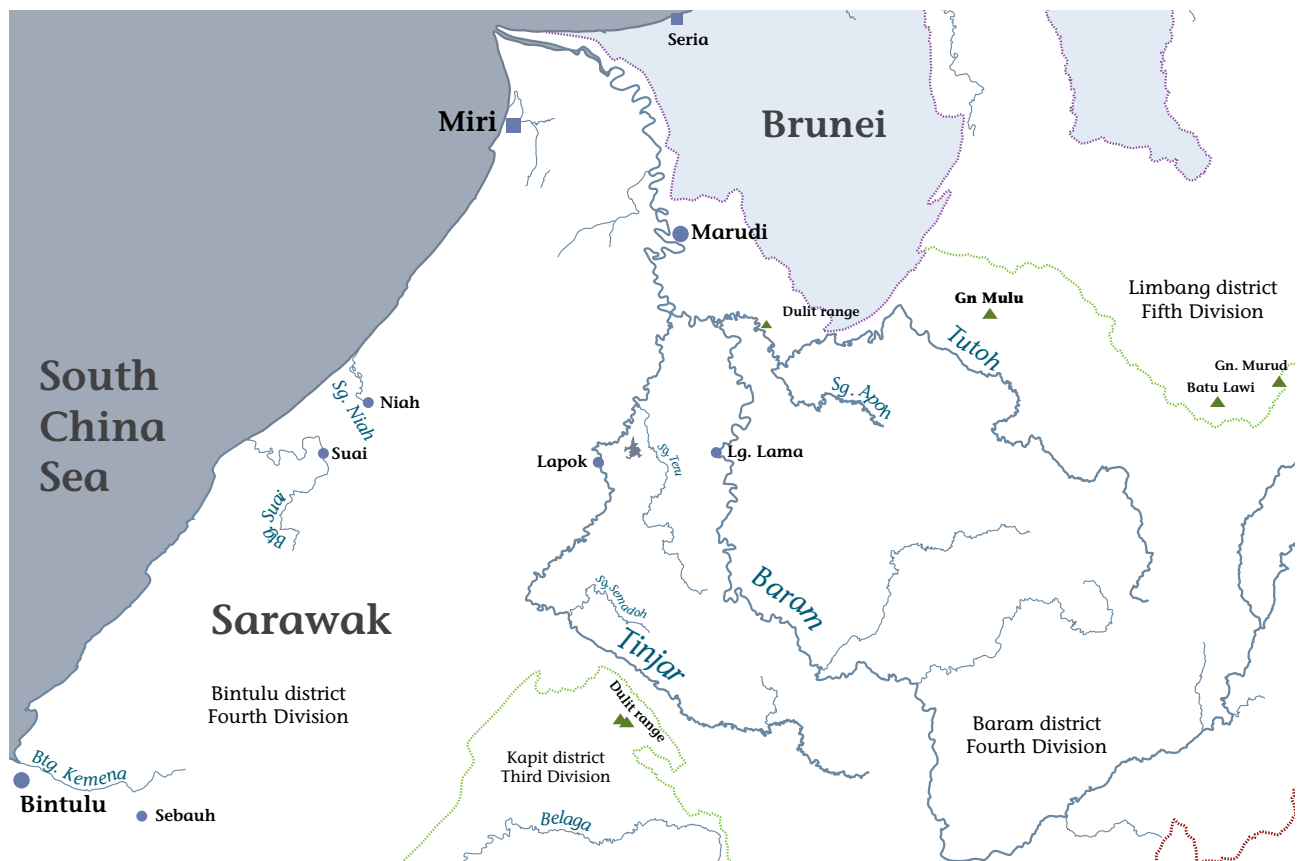
Map 4.1) The Baram and Tinjar rivers in the north of Sarawak
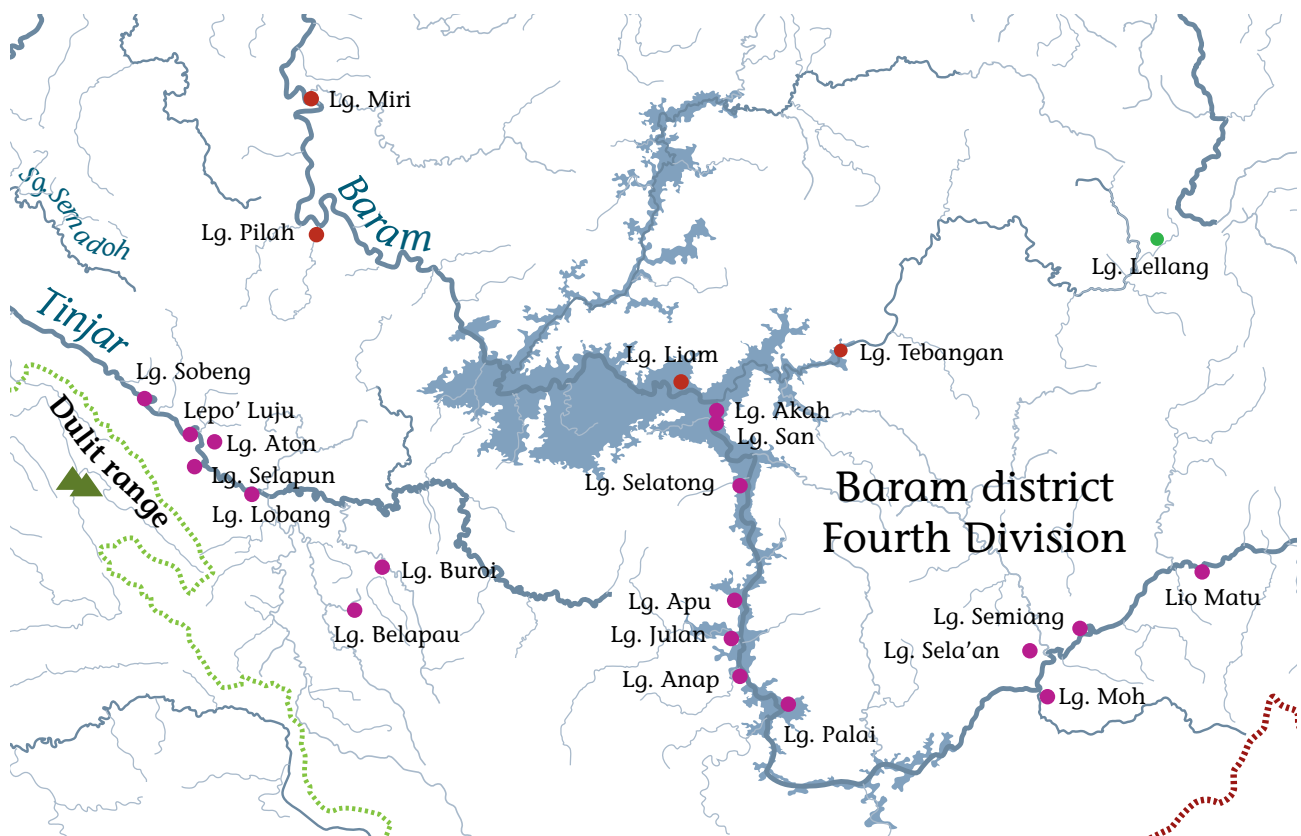
Map 4.2) The Baram Dam, data courtesy of Bruno Manser Fund

Figure 5.1) Tom Harrisson together with members of the Kelabit communities, undated

Chapter Five: Tom Harrisson and his work

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the origins of the photographs I worked with in Sarawak. I focus on the archive and its creator, Tom Harrisson, the curator of the Sarawak Museum during the period in which Sarawak was governed as a British colony. I examine Harrisson's earlier work with an organisation called Mass-Observation, and draw parallels with his work in Sarawak, and with later changes in anthropological and museological theory that reflected some of his theories. I suggest that his methods addressed the criticisms he levelled at anthropology, criticisms that would be echoed by a more general shift in the field in the years to follow. I argue that during his time at the Sarawak Museum, Harrisson experimented with methods and theories that would later become firmly established in anthropological practice as well as in the museum field. I also assert that his approach was more representative of the reflexive and critical anthropology that would only emerge in full some decades later. His attitude contrasted with that of many of his contemporaries who argued that Indigenous culture was doomed to make way for the civilising forces of colonial development policies. This view was exemplified in the

attitude of Malcolm MacDonald, the Governor General of Malaya between 1946 and 1948 and later Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, who took a personal interest in Sarawak and its "pagan society" (MacDonald, in: Wong 1960: 7; Sanger 1995).

I then move on to discuss Harrisson's work at the Sarawak Museum and the photographic archive he established there. I examine how Harrisson and his work were perceived by contemporary researchers and government servants at the time, and the contemporary academic criticism he received from different quarters. Harrisson had a polarising personality, and although respected and admired by some, he was intensely disliked by many others who questioned his professionalism (Freeman 1961; Morrison 1999). Nevertheless, few of his critics have denied that he was a prolific worker, and at the Sarawak Museum he found many areas to which he could apply his investigative interest, and a body of staff who were ready to assist and support these efforts. In this section I introduce the museum staff who worked with Harrisson, as well as later curators who continued to expand the museum's archives. I explore the ways in which the material in the photographic archive was created, as well as the collaborations between museum staff and the communities, and the methods used by photographers and researchers to document Sarawak's rural communities.

In order to put Harrisson's work into contemporary context, I then compare the material at the Sarawak Museum archive with the work produced by other photographers active in Sarawak at the time. Two of the best-known photographers in the region were Hedda Morrison and K.F. Wong. I discuss their methodologies and the bodies of work they produced, and point out how their methods for creating and disseminating photographs differed from those applied to the photographs at the Sarawak Museum archive. I examine the ways in which Indigenous communities were portrayed through these photographs, and through the descriptions and textual frameworks that accompanied them.

Anthropologists at the time were on the verge of a general shift towards a more critical approach, and away from theories such as salvage anthropology. However, the idea that Indigenous culture was soon to vanish through the modernising influence of Western colonisers, and that this change was at the same time deplorable and inevitable was still firmly lodged in the imagination of many people. This led to romanticised and "primitivist" representations of Indigenous people (Prins 1999:60). I suggest that Harrisson, while nostalgic of traditional Indigenous lifestyles, was simultaneously critical

of the anthropological concepts that positioned Indigenous societies as unchanging and primitive. I suggest that the Sarawak Museum archive was conceived not with the idea that the photographs were to document a lost primitive culture, but as an archive of the activities of museum staff, and thereby of the people and events as they unfolded around them. Harrisson believed that social and cultural change was impossible to predict, and he created the photographic archive with the intention of providing a resource that would enable future researchers to have a critical engagement with the past. This had been Harrisson's motive during his work with Mass-Observation, and this idea also informed his work with the Sarawak Museum archive.

5.2. Tom Harrisson and Mass-Observation

Tom Harrisson was born in Argentina and raised in Britain. He never completed a university degree, but from his early focus on ornithology he expanded his range of professional interests to include anthropology, zoology, archaeology and a number of other disciplines. Harrisson visited Sarawak for the first time as a student at Oxford University, when he joined a university expedition to Borneo in 1932 (Heimann 1999). During this trip and a subsequent two-year expedition to the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) in 1933-4, his focus shifted to anthropology. He had set out on both expeditions to investigate the natural environment, but became increasingly interested in the culture of the people he met. However, he was critical of anthropological methods and theories of the time. When he published his account of the New Hebrides expedition in 1937, he gave the book the ironic title "Savage Civilization" (Harrisson 1937; Stanton 1997). In this book, Harrisson broke with the common anthropological practice of the time by positioning local communities within the developments and influences of a historical narrative that included the recent impact of international trade, Christian missionaries bringing religious conversion, and the colonial administration of the region. Acknowledging the impact of these developments on Indigenous peoples was "a connection which anthropologists were not to make for several decades," (Stanton 1997: 23). Unlike many anthropologists of the period, Harrisson was interested in the social and cultural changes then happening in the New Hebrides communities instead of looking for former and aspects of culture perceived as authentic.

When Harrisson returned to England with his new-found interest in anthropology, he realised that he knew more about the people of the New Hebrides than about the views and habits of the people living in his home country. "It was gradually borne in upon me that the things I was doing, at great expense, in these difficult jungles, had not been done in the wilds of Lancashire and East Anglia," Harrisson wrote in 1943. He concluded that "[w]hile studiously tabulating the primitive, we had practically no objective anthropology of ourselves" (Harrisson 1943: 5). Harrisson decided this situation ought to be addressed. As he later put it: "We needed to study our own anthropology, or wider than that, the science of living with ourselves" (Harrisson and Spender 1975: 1).

On the 30th January 1937 Tom Harrisson, surrealist poet Charles Madge and budding documentary filmmaker Humphrey Jennings published a letter announcing their new research project, Mass-Observation, in the New Statesman (Moran 2007). As they put it, the aim of the organisation was to document the opinions and life experiences of British citizens—to conduct "Anthropology at Home" (Hubble 2006: 4; Kushner 2004: 246). Public opinion, Harrisson and his collaborators argued, was "endlessly misinterpreted" in the press because few members of the working class contributed to such publications (Harrisson and Spender 1975: 1). This lack of representation of a whole section of the population would be detrimental to the functioning of democracy (Harrisson 1943; Hinton 2013). At the time, opinion polling was emerging as a new social and political interest, and methods for sampling public opinion were still being established. Mass-Observation projects were based on questionnaires, interviews and audience participation, through which researchers assessed public opinion regarding a variety of subject matters. Most of all, however, Mass-Observation's research was supposed to be based on observation, and carried out by participant observers who were instructed to record the minute details of what they had set themselves to observe (Hinton 2013).

The founders of Mass-Observation, as Pollen has put it, tried "both to reject academic anthropology and also to court it" (Pollen 2013: 214). They wanted to distance themselves from academia while at the same time establishing links with selected academics (Summerfield 1985). Like the media in England, they felt that academic practices were exclusionary and did not represent the views and opinions of the wider public (Summerfield 1985). In addition, neither anthropology nor academia in general

had, in their view, succeeded in understanding and truthfully representing who these people were and what their lives were like (Pollen 2013). Harrisson, Jennings and Madge's common aim was to create a democratic form of social science "free of academic trappings" and built on the participation of its subject communities to ensure accurate representation of people's lives, interests and views (Sheridan 1984: 42).

The research conducted by Mass-Observation was to be carried out by participants from the group under investigation, whose members were also the proposed audience. Thus, the people among whom the research had been conducted would be able to benefit from the outcomes of the projects rather than only a small group of academics. "Mass-Observation does not believe that social science can effectively operate only at the academic level," states a Mass-Observation publication in 1943. "Its job is to study real life; and the people it studies are people who can be interested immediately in the results, which often directly concern their everyday lives" (Mass-Observation 1943: vi). Many of Mass-Observation's participants volunteered to contribute because they saw participation as a method of furthering their education as well as making their political and social opinions heard (Summerfield 1985).

Because of their ambivalent relationship with the press and with the academy, Mass-Observation received ample criticism from these quarters (Pollen 2013). Its founders were criticised for the absence of methodology and the lack of academic focus in their studies, for a tendency to rely on well-educated middle-class participants instead of the working-class informants they had aimed to engage, and for the lack of experience and objectivity of their investigators (Hinton 2013; Sheridan 1984; Madge and Harrisson 1938). Harrisson and Madge were unfazed. Compliance with academic standards had not been their aim; instead they intended to "inform the British people about their own behaviour" (MacClancy 1995: 506). Mass-Observation's founders, together with several close collaborators, went on to publish academic articles on their research. However, their main publications consisted of a series of books through which the research outcomes were to be made available to their contributors and the public (Summerfield 1985). Between 1937 and 1950 members of the organisation, individually or in collaborations, issued over 20 publications (Mass Observation Archive 2014).

5.3. Mass-Observation's methodology

Mass-Observation research had a wide focus covering a range of topics from the patterns found in discarded tram tickets to female cyclists; further suggested topics were the "Behaviour of people at war memorials, Shouts and gestures of motorists, The aspidistra cult, Anthropology of football pools" and many others (Calder and Sheridan 1984: 4; see also Hinton 2013; MacClancy 1995). This diverse selection of research interests was in part due to Madge's surrealist affinities. More importantly, however, Harrisson felt that it was impossible to foresee what would be of interest to researchers in the future and that therefore a maximum amount of detail should be recorded (MacClancy 1995). At the time, this made Mass-Observation's method of data collection seem random, but it was the principle that informed their research. "It is the trivial of the present day that may prove significant tomorrow," Harrisson later wrote. "The observer or photographer must shed the preconceptions about what is good to observe and what is bad to observe; and shed all habitual frames of reference which may inhibit fresh observation and obscure the unexpected" (Harrisson and Spender 1975: 3-4).

This was an important aspect of Harrisson's theoretical and methodological approach. Inclined to let research topics emerge from the data, and convinced of his own inability to foresee what would become relevant in the future, Harrisson aimed at collecting a maximum amount of information that was to be made available, through archives, to future researchers as a method to investigate social and cultural change (Harrisson and Spender 1975). This methodology-driven approach, I suggest, later informed the establishment of the photographic archive at the Sarawak Museum, and its large collection of mostly undocumented material that Harrisson initiated. The similarities in Harrisson's methods during his involvement with Mass-Observation and his later work at the Sarawak Museum indicate that he approached anthropology in his new home in Sarawak in the same way he had attempted the investigation of Britain's working classes before the war.

In terms of methodology, Mass-Observation relied on the use of questionnaires, diaries and surveys and on observations made and transcribed by its investigators. Informants and participants were thought of as subjective witnesses, whose personal views on their topics of research were reflected in their reports. The lack of academic training

of Mass-Observation's contributors was criticised as unprofessional by contemporary academics (MacClancy, 1995). Harrisson, Madge and Jennings, however, felt that this was an important part of what the project was about. "Mass-Observation has always assumed that its untrained Observers would be subjective cameras, each with his or her own distortion," asserted a first-year report published in 1938. "They tell us not what society is like but what it looks like to them" (Madge and Harrisson 1938, n.p.). Rather than suggesting that an objective approach was possible, Mass-Observation's founders instead insisted that the personal bias of the material was part of its relevance (Madge and Harrisson 1938 n.p.).

Harrisson, Madge and Jennings recognised that interviews and questionnaires could lead to inaccurate results because they suspected that respondents would not communicate in the same way with their investigators as they would with friends and family (Hubble 2006). They encouraged participants to keep personal diaries to overcome this methodological problem, and provided written topics to which participants were expected to respond with subjective and personal replies (Summerfield 1985). They also used other methods, such as poetry, drawings, or the collection of ephemera from everyday life (Pollen 2013).

Mass-Observation emphasised that recorded observation was an accurate method for conducting research. Participants closely described the scenes they observed or conversations they overheard, without interfering themselves (Goot 2003). Many of these scenes were published in Mass-Observation's books (Calder and Sheridan 1984). Harrisson, in particular, with his background in the observation of the natural world, felt that words could be misleading, to the point that he suggested that observers wear ear-plugs (Hinton 2013). As he later wrote, "I started as an ornithologist, a bird-watcher and I went on to be an anthropologist, a man-watcher. My interest was to describe as accurately as possible how people behave" (cited in Hinton 2013: 15). This was a continuous theme for his research. The practice of listening in on conversations and observing people unnoticed gave rise to criticism because it was likened to spying on the public (Stanton 1997). However, for Harrisson the method was in many ways more revealing than more direct exchanges such as interviews. In Stanton's words, Harrisson was aware that "in the ordinary details of everyday life there are worlds of meaning that have not yet revealed themselves" (Stanton 2006: 101).

Sociologists, historians and other researchers have made considerable use of the Mass-Observation archive, which has been located at Sussex University since 1970. In spite of the criticism levelled at Mass-Observation's theories and methods, the material collected in the archive has proved to be a valuable resource for a large number of research projects (Sheridan 2000). Shifts within anthropology, through which the objectivity and authority of the observer or researcher was questioned, mirrored the kind of ideas developed by the founders of Mass-Observation (Pollen 2013). As Pollen has put it, the Mass-Observation archive was increasingly seen as "a unique, extraordinarily rich and internationally significant body of material for the study of everyday life" (Pollen 2013: 214).

Mass-Observation flourished until the outbreak of World War II. During the war, the organisation worked on several projects for the British Ministry of Information, but Madge, who opposed the collaboration, pulled out of Mass-Observation in 1940 (Sheridan 1984). Earlier that year, Jennings had left to join the Crown Film Unit (Richards and Sheridan 1987). In 1944, Harrisson returned to Borneo, which was occupied by Japanese forces. As part of a military mission Harrisson entered Sarawak behind the Japanese lines, parachuting into the interior of the fourth division with a team of soldiers to organise local resistance against the Japanese military (see figures 5.1 and 5.2). Harrisson later published his accounts of this period in a book entitled "The World Within" (Harrisson 1959). He returned to Britain in 1946 but set off again for Borneo a short while later to take up the position of curator at the Sarawak Museum.

5.4. Harrisson at the Sarawak Museum

By the time Harrisson started his curatorship of the Sarawak Museum, his interest in Sarawak was firmly established. His report of his first expedition to Sarawak, published in 1932, suggests that for him the trip was an important experience, but it also indicated that Harrisson did not get along with his peers in Sarawak (Harrisson 1932). The expedition was assisted by the curator of the Sarawak Museum, E.R. Banks, who, in his annual report of Museum activities, referred to the expedition team with barely-concealed contempt. In an expedition, Banks wrote,

Figure 5.2) Harrisson in military uniform, undated

[e]very bit as important as selecting technical ability is the rejecting of men lacking normal manners, uncouth in appearance or unpleasant in personality, characters admittedly in only small proportion, yet doing much to antagonize both European and native against the Expedition's better interest (Sarawak Museum Annual Report 1932: 18).

Harrisson felt that this remark was directed at him, and his contemporaries agreed (Heimann 1999). As we will see, the encounter foreshadowed Harrisson's professional relationships later during in his career. After Banks was liberated from internment by Japanese soldiers and decided to return to England, Harrisson applied for his post and was offered it. As Harrisson later noted, the colonial administrators of Sarawak "weren't at that time intending to appoint a curator and so I said I'll [be] curator pretty well for nothing" (cited in Heimann 1999: 243). While Harrisson had no prior experience in museology, he was chosen for the post and began work at the Sarawak Museum in June 1947. At the museum, the scope of his research expanded rapidly. Harrisson became interested in archaeology, geology, burial rituals, sculpture, local myths and legends, malaria, education, in the conservation of Orang Utans, of which he kept a juvenile at his home, and in turtle breeding (see figure 5.3).

For his work as museum curator as well as that of government ethnologist, a role which Harrisson held parallel to his engagement at the Sarawak Museum, Harrisson travelled throughout the region, as he was also keen to return to the people in the highlands where he had been based during the war. Although Harrisson was employed by the colonial Government, he was nevertheless vocal in expressing criticism of the policies of the colonial administration in his contributions to the Sarawak Gazette. While he took care to separate his personal views from his professional work for the Sarawak Museum and the Government (Harrisson 1956), his confronting personality led to numerous conflicts with colonial government servants.

Figure 5.3) Harrisson releasing newly hatched turtles, undated

Among them was Alastair Morrison, an administrative officer in Sarawak. Morrison had a low opinion of Harrisson and of his work at the Sarawak Museum, and noted that Harrisson did not get on well with other researchers who came to Sarawak because

> he had a vicious temper and an unbridled tongue and by nature he was intensely jealous. I never knew a man with such a capacity for quarreling. His relations with others, especially a string of unwary visiting academics, were characterized by a long series of incredibly squalid and unpleasant rows. He bullied his subordinates and sought to dominate and crush their personalities. He set a very bad example to his successors (Morrison 1993: 98).

Morrison credited Harrisson with making Sarawak well known through his work and publications, but he doubted the ongoing value of his research, and criticised it for lack of methodology, for concentrating on some communities over others, and because his writing was, in Morrison's view, "too hasty and careless to endure" (Morrison 1993: 98). Harrisson was a prolific writer and interested in a variety of subjects, and wrote confidently about many of them. During this time at the Sarawak Museum he published more than 150 articles in the Sarawak Museum Journal. A sample of the titles of his articles indicate the breadth of Harrisson's interest: "Berawan death chants," 1955; "Cold-blooded vertebrates of the Niah Cave area," 1966; "The edible turtle (Chelonia mydas) in Borneo: Parts 1 through 5", 1951 - 56; "Humans and Hornbills in Borneo," 1951; "Maloh coffin designs," 1966 and "Punan Busang bird names," 1965.

The Sarawak Museum was the point of contact for foreign researchers visiting the region, and it was Harrisson's responsibility to host and collaborate with these researchers. In 1950, Edmund Leach arrived in Sarawak to conduct the social science survey of the state. Leach was critical of Harrisson's anthropological research, particularly of what Leach felt were hastily drawn conclusions Harrisson made from observations during his fieldwork. As I will discuss later in this chapter, the debate between Leach and Harrisson stayed cordial and eventually led Harrisson to address some of the profound limitations he perceived in anthropology in the period (Heimann 1999).

Harrisson's relationship with most other foreign researchers was less constructive. Derek Freeman, who conducted one of the research projects suggested by Leach in 1951, returned to Sarawak in 1961 to assist a doctoral student of his who had allegedly been

harassed by Harrisson. An intense confrontation with Harrisson led Freeman to accuse Harrisson of illicitly manufacturing sexually explicit sculptures at his bungalow and smuggling them into the museum's collections. He summarised what he called "conspicuous manifestations of Harrisson's psychopathic personality" (Freeman 1961: 17) in a report in September 1961:

> For some time past [Harrisson] has fabricated, in an annex to his house, by a number of natives, possibly also psychopathic and certainly under his direct personal influence, a series of grotesque and highly obscene carvings. None of these carvings ... is a genuine product of native culture. To the contrary, they are perverse innovations of a highly debased kind. Most of the more extreme of these have already been placed on public display in the Museum buildings under Harrisson's charge where, as might be expected, they excite great attention among the local population. (Freeman 1961: 17).

Freeman's accusations were not given credit, and Harrisson remained curator of the Sarawak Museum in spite of Freeman's ongoing efforts to have him dismissed (Caton 2009). Such episodes confirm that Harrisson was not liked by all, and there was some doubt about his professionalism in his work at the Sarawak Museum (Heimann 1999). However, he continued to be supported by the colonial administration of Sarawak in spite of his quarrels with visiting anthropologists and other researchers. These clashes were only in part due to his belligerent character and his protective stance towards local people for whom he felt responsible (Heimann 1999). As Heimann suggests, Harrisson's arguments and disagreements with other researchers were also the result of his discomfort with the anthropological theories and methods of the time which, he felt, often misrepresented Indigenous people who were not in a position to contradict or correct them (Heimann 1999). As I discuss in this chapter, Harrisson felt that anthropologists did not spend enough time with the people they researched, that they rarely came back to re-visit these people, and that their research was almost never independently verified. In contrast, he tried to spend as much time as possible with the people in whom he was most interested, the Kelabits living in the Bario highlands in the north of Sarawak, one of the Orang Ulu groups (see figure 5.4). As his biographer noted, he was not interested in drawing general patterns about humanity from his research.

Instead he was interested in the people he worked with on an individual level, as he had been in the New Hebrides and during his Mass-Observation projects (Heimann 1999). His dissatisfaction with the work of anthropologists around him was an early critique of anthropological theories and methods which would later be extensively criticised as culturally biased and infused with scientific racism and remnants of cultural evolutionism. Harrisson, by consciously ignoring anthropological theory and applying his own methods and principles established during earlier projects, was trying to overcome some of the obstacles that he felt encumbered other researchers. Above all, as I will argue, he tried to work in the communities and together with the people whom he intended to investigate (Heimann, 1999).

Figure 5.4) Harrisson with a group of Kelabit from Bario, Sarawak, undated

5.5. Harrisson's museum practices

Although the extended use of the Mass-Observation archive by contemporary researchers suggests the continuing relevance of his work, the value of his contributions to the field of anthropology has continued to be debated. Harrisson's methods at Mass-Observation, his perceptive accounts of the cultural influence of colonial governments on communities in the New Hebrides, and his call for longitudinal studies in anthropology were representative of some of the issues that were becoming increasingly contentious in the anthropological field. Some writers have argued that Harrisson's early work in the New Hebrides, through its break with established ethnographic representations, was not so much anthropology as "cultural studies avant la lettre" (Stanton 1997: 11).

While Harrisson's influence on the development of anthropology as a discipline has been discussed by a number of researchers investigating Mass-Observation and the Mass-Observation archive, his work at the Sarawak Museum has not yet been subject to academic scrutiny. Neither has his work been assessed according to its relevance to the development of museum studies and practices. My discussion of his methods at the museum aims to fill this gap, focusing on his influence on the photographic collection of the museum.

During my work at the Sarawak Museum, a number of older museum staff remembered Harrisson's explosive manners and coarse ways of handling subordinates, as well as for the rumours that arose after he left Sarawak that he had mishandled museum artifacts. However, others remembered him for his efforts to educate local staff by sending them overseas for training and for his keen interest in local communities and their culture. Thus, Harrisson's legacy has remained subject to debate even at the Sarawak Museum.

Nevertheless, the methods Harrisson introduced during his work at the Sarawak Museum were innovative. In spite of the antagonism he invoked during his career, Harrisson was an original thinker who addressed the flaws he perceived to be intrinsic to the fields with which he engaged, in spite of his lack of formal education in either anthropology or museums. In many respects, his practices resembled the concepts and practices later curators and museum workers identified by the term 'new museology'.

The term includes collaborative efforts of museums such as the participation by and collaboration with source communities in museum work, shared authority in describing objects and creating exhibitions, and focus on the social context of artifacts. He engaged in what may be seen as attempts at co-curation or co-production together with local communities. Harrisson employed a variety of Indigenous artists at the Sarawak Museum, among them Tusau Padan, an Orang Ulu from Long Nawan in Indonesia, who created artistic carvings and paintings which became part of the museum collection (Langub 1997). In a number of the photographs from the archive, Harrisson can be seen discussing and working together with people from the local communities during his work with the museum. Harrisson also introduced new documentation techniques such as audio recording and film. His interest in photography led to the increased use of the medium at the Sarawak Museum to record and document research work and conservation projects. Mass-Observation had relied on the subjective observations of informants from the groups under investigation; in Sarawak, members of museum staff from the different communities filled this role. Harrisson believed that all observers would be in some respects subjective, and aimed to include this subjectivity as part of the research. In Harrisson's view, using local collaborators, would not eliminate subjective bias but would nevertheless limit the intrusive effect of the observer on the people under observation. As Harrisson wrote in his notebook,

> One is constantly making British-judgement or whatever you like (footnote: state in full my biases–cf. education, politics, experience, sex;) judgement, even when feeling most fully in the thing. This matters, because–in my view–the investigator, though bound to affect the situation (even if he was, in this case, a Kelabit, and no one knew he was investigating anything, his presence would or could affect this) should do so outside their pattern as little as possible (cited in Heimann 1999: 256).

Harrisson adapted these principles for his work at the Sarawak Museum. The wide scope of content of the photographs and the processes through which they were created indicated that Harrisson applied the principles he had established for his anthropology at home to the investigation of the people he was now charged with representing at the Sarawak Museum. Throughout his work with Mass-Observation,

Harrisson had insisted on recording as much detailed information as possible without concern for redundancies. In his new research environment, he similarly felt that it was necessary to collect as much material as possible "without fear of being swamped in trivial data" (cited in Heimann 1998: 256). In his view,

> [f]or an investigator to be afraid of being 'overwhelmed by fact' is about as idiotic as for a Kelabit [ethnic group among the Orang Ulu] cutting down a tree for fear of being crushed by his own work (cited in Heimann 1998: 256).

The scope of material in the photographic archive suggests that this idea informed and motivated the production of photographs for the Sarawak Museum. The absence of a theoretical framework or working hypotheses in Harrisson's work and thus of a specific brief for the photographers was deliberate. As Hinton put it in relation to Harrisson's work with Mass-Observation,

> [t]he first principle of Harrisson's method was a relentless empiricism, an insistence that the starting point of any research was not conceptual clarity about the hypothesis to be tested but an almost passive stance of pure observation (Hinton 2013: 31).

Instead of setting out with a specific research focus, Harrisson preferred to let the issues emerge from the wealth of data and information he had collected. This inductive approach, which Harrisson established during his time with Mass-Observation, was also applied during his work at the Sarawak Museum, and for his anthropological work in Sarawak's Indigenous communities. As a result, the collection at the archive of the Sarawak Museum grew into a repository of diverse material awaiting future analysis.

Harrisson noted how his methods established during Mass-Observation had prepared him for the observation and investigation of Indigenous people in which he was now involved (Heimann 1999: 256). Likewise, his methods for the accumulation of information were informed by the same guidelines for empirical investigations used in Mass-Observation. As his biographer noted, "as with Mass-Observation, Tom wanted to collect more and more data rather than try prematurely to draw out underlying principles and patterns" (Heimann 1998: 257).

5.6. Harrisson's anthropological critique

In Harrisson's view, one of the great shortcomings of most anthropological research was that its results were rarely subject to re-evaluation or followed up after the work had been published (Heimann, 1999: 258). It was his conviction that the material collected in sociological or anthropological research needed to provide a comprehensive record to enable future researchers to compare and substantiate the data. "The record must be clear, factually precise, and stated in such a way that it can be understood by anyone at a later date, years or even centuries later," he wrote in 1975 (Harrisson 1975: 3). Archives were meant to provide material for researchers to investigate social, cultural and economic change with the advantage of hindsight.

> Ideally it should be possible for another observer to go back to the same place at the same time on the same day of the year, years later, and repeat the same observation, whether in words or film, thus measuring change in a way which cannot be theorised about or preconceived (Harrisson and Spender 1975: 3-4).

While Harrisson made these statements about the data collected for Mass-Observation, the collection of photographs at the Sarawak Museum reflects the same objectives and methods. The material provided a visual archive of the communities accessible to future researchers as well as to the people in the communities themselves, which would allow for the kinds of uses Harrisson anticipated for the material. Moreover, the archive provides a source of historical material showing communities from which few historical photographs exist.

Harrisson's work with Mass-Observation, as well as his work at the Sarawak Museum, continued to be debated by academics. Some of these have criticised his methods while others have found his theories to be innovative and relevant. However, few have investigated the connection between the two bodies of work that marked Harrisson's professional achievement. This may be one of the reasons why the collections and archives of the Sarawak Museum have not been subject to closer scrutiny by academics and researchers investigating Harrisson's role in anthropology and museology. However, the practices he introduced at the Sarawak Museum during his work as museum curator remain relevant to the study of these disciplines. Harrisson's confrontational personality antagonised contemporaries and coloured

attitudes to his research. Nevertheless, the projects he initiated, for Mass-Observation as well as for the Sarawak Museum, remain valuable resources for investigation. I argue that there are strong parallels between Harrisson's work with Mass Observation and his later work at the Sarawak Museum. Among these parallels is the large scope of the material that was collected at the archive, and Harrisson's disregard for specific methodological approaches. Another similarity was the engagement of researchers and collaborators who came from the communities under investigation. The staff of the Sarawak Museum had always been largely drawn from local people, with the exception of the curator. Harrisson continued to employ staff from a variety of different ethnic groups in the state. Although this was based on pre-existing practices, it nevertheless mirrored the way in which Harrisson had previously tried to engage with the communities he intended to investigate; for Mass-Observation he had focused on recruiting participant observers from the lower and working classes. Kuching-based museum staff took part in fieldwork and research projects involving their own ethnic communities, to facilitate travel and communications. Employing local staff also had practical advantages, as museum director Ipoi Datan pointed out to me in an interview in 2011. According to Datan, the curators of the Sarawak Museum

> tried to recruit as many staff as possible from different communities. Malay, Chinese, Iban, we have Orang Ulu, Bisayah, Kelabit, Bidayuh, I think [the curators of the museum] tried to make sure that the museum is owned by the locals. And ... you go to the Iban areas, so you bring one of the staff that is Iban, there will be no problem with translation or understanding. Likewise, you go to Bidayuh areas, you bring along the Bidayuh staff (Datan, Interview 23.02.2011).

This suited Harrisson's methods, and among his numerous publications are also a number produced jointly with local informants and collaborators. Local names also increasingly appear on the list of authors contributing journal articles to the Sarawak Museum Journal, focusing in particular on local history, myths and legends, as well as local customs and traditions.

These different activities at the Sarawak Museum suggest that under Harrisson's curatorship museum work became more collaborative. Although to some extent the source communities had in the past been contributors as well as audiences of the museum, under Harrisson this was increasingly and explicitly acknowledged.

5.7. The Sarawak Museum photographic archive

The archive at the Sarawak Museum contains photographs dating back as early as 1898. Several boxes of glass plates were added to the museum's collection during the time of the Brooke Rajahs. Notes in the Sarawak Gazette and the Sarawak Museum annual report, in which the museum curator listed the events which took place at the museum for each year, noted the contribution of photographs by Hose and other government servants who donated their photographs for the museum's collection (The Sarawak Gazette 1906). However, the main bulk of material was added after 1947.

Harrisson had taken photographs in the Kelabit highlands during his campaign against Japanese occupation. Once he became the curator of the Sarawak Museum, he proceeded to use photography to document his new research projects. Harrisson's preferred method of research was through observation (Hinton 2013), and photography was a suitable method of documenting his observations, and of registering material for future observations. Harrisson soon became known for the copious amounts of material he gathered. "During the year the Curator of the Museum made another visit to the Kelabit country," noted the annual report of the British colonial administration 1949. "The main objects of this expedition were...to take photographs of the lesser-known tribes... More than a thousand photographs were taken" (Sarawak Annual Report 1949: 95). In an article published in the Sarawak Gazette in 1947, just after he had started his work as a curator, Harrisson called for public contributions to the photographic archive. In his words,

> the Museum urgently needs photographs from all who take them.
> Our collection is not up-to-date and has suffered in Jap hands. Photos
> are, of course, an important part of any Museum's records and display
> (Harrisson 1947: 190).

The archive grew in size and importance and more resources and facilities were added. In the early 1950s Harrisson established the position of staff photographer at the museum, and later added to the Museum's facilities the archive and a darkroom for developing photographs. The first staff photographer was Junaidi Bolhassan, who held the post until 1985. Bolhassan had started at the Museum as a driver and had no formal training in photography. He was in charge of the archive, an assignment that included developing, archiving and reproducing the photographs from the collection on request. Harrisson and other researchers used the photographs to illustrate their

publications in the Sarawak Museum Journal. Researchers, journalists and members of the public could order prints from the archive on request for a small fee. Museum staff also used material from the archive for exhibition displays and showcases. The collection of photographs at the archive grew to include portraits of museum staff, photographs of museum buildings, and urban as well as rural scenes. Among these were photographs of Indigenous artists working at the museum and photographs of functions and events, as well as pictures taken in various communities. The material also documented museum work such as archaeological digs, the arrangement of exhibition displays and the objects of the museum collection. A large number of photographs were taken by museum staff during research, collection and conservation trips. Many of these photographs focused on the work and cultural life of villagers including photographs of local material culture, practices and rituals.

While much of the initial material at the Sarawak Museum was produced by Harrisson, other members of Museum staff also contributed to the archive. Museum staff carried out projects contemporaneously in different regions, and the photographer was not always available to accompany them. Thus, other museum staff also took photographs, as a later director of the Sarawak Museum, Ipoi Datan, recalled:

> Different sections had their own cameras, and we knew how to use them. And if you are going to be out for a while, maybe one month, then you can't bring the photographer along, you have to do it on your own (Datan, 2011).

Members of staff at the Sarawak Museum who had taken photographs in the course of their work handed them to the photographer, and Junaidi developed and filed the photographs in the archive and noted the date of capture on the negatives. Once the photographs had become part of the archive, they could be requested by other staff, journalists and researchers and also by private individuals. However, neither Junaidin nor any of the contributors to the archive seem to have been briefed to provide any descriptive information along with the photographs they submitted to the archive.

Harrisson's successor, Benedict Sandin, together with subsequent curators, maintained the practice of documenting museum work, objects in the collection, staff and other activities through photographs. Junaidi Bolhassan retired in 1985 after 30 years of work for the museum. As new photographic technologies became available, museum

staff worked with 35mm film, slides, and eventually with colour photographs, and these were archived under the care of the photographer. The archive of the Sarawak Museum grew to number thousands of negatives, prints and colour slides.

In 2007 when I first visited the photographic archive of the Sarawak Museum it occupied two small rooms located underneath the storage facility for some of the archaeological material from the Niah excavations undertaken by the Harrissons—Tom and his second wife, Barbara—in the 1950s. Barbara worked with Harrisson even though she was not formally employed at the museum, and she established the indexing system used for the photographs at the archive. When I started working at the archive, one of the two rooms it occupied was furnished as a photo studio, with assorted screens and lighting, mannequins in ethnic costumes and other objects used by the photographer. The other room contained the main body of material, along with some desks for the photographer, archivist, and interns. Most photographs were grouped according to the medium or technology used for their creation and subject matter, for instance glass plates, slides, medium-format negatives or rolls of film. The photographs were sometimes used to illustrate journalistic or academic articles, books and other publications but no list of their usage was kept. Most of the photographs in the archive remained unpublished and without descriptions.

5.8. The Sarawak Museum archive and other Sarawak photographers

While the archive of the Sarawak Museum probably contains the largest collection of photographs from Sarawak's colonial period, other photographers worked in the region at the same time and sometimes also collaborated with each other as well as with the Sarawak Museum photographer. The Sarawak Museum occasionally used the services of the Anna Photo Studio in Kuching to develop and print photographs. Anna Photo's proprietor K.F. Wong knew Museum staff photographer Junaidi Bolhassan, and helped Bolhassan to acquire practical photographic processing skills after he was promoted from the position of a driver to that of a photographer. Wong was a professional photographer who assembled his own extensive collection of photographs from around the state in his private archive, and also contributed to the Sarawak Museum collection. He published a number of his photographs under titles such as "Pagan Innocence" (1960), "Borneo Scene" (1979), and "Vanishing World: The Iban of Borneo" (1972).

"Vanishing World" was produced in collaboration with other authors, among them Hedda Morrison, a professional photographer who spent almost 20 years in Sarawak with her husband Alastair, the British colonial government servant who had formed such a negative opinion of Harrisson and his work. Like Harrisson, the Morrisons arrived in 1947 just after Sarawak had been ceded by the third Rajah Brooke and left in 1966, three years after Sarawak became part of Malaysia. During her years in Sarawak, Hedda Morrison assembled a large collection of photographs taken on her numerous trips throughout Sarawak. Apart from co-authoring "Vanishing World", she published two other books entitled "Sarawak" (1957) and "Life in a longhouse" (1962) and her photographs appeared in numerous other publications. Whether Morrison also collaborated with the Museum is not clear.

The collections of Wong, Morrison and the Sarawak Museum show distinct differences in their subject matter, the way the photographs were taken, the audiences addressed in their publications and the way they were contextualised. Wong's photographs were created for the commercial market, and provided picturesque compositions of good-looking people in serene surroundings. His publications represented Indigenous communities in what Prins has called a 'primitivist' genre (Prins 1999:60). The photographs, through their arrangement and accompanying descriptions and captions, romanticised traditional Indigenous lifestyle while suggesting that its extinction through the influence of development and modernisation was both unavoidable and desirable. Wong's approach to his subject was directed by his commercial interest in photography. He focussed on representations of local Indigenous groups that he presumed would be of interest to tourists and foreigners. His photographs, captions and the introduction to publications such as "Pagan Innocence" reflect a view that objectified his subjects as primitive others, presenting local people to his readers as "bare-breasted native beauties" and "legendary tough, sword-wielding head-hunters" (Wong 1960: 18, see figure 5.5 to 5.8).

Figure 5.5) Dayak men and women like to be clean and bathe at least twice a day, from: KF Wong 1960

The captions accompanying Wong's work also suggest stereotypical, simplistic and idealised representations of Indigenous culture, for example his description of a photograph of several Iban women bathing in a rapid in the river: "Iban girls splash and play like otters at one of the many waterfalls in the upper reaches of rivers" (Wong 1960: 50, see figure 5.8). Such comparisons of people and animals confirmed the alterity of Indigenous peoples and reinforced their cultural difference (Smith 1999: 42).

Morrison's photographs show a greater range of subject matter and a more ethnographic than populist approach in her work. Portraits, photographs of material culture, the agricultural cycle, the longhouse environments as well as festivals and ceremonies feature in her publications (figures 5.9 and 5.10). Her photographs provide a varied and in-depth view of the different ethnic groups in Sarawak due to the particular access she was granted through Alastair Morrison's service in the British colonial Government. She often travelled with Alastair or with other government servants, and while this enabled her to visit places that would otherwise been difficult to reach, the particular context of the colonial administration at work also became apparent in her photographs (Walker 1994). The extensive descriptions that accompanied her photographs in publications provided detailed information she had gathered in years of working in Sarawak.

Morrison was concerned to make her publications available to local audiences. The captions in "Life in a longhouse", which contains photographs taken in Iban communities, were indicative of her attempts at inclusiveness. The texts accompanying the photographs were written in the four most widely-spoken languages in Sarawak, namely English, Malay,

Figure 5.6) This young Iban mother has collected a bouquet of hibiscus, from: KF Wong 1960

Figure 5.7) A Kelabit, probably the finest physical type in Sarawak. His hair is kept neatly trimmed and he sports massive brass ear-rings, from: KF Wong 1960

Figure 5.8) Iban girls splash and play like otters at one of the many waterfalls in the upper reaches of rivers, from: KF Wong 1960

Iban and Chinese. Nevertheless, Morrison was later criticised for failing to acknowledge in her work that Sarawak society at the time was deeply ambivalent about the British colonial administration and its efforts at modernisation (see figures 5.11 and 5.12). Another point of critique was that her work positioned local traditional culture as backwards and inferior while suggesting "Western" development as the only possible and desirable outcome (Walker 1994). In spite of this criticism, Morrison's photographs became important historical documents for the local communities in which they were taken (Bala 2000).

In contrast to the photographs taken by Wong and Morrison, the material produced for the Sarawak Museum archive was not aimed at a commercial audience. Most of the photographs were created to document museum work and to provide photographs for use in museum exhibitions and documents that future researchers could use in their work. The archive was not the product of a single photographer but assembled by a range of contributors at the Museum. Through the contributions of staff working throughout Sarawak, the collection of the Sarawak Museum grew to contain many more photographs than those either Wong or Morrison published or otherwise made available, and as part of a public museum the Sarawak Museum collection remained to a degree accessible to the public. In contrast, the collection of Hedda Morrison is contained in a number of different archives in several countries, not all of which are publicly accessible. According to staff at the Sarawak Museum, Wong's photographs are in the private hands of Wong's nephew and are also not available to the public. In contrast, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum have remained in Kuching, and while not on public display, they were accessible on request, and the main limitation to the use of the archive was the lack of knowledge about the specific kind of material contained in it, as no index of the material was created.

Wong and Morrison were aware that they were documenting communities undergoing rapid changes. Harrisson also perceived these social changes brought about by increasing exchange with outsiders and the influence of the Government, public education and the increasing conversion of animist communities to Christianity. In an article in

Figure 5.9) Three women in ceremonial skirts, Cornell University Library Division of Rare and Manuscript collections, undated, by Hedda Morrisson

the Sarawak Gazette in 1956, Harrisson stated that if things would continue in the same way, the photographs of Hedda Morrison and F.K. Wong would constitute "archives" of those rural communities undergoing what in his view were irredeemable changes (Harrisson 1956: 146). Harrisson's words suggest that he credited the two photographers with creating a visual archive of the state, but he did not mention the archive which he himself had set up at the Sarawak Museum. Perhaps this omission was due to the fact that photographs from the museum archive were never widely published, and were not as well known by his audience, many of whom were probably familiar with Morrison's and Wong's work. Harrisson and Morrison were both experimenting with ethnographic photography with a focus on social and economic change. This was during a time when the stereotypical image of Indigenous communities was that they were in a state of innocent but primitive unity with nature, and that of the modern, technologically and morally-advanced colonial Government was pervasive and popular. An example of this attitude is found in the introduction to Wong's "Pagan Innocence" written by the Governor General of Malaya, Malcolm MacDonald, who later also wrote a book about Sarawak and its Indigenous people with the title "Borneo People" (MacDonald 1956) and who also contributed the foreword to Morrison's "Sarawak" (Morrison 1965). The concepts of the salvage of culture through photography, of the imminent loss of Indigenous culture, and of the inevitable but simultaneously deplorable transition to modernity are evident in his text. In MacDonald's view,

Figure 5.10) River and mountains with boat, Cornell University Library Division of Rare and Manuscript collections, undated, by Hedda Morrison

142

Figure 5.11) How to wash a baby, Long San, Ulu Baram, 1966, undated, by Hedda Morrisson, reprinted in Walker, 1994

[o]ne of the important aspects of the photographs in [Wong's] book is that they catch the Dayaks at a moment which is passing, when they are still pursuing the customary pastimes of their ancestors in the traditional dress which those forebears favoured for centuries. Alas, many "modern" notions are now travelling up-river in Sarawak, inducing the people in the long-houses to adopt new costumes and new ways. Traditional native society is therefore undergoing a critical transformation (MacDonald, in Wong 1960: 7).

The ethnographic present and the ahistorical nature of Indigenous communities, stable and unchanging and documented by the photographer just at the moment before it is changed forever, are taken for granted by MacDonald. So too is the ongoing validity of social evolutionism for the governance of colonial populations. In the foreword to Hedda Morrison's "Sarawak", MacDonald suggests that the role of the colonial Government in developing local populations is complicated "not only by wide contrasts in the characters of the various races, but also by the different stages which they have reached in social evolution" (MacDonald, in Morrison, 1957). Nevertheless, he insists that the process of evolution initiated through the influence of benign colonial governments would be unavoidable and all-encompassing. In MacDonald's words,

> Iban and other pagan society as we know it will disappear as a result of a continuous and, eventually, complete process of advance. Once such a movement begins, it cannot be checked. The original impetus persists. The first set of changes produces a desire for further changes, and so-called progress works out its inexorable evolution (MacDonald, in Wong 1960: 14).

MacDonald and Harrisson both perceived that social and cultural change was happening in Sarawak, and both thought photographs would provide valuable documentation of this transformation. However, their ideas of the kinds of changes that

143

were about to happen, and of the role which photographs were to play, were not the same. For MacDonald photographs were documents of a romanticised traditional lifestyle that was happy, innocent and unchanging, but also primitive and full of hardship. To him this was a lifestyle that was to be changed forever but also for the better by a caring modern colonial regime. Change for MacDonald was predictable, inevitable, and followed the patterns indicated by government development policies. Romantic traditional lifestyles were lost, but modern conveniences,

Figure 5.12) Application for a Gun Licence, Ulu Baram, 1960s, undated, by Hedda Morrisson, reprinted in Walker, 1994

health, infrastructure and education were gained, and photographs like those taken by Wong and Morrison would remain as souvenirs of a passing culture. In contrast, Harrisson's concept of the photographic archive was different. According to Harrisson, change could not be preconceived. He felt that the changes brought by the colonial Government were not wholly positive, and might not succeed in providing meaningful development for local people (Harrisson 1956). Harrisson anticipated the unpredictability of social and cultural change, and initiated the photographic archive as evidence that would enable future researchers to critically investigate social and cultural change. The archive was not conceived of as a source of nostalgia but as a repository of resources for the future.

5.9. CONCLUSION

In spite of being a unique and extensive public resource, the Sarawak Museum photo archive has remained largely unexplored by sociologists and historians. In 2012 the Sarawak Museum started to digitise the collection, but many researchers based in institutions in Australia, the UK, and the USA still struggled to gain access to the material. While working with the photographs of the Sarawak Museum I was contacted several times by researchers who had been trying to get in touch with the Museum staff in order to request photographs, but had not been able to get a response, and were thus looking for other ways of getting hold of the material.

The Sarawak Museum did not keep any records of the use of the photographs in academic or journalistic publications, but there is evidence at the archive that local people frequently came in to view photographs. Each medium-format photograph was stored as a negative in a small booklet and as a contact print glued onto an A4 sheet. These were kept in a document folder according to a system based on codes of letters corresponding to its subject matter devised by Barbara Harrisson. Many of the contact prints in these folders had been viewed, and viewers had contributed notes on the side (see figure 5.13 and 5.14). Sometimes the notes contained the names of the people in the photographs, the location, or the occasion at which the photograph had been taken. The notes were handwritten, in different styles of handwriting and several kinds of ink, obviously contributed by different people who had accessed the material.

The documentation of photographs at the Sarawak Museum by visitors to the archive constituted a collaborative project of description. The contribution of the community to the work of the Museum, if incomplete, was evident from the engagement of the source communities with the material. It suggested that the photographs were still important to some members of the source communities, and furthermore that the communities would be able to provide the social context to locate the photographs. It also seemed to constitute a precursor for a more inclusive community co-production in terms of the description and contextualization of the material, in which people from the source communities had evidently taken part.

Figure 5.13) Page with contact prints and handwritten comments from the Sarawak Museum, 2011

I chose to work with the museum photographs for my research to extend the reach of the material and to provide access to it to a more varied range of contributors. Returning the photographs from the Sarawak Museum to the source communities constituted the kind of longitudinal study Harrisson had called for, and which he hoped the material would enable.

Figure 5.14) Page with photographs and written comments, undated, Sarawak Museum archive, 2011

Source communities were to be given the opportunity to contribute, verify or contradict research carried out in their communities. Through photo elicitation interviews, people would be able to comment on the photographs, the representation of their own culture, the work of the Sarawak Museum and the photographer and other researchers who visited them. Referring to his work for Mass-Observation, Harrisson had written that the collected research data should enable future researchers to investigate social and cultural change. The return of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum and the photo elicitation interviews in the source communities were carried out to test Harrisson's claims for the value of the Sarawak Museum material he helped to create.

In the next chapters I discuss the work with the 1500 medium-format photographs from the archives, which were circulated in the villages along the Baram and Tinjar between 2010 and 2012. I examine how members of the source communities conceptualised the connection between the photographs and the competing versions of social and cultural change offered by people like Harrisson, MacDonald, and Morrison. I investigate how members of the communities contextualised the photographs, and how this reflected the methods and theories that motivated Harrisson's work at the Sarawak Museum. I also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of photo elicitation for this project, methods developed as a result of the changes in anthropology and museum theory to which, as I have shown, Harrisson was an early contributor.*

*An early version of this chapter was published as a peer-reviewed article (Horn 2013; see Bibliography and Appendix IV).

CHAPTER SIX: PHOTOGRAPHS, AGENCY AND THE SARAWAK MUSEUM ARCHIVE

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s much evidence has been gathered of the repressive quality of and hierarchical ordering evident in ethnographic and colonial photography (Appadurai 1997; Hight and Sampson 2002; Grimshaw 2008). Critics highlighted the unequal power relationships that enabled anthropologists and colonial administrators to compile photographs of the local communities in the colonies, where photographs acted as "tools of empire" (Landau 2002: 142). This approach was reflected in the critiques of Pratt (1991, 2004) and Smith (1999), who pointed out the injustices innate in the relationships between Western researchers and Indigenous peoples. In the words of Smith,

> the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of [Indigenous people's] ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations (Smith 1999: 30).

Indigenous communities had little agency in the process through which their communities were investigated and did not benefit from outcomes of research, while their contributions to research remained unrecognised (Pratt 2004; Smith 1999). According to Smith, among Indigenous peoples

> research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the Indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument. It told us things already known, suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already had jobs (Smith 2012: 33).

> Similarly, Pratt (2004) argued that Indigenous contributors to research were rarely acknowledged in the outcomes of such projects, while their knowledge was extracted and then subsumed within the academic analysis to which they had no access or authority over the outcomes. In this chapter, I assess the photographs from the Sarawak Museum within the context of such theoretical criticisms. I apply Smith's arguments to the research and documentation carried out by Sarawak Museum staff, which included the

work of curator Tom Harrisson and his staff, as well as to later work carried out by foreign and local researchers after Sarawak had become part of Malaysia. While the criticism of writers such as Pratt (2004) and Smith (1999) suggests that Indigenous groups had little influence on the outcomes of research conducted in their communities, I argue that my investigation of the relationship between researchers and Indigenous communities in Sarawak suggested that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum collection can be viewed, to an extent, as collaborative acts between the photographer and the people in the communities. I also argue that the acknowledgement of these acts of agency enabled people to re-appropriate and re-interpret the photographs and assume ownership over the material.

To begin, I draw on my fieldwork to discuss how people in the source communities used the photographs to anchor their oral narratives of local history, customs and traditions. During my fieldwork, people re-contextualised the photographs and interpreted them according to the stories that emerged through the photo elicitation interviews. These narratives at times complemented and at other times contradicted the official records of the Government and thereby complicated the written archival accounts through which local history was recorded at the time. As Binney and Chaplin have suggested, the photographs "conveyed a past that had not died in individual memories, but which had been suppressed in the European-recorded historiography" (Binney & Chaplin 2003: 100).

During my field research, people's use of ethnographic photographs suggested that source communities were able to re-assign new interpretations to photographs and discard or ignore the meanings and interpretations established when the photographs had been part of projects of ethnographic investigation. As I have argued in Chapter Three, ethnographic photographs are defined through processes of description and contextualisation. Museum objects are not in themselves representative of the specific culture or context in which they were created. Instead, they "are made 'ethnographic' by the act of detaching them from their original cultural context and recontextualizing them into western scientific frames of reference" (Kreps 2003: 31). I argue that although the photographs from the Sarawak Museum may have been created for the ethnographic documentation of a specific group of people, they were re-contextualised during the discussions with people in the source communities who in the process asserted their authority over the meanings of the material.

While working in Sarawak's rural communities, I was acutely aware of the entanglement of the photographs in the frameworks of governance. I expected people in the source communities to express criticism of academic research carried out in the villages and of the way in which local communities were represented by outsiders. However, during my work in the source communities, these concerns did not enter the narratives of the participants in the interviews and group discussions. Participants talking about the photographs analysed their meanings and possible interpretations from a variety of perspectives but, for reasons I will discuss in this chapter, they rarely referred to the motives that might have informed the creation of the material.

Unlike many projects involving museum collections, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were taken relatively recently and many of the people in the source communities remembered the visit of the Sarawak Museum team in their community. People recalled the situation and their interaction with the photographer and, in interviews and discussions, they reflected upon their memories and the acts of agency and collaboration they recalled. Along with the memories of these interactions, the discussions with people who remembered how they had contributed to the photographs suggested a sense of ownership, because people were aware that they had contributed to the content and meaning of the photographs. Their interpretations of the photographs depended on their personal memories of the event and on their cultural knowledge about the persons, objects and scenes shown.

These insights generated from my fieldwork were supported by a growing body of literature suggesting that all photographs are collaborative acts between photographer and subjects (Edwards 2000; Eileraas 2003; Maxwell 2008; Lydon 2010). The photographs from the Sarawak Museum contained traces of the control the photographer exercised through systematic composition or staging of scenes, or through the selection of specific subjects. However, they also contained evidence of acts of agency by those photographed, who were able to contribute to the process in different ways.

Interviews with Sarawak Museum staff implied that the relationships between source communities and researchers were not as clearly defined as critics like Smith suggest. During Tom Harrisson's curatorship at the Sarawak Museum, people from various source communities were employed at the Museum and collaborated with

its staff. The collaborations between Sarawak Museum staff and source communities depended on personal interactions and negotiations on both sides, which allowed the source communities agency in the process and creative ownership over the material. During my research, this sense of ownership was expressed through the different ways in which people appropriated the photographs from the Sarawak Museum to illustrate points they were making about local culture and social relationships, as well as the accounts of individual acts of agency that contributed to the documentary material. My research therefore suggests that historical photographs such as the Sarawak Museum photographs enable source communities to exert 'photographic sovereignty' (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998: 42) over the resources directly related to their own history and culture. Tsinhnahjinnie defined photographic sovereignty as her capacity, as a member of an Indigenous group, to claim the authority "to reinterpret images of Native peoples" (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998: 42) and to construct new meanings based on her own knowledge that differed from the interpretations and descriptions imposed on the photographs by others. My work supports Tsinhnahjinnie's suggestion that ethnographic photographs can be re-conceptualised by their source communities. During my research, people exercised photographic sovereignty over the photographs by making them work within their cultural frameworks and by pointing towards their own contributions in creating the material.

The sense of ownership and agency that people expressed with regard to the photographs from the Sarawak Museum suggested that the photographs are not only cultural and historical resources for the communities but must also be considered in terms of Indigenous cultural property. In 2007, the rights of Indigenous peoples over the curation and conservation of cultural heritage were enshrined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (Janke and Iacovino 2012). Indigenous cultural and intellectual property was defined as including rights over material contained in state, national and international museums and archives. The equation of cultural rights with human rights (Kemmish et al 2012) raises additional questions of Indigenous agency over documentary material.

Figure 6.1) Bungan ceremony in Long Sobeng, 1956

6.2. Photographs as evidence of social change

Throughout my fieldwork in the communities along the Baram and Tinjar rivers, the Sarawak Museum photographs prompted people to tell stories from local oral history. Some images among the photographs to which these stories related were particularly pertinent for my research. Rather than illustrating local culture, beliefs and practices, these photographs related directly to past events which I was able to contrast with other sources such as the documents and publications in Kuching's archives. The stories narrated by people in the communities during my research provided an alternative side to the written historical accounts in government publications such as the Sarawak Gazette,

the annual reports of the Sarawak Museum, and the numerous ethnographies, reports, travel accounts and memoirs published by Westerners who spent time in Sarawak. The archival documents had been produced by government servants, missionaries, teachers, anthropologists and other researchers, but generally by Europeans. The oral accounts contributed by the people in the source communities during my visits represented alternatives to these historical narratives from the point of view of the people in the local communities.

A series of examples will illustrate the relationship between the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, local oral history and local history as recorded in government publications and archives. Among the photographs I worked with was a series of images taken in 1956 which showed a group of people gathered on a longhouse verandah (see figure 6.1 to 6.4). The photographs showed two men seated in chairs presiding over the group. Everyone else was sitting on the ground around them. Round plates decorated with Chinese peony patterns could be seen placed on bamboo mats on the floor. The plates were filled with food and drink. Small packets wrapped in leaves and some round biscuits, glass bottles and enamel cups and glasses filled with a milky liquid—presumably *tuak*, the local rice wine—and some of the conical cigarettes made from local tobacco rolled in wild banana leaf. The two men on chairs were seated in front of an extensive mural covering the wall of the apartment beyond, showing the spirals and tendrils of the 'tree of life' design which is a popular motif of Orang Ulu decorative arts. In one of the photographs a man is seated facing the two men on the chairs and the mural. He is holding a film camera pointed at the proceedings. Dressed in a white shirt and with his hair cut short he may have been a foreigner, perhaps a researcher documenting the event or a visiting government servant (see figure 6.1).

Figure 6.2) Bungan ceremony in Long Sobeng, 1956

In 2012, I took prints of these photographs on a trip to the Tinjar during which I visited a number of communities. I had set out to find out where the photographs had been taken, since the location had not been noted at the archive. When I arrived at my first destination, a small village called Long Sobeng (see map 6.1), I unpacked the material in the living room of the headman of the village. Some people had come over at the request of the son of the headman, Jarau Braim,
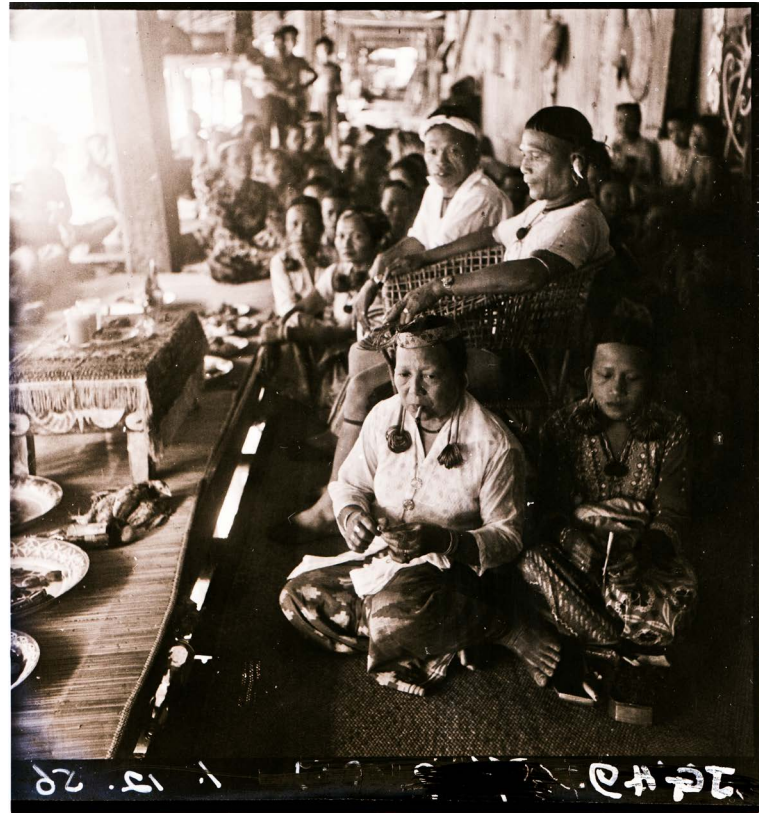
Figure 6.3) Bungan ceremony in Long Sobeng, 1956

who had accompanied me on the trip. People quickly agreed that the photographs had been taken in their village. The men in the chairs were identified as Penghulu Balan Lejau, one of the community leaders of the time, and Tua Kampong or headman of Long Sobeng, Jelayan Semuni. The two men were holding a religious ceremony. It was not part of the *adat lama*, the old religion based on animal omens and spirits, which most people followed. Instead, the ceremony was part of a religion called *bungan* which had started to spread in the Ulu in the 1940s.

Lungah Ganang, one of the women who came to have a look at the photographs as I unpacked them at the headman's apartment, named the people in the pictures one by one. She and some of her friends identified almost everyone. "This is Lisim Avun, sitting next to Kulan Avon. Here in front, with the white *kebaya*, it's Lavang Tinggang, the wife of Balan Lejau, she is the one smoking the cigarette," she listed (Ganang, Interview 22 September 2011). Among the group, hardly anybody could recall the details of how the *bungan* rituals were conducted. Some may have been reluctant to discuss their old beliefs because the people in Long Sobeng had converted to Christianity. Lungah was unable to provide more detail, but she introduced me to an older man who had been present at the

Figure 6.4) Girls watching the bungan ceremony in Long Sobeng, 1956

celebration, as he said, when he was a little boy. He recalled precise details of the rituals and beliefs. In the ceremony, sacrifices were given to the deities, he said. Three pieces of betel nut, three pieces of rice cake, three cigarettes, three glasses of rice wine, three of everything, because there were three gods in *bungan*. "They were called Penyelung, Tenangan and Bungan herself," he recollected, spelling out the names, and went on to elaborate in detail on the beliefs and legends of the religion. Followers of *bungan* still observed animal omens, but bad auguries could be offset with small sacrifices. Instead, as shown in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, weekly rituals were held to honour a trinity of deities, in which food and drink were given as offerings. When the rest of the community converted to Christianity some years later, Jelayan had remained a *bungan* believer until his death, refusing to be baptised, Wan told me.

Bungan had started in a Kenyah community in Kalimantan across the border in Indonesia. A man whose harvest had failed and whose family was suffering from disease and hunger dreamt of a beautiful woman. She told him that if he followed her

instructions, his bad luck, poverty and bad health and that of his family would come to an end (White 1956; Aichner 1956). After following the instructions of the apparition, his fate immediately turned for the better. Seeing this, the other people in the community started to take up his practices and *bungan* began to spread. The people who followed *bungan* were rewarded with plentiful harvests and good health (Metcalf 1974). *Bungan* rapidly became popular and was introduced to Sarawak where, among others, headman Jelayan became a convert, and with him the community of Long Sobeng.

During the time of the Brooke administration, access to the remote interior of Sarawak for outsiders was limited, because the Brookes thought that outside influence might have a harmful effect on rural populations (Kaur 1996). The policy forestalled the spread of Christianity through missionary activity (Harrisson 1956). This changed after 1946, when Sarawak became part of the British colonial empire. Increasingly, missionaries gained access to remote communities and many of those communities converted to Christianity (Metcalf 1975; Southwell 1999).

The religious conversion of local communities through outside influence was by no means uncontested, as the example of *bungan* shows. *Bungan* was seen by government officials as a reaction to the efforts of the first Christian missionaries in the region. It contained some similarities to Christianity while also maintaining elements of the old religion. Tom Harrisson wrote in 1956: "I first met with [*bungan*] in the upper Baram in 1949. Since then it has spread tremendously, largely in secret, always subtly, and always behind the missionaries—behind, that is, in the temporal sense; against them in the moral" (Harrisson 1956: 114). The implication was that local people in Kalimantan had borrowed aspects of Christianity, the trinity of deities and the weekly ceremonies, and integrated them into a new religion that was nevertheless local and included many of the elements of the old religion. Tom Harrisson expressed his criticism again in the Sarawak Gazette in the same year:

> I spent six months in the interior in 1932 without meeting a missionary, and again in 1946. Now you could hardly go six days. In some rivers, not six hours... In Sarawak, habits and beliefs rooted in centuries of native development and experience have been swept aside in less than a tenth of a century (Harrisson 1956: 116).

6.3. Negotiating change in the Ulu

During my visit to Long Sobeng and nearby Long Loyang, which are both Sebup communities, people had other perspectives on religious change. Discussions about the photographs with the source communities suggested that conversion was not entirely driven by missionary activities. Clement Langet Sabang, a Sebup from Long Loyang who worked in Sibu, explained what had motivated people to convert. "Christianity allowed us to get rid of some of the very restrictive and dangerous rites which were practised under the old religion," said Clement as we were walking underneath a part of the remaining longhouse in Long Loyang (see map 6.2). Among these prohibitions was the ban against eating deer meat: "Under the old religion, you would see barking deer running under the longhouse, nobody was allowed to hunt it!" As we were walking we discussed the prohibitions that were part of the old religion. The prohibitions were based on the observation of animal omens, birds, snakes, or deer. If bad omens were observed, it meant that danger was near. At such times people were not allowed to leave the longhouse or go to their farms. These restrictions were particularly limiting during the planting period, when the staple crop, rice, needed regular weeding and protection from pests. For a farmer, not being allowed to tend his crops could result in whole families going hungry.

"But what was worse were the birth houses," Sabang added. Birth houses were constructed behind the longhouse for pregnant women. When childbirth was imminent, the woman was confined to the shack, separated from her family and the rest of the community. She had to stay in the birth house throughout the delivery and for days and weeks afterwards, and all food and drink had to be lifted up to her on a bamboo pole. Only very young girls and old women were allowed to attend.

> People believed that proximity to a woman giving birth would weaken
> the men in the longhouse, in particular the husband and the aristocrats
> of the community. You can imagine that a lot of women and their babies
> died because of this (Sabang, Interview 26 July 2012).

According to Sabang it was Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, one of the most important and best-remembered community leaders, who initiated the conversion to Christianity.

He told the Governor of Sarawak that he was looking to change the old customs and had had himself christened (Ritchie 2006, Southwell 1999). He then brought a missionary to Long San to teach the community about Christianity and to build a church in Long San, which was be the first church in the Ulu (Morrison 1957). Oyong Lawai Jau was buried as a Christian in a grand ceremony that lasted for several days (see figures 6.5 and 6.6).

Not everybody chose to follow the new beliefs, and the conversion of local communities from *adat lama* through *bungan* to Christianity was not straightforward. In 1956, the District officer of the Baram Urquhart noted:

> It is reported from the Tutoh that the Christian part of what used to be one pagan Kayan longhouse calls out loudly when people of the pagan part enter the Christian part 'Ah, here come those Kayans'." The implication seems to be either that the speakers have now become tuans [Europeans or Westerners] or … that they have ceased to be Kayans when they masok [enter or become] Christian (Urquhart 1956).

The quote suggests that according to Urquhart, the conversion of local people to Christianity was not only a result of the activity of missionaries, but also a political decision through which people aligned themselves with those communities in Sarawak that were also Christian rather than becoming Malay through converting to Islam. These Christian communites included the Europeans and British colonial government servants, as well as some parts of Sarawak's ethnic Chinese population.

As my research suggests, local accounts of the religious conversion of Orang Ulu communities provide a picture of the trajectories of local communities from their old belief systems to Christianity that were neither straightforward nor uncontested. The oral history prompted by the photographs from the Sarawak Museum added an additional aspect to the story of religious conversion in the Ulu, and allowed details based on the personal memories of people in the communities to come to the fore. The stories of religion and counter-religion, conversion and adaptation of belief systems were not complete without the voices of those who wished for, contested, succumbed to or mitigated the processes of adopting the new beliefs. A large body of work on cultural change during colonialism supports my analysis about how cultural and social change is negotiated in the Ulu (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Pratt 1991; Ortiz 1995; Gomes 1999; Appadurai 1996; Castro 2003). As Appadurai has pointed out,

Indigenous communities selectively appropriate relevant cultural forms, a process he calls "indigenization." In his words, "indigenization is often a product of collective and spectacular experiments with modernity, and not necessarily of the subsurface affinity of new cultural forms with existing patterns in the cultural repertoire" (Appadurai 1996: 90). As a process of indigenization, Christianity was appropriated by Indigenous communities as a way of modernising traditional beliefs rather than of succumbing to a belief system forced upon them. This process in its various forms has also been described as 'acculturation' (Oestreich 1960; Castro 2003) and 'transculturation' (Ortiz 1995).

The photo elicitation interviews prompted oral narratives from the community perspective that contrasted with the picture provided by official documents and publications, and thus provided an alternative narrative to the existing historiography.

These stories also complicated the perceptions, held by many contemporaries of Harrisson as well as Harrisson himself, that conversion to Christianity was deplorable because it meant that Indigenous communities would be changed from some implied authentic belief system to Christianity. As we have seen, the people in the communities had practical reasons for reconsidering their old beliefs. Although the *adat lama* may have been a part of traditional culture, it was also in many respects an impediment to their daily work, as the numerous prohibitions limited the exercise of important activities relating to farming and hunting, and governed the relationship between social classes.

Figure 6.5) Funeral of Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, Long San, 1974

Contextualising the photographs through the historical narratives told by people during photo elicitation interviews confirmed Harrisson's suggestion that social change was unpredictable, and could only be properly assessed in hindsight (MacClancy 1995). It was this view that motivated Harrisson's emphasis on documentation and data gathering. Like his contemporaries, Harrisson foresaw that rapid changes were likely to happen in Sarawak's rural communities, but unlike his contemporaries he was

not convinced of what these changes were going to look like. Many of Harrisson's peers, like the Governor General of Malaya Malcolm MacDonald, believed in the success and effectiveness of the development policies of the British colonial Government, and assumed that Indigenous societies would eventually cease to exist. In his view, "pagan society as we know it will disappear as a result of a continuous and, eventually, complete process of advance"

Figure 6.6) Funeral of Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, Long San, 1974

(MacDonald in Wong 1960: 14). His choice of words suggests that MacDonald assumed that Indigenous cultures would vanish summarily and in their entirety through a process of progress initiated by the colonial Government. MacDonald did not consider the role Indigenous people might play in negotiating the development of their own communities, and he also did not doubt that development or, as he put it, "advance" as managed by the British colonial government, could fail. Harrisson, too, was nostalgic about social change and cultural loss in Sarawak, but he had a less deterministic view of development, which was manifested in the way he sought to collect and conserve the material, tangible and intangible culture of local communities through photographs.

6.4. Two dead children in Long Teru

The narratives participants contributed during interviews and group discussions about the photographs from the Sarawak Museum raised questions about the fundamental qualities of photographic practice. Most important among these was the question of agency. Barthes argued that photography involves three actors: the photographer, the subject and the viewer, and their roles are clearly divided: "to do, to undergo, to look" (Barthes 1981: 9). However, my research suggested that this statement does not sufficiently acknowledge the

159

Figure 6.7) Wake for two dead children in Long Teru, 1975

role of the photographed, the researched, the depicted and also that of the viewer and interpreter, who together determine the meanings that can be derived from a photograph. During my research, it became apparent that people in the source communities did not simply endure or undergo the process of photographic investigation of which they were the subject. Instead people were able to exercise agency over photographs taken as a result of ethnographic and museological work of Sarawak Museum staff in the rural communities in Sarawak.

The following example illustrates this argument. While digitising negatives at the Sarawak Museum archive I came across a series of photographs that differed from other photographs in the archive in subtle ways. The photographs, taken in 1975, showed two children lying in little cots, fully dressed and with little bonnets on their heads. Their hands rested in small plates placed on their bodies, and between their little fingers each held an unlit cigarette. The eyes of one of the children was open, the others' were closed. The photograph showed several people sitting around the cribs and looking at the children. A small petroleum lamp was alight behind the two cots. Above them, the roof was decorated with *sarongs* suspended from a bamboo construction (see figure 6.7 to 6.9). Looking at the expressionless faces of the children, I wondered if they were alive.

The photographs gave me cause for concern and also gave rise to a number of questions. Why had the photographer taken them? Was it ethical to take such photographs? What would people think if I showed them pictures of their dead children, if the children in the photographs were indeed dead?

Photographs are reminders of things of the past that have vanished: moments, scenes and people. Susan Sontag felt this inherent sense of fragility and sadness when she wrote that "[p]hotographs state the innocence, the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction, and this link between photography and death haunts all photographs of people" (Sontag 1973: 55). But this direct connection between pictures and death is rarely so obvious. More often photographs are evocative of the person in the image rather than their death: the memory is of the presence instead of the painful incision, the sudden absence caused by death.

The history of anthropology and the history of photography have been linked to unequal positions of power in many ways. As Susan Sontag noted, "[t]o photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge—and, therefore, like power" (Sontag 1973: 2). For Sontag, the vocabulary surrounding photography—"shooting" photographs, "taking" pictures, "aiming" a camera, to "capture" a scene—is a language of hunting, and evocative of its inherent dynamics. For Sontag, taking a photograph is an act of violence, of unwarranted acquisition, of appropriation, the appropriation of knowledge about the subject over which he or she has no further influence.

Analogous to photography, anthropology has been entangled in frameworks of unequal power distribution (Smith 1999). In the eyes of critics, this enabled anthropologists and other researchers to appropriate Indigenous knowledge, incorporate it into their own interpretations and to use their position to submit people to inappropriate behaviour and breach of social conventions in the pursuit of their research,

Figure 6.8) Wake for two dead children in Long Teru, 1975

161

resulting in "cultural protocols broken, values negated, small tests failed and key people ignored" (Smith 1999: 3). From this perspective it seemed that taking photographs of the dead children, if they were dead, had been a predatory intrusion by the photographer into the private grief of the parents and the communal mourning of the wake, and had only been possible because of the authority of the photographer in his position as a researcher, and member of Sarawak Museum staff.

I included the photographs of the dead children in the material I took on one of my trips to the Tinjar because they were part of a much larger series taken in Long Teru (see map 6.3). When I arrived in Long Teru, the people at the longhouse viewed the images with much interest. On that day there was another wake being held at the longhouse. An old woman had passed away some days ago and villagers were gathered outside her apartment in the longhouse, chatting and playing cards, as was customary. The body had been taken to the cemetery the day before, but a picture of her was displayed on a little table outside of her apartment.

Prior to the arrival of Christianity, the occurrence of a death in the longhouse would have meant that nobody could leave or enter the longhouse (Urquhart 1955) and any transgression would incur a fine to be paid in money or gongs, *parangs*, chickens or pigs. These customs had long fallen into disuse, which is why I had been allowed to visit Long Teru at the time. To the people gathered on the longhouse verandah during the wake, the photographs were a welcome distraction. Dispersed in small groups they went through the different books with the printouts, discussing them among themselves (see figure 6.10). Soon, somebody found the images of the children, and showed them to a woman sitting near me, Laing Baleng, the wife of the headman in whose apartment I had been put up (see figure 6.11). She looked at the photographs for a while and then started to cry.

Figure 6.9) Wake for two dead children in Long Teru, 1975

"That is me," she said, pointing at the woman sitting in front of the cribs, "these are my babies." She explained that both children had fallen ill and died, one shortly after the other. "I already almost forgot about it, it was such a long time ago" she said, wiping her cheeks with her hands (Baleng, Interview 22 April 2011).

Figure 6.10) People talking about the photographs in Long Teru, 2011

The photographs from Long Teru had been taken in 1975. Junaidi Bolhassan, the staff photographer of the Sarawak Museum, had accompanied an anthropologist, Peter Metcalf, to the community of Long Teru to witness a *Gawai Nulang*, the celebration of a traditional secondary burial which marks the transferral of the bones of an ancestor to the burial ground in a large heirloom jar. In local tradition, deceased family members were kept in a coffin in a small hut on the front verandah of the longhouse, sometimes for several years until the secondary burial could be performed. The fluids were drained from the coffin through a narrow bamboo pipe. Other groups in the area had different burial practices. They erected large painted or carved poles with a hut on top to contain the body of the deceased. In the literature as well as local legend, a slave

Figure 6.11) Laing Baleng at Long Teru, 2011

used to be crushed to death by the pole on the day it was erected, as a human sacrifice (Sandin 1983). The practice of secondary burial had largely ceased by the 1970s. The Brooke Rajahs had opposed it as a danger to health (Abdullah and Langub 2011). Later, most people in the region converted to Christianity (Metcalf 1974), and, along with other religious traditional customs, secondary burials were discouraged. The photographs of the children had been taken around the time as the *Gawai Nulang*, according to the dates written on the negatives.

163

6.5. Photographs and agency

While I worked on the photographs from Long Teru I contacted Peter Metcalf, the anthropologist who had worked in Long Teru, to ask him what he knew about the photographs taken in 1975. Metcalf wrote he had returned to Long Teru, the place where he had carried out studies related to his doctoral degree years earlier, to witness the secondary burial ceremony. He had been accompanied by the museum photographer Junaidi Bolhassan, but it had been Metcalf who took the photographs of the dead children. Laing Baleng, the mother of the two children, had requested it. Metcalf wrote that both children "died right after the *nulang*. I was summoned to take the photo, as I had been before. Parents often remarked that it was the only photo they would ever have" (Metcalf, personal communication 5 January 2013).

My assumptions about the photographs had been wrong in several respects. Metcalf wrote that people were indeed often wary of cameras around young children because their souls were believed to be sensitive and easily disturbed. However, the deaths of the children had made this precaution unnecessary. At the same time, Metcalf wrote, the death of the children was considered a sign that the secondary burial rituals were ineffective: "The deaths indicated that the rites had not worked properly. They are supposed to halt the otherwise inevitable process of death. I don't think anyone blamed me, but it was the last *nulang* ever" (Metcalf, personal communication, 05 Jan. 2013).

Looking at the photographs of her dead children with Laing Baleng, I realised that my sensitivity towards photographs of the dead was a result of my own cultural and social conditioning. Visual representations of death are encountered with anxiety because current notions of social progress are geared towards the prolongation of life (Gross, Stuart et al 2003). The cultural anxiety in looking at the photographs of dead children in Long Teru was mine, as I was not accustomed to looking at the dead. For the Berawan, rites surrounding the dead were an important part of the local cultural practices, as they were for other groups in the region. Even after secondary burial people would often keep their deceased nearby where they could be seen. Looking at the photographs of *salong* burial poles, Clement Langet Sabang from Long Loyang told me about a community elder who had passed away many generations ago. "They loved him so much", he said. "He was very popular and everybody mourned him when he died. So when they built his burial pole, they built it near the longhouse, and placed it so that they could see his long

hair coming out of the coffin flowing in the wind. And whenever the longhouse moved somewhere else," he continued, "they would take the burial pole with them and place it near the new longhouse."

When I was looking at the images from Long Teru, I had questioned the ethics of the photographer who took the images. I had been reluctant to show them to my participants, and to talk about them in the communities. However, the photographs were produced at the request of the parents, and by bringing them back I had inadvertently delivered them for the purpose for which they had requested them, as a memory of their children. The photographs of the children from Long Teru demonstrated how the interactions between researchers or photographers and source communities were based on personal collaborations in which all participants have some agency. The narratives told by people in the source communities about how the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were created suggested that those photographs originated in complex personal interactions between researcher and source community.

During my fieldwork I had expected to experience criticism of the photographs: their intrusive nature and inaccurate representation of local life, customs and traditions. But no such comments were made. In the beginning I assumed that perhaps the people I spoke with reserved critical views and comments because they were being polite, but the photographs from Long Teru suggested that this was not, or not always, the reason. Instead, it became clear that like Laing Baleng, who had commissioned the photographs of her children at their wake, many of the people shown in the photographs had been actively involved in the act of picture-taking.

The stories prompted by the photographs of the dead children also illustrated the value of photographs for breaking the researcher's frame, and dismantling preconceived ideas about what photographs mean. As Harper has put it, "[t]he photo becomes a bridge between people who may not even understand the extent to which they see the world differently" (Harper 2012: 157). As Samuels has suggested, photographs help to move away from the researcher's perceptions which inadvertently inform the way questions are asked during interviews (Samuels 2004). As I was talking about the dead children with Laing and other people in the community, people started to talk about the rituals, ceremonies and beliefs that had replaced the older practices in the community. Because the elderly woman at Long Teru had only recently passed away, I was warned that her spirit would still be near and I should be careful not to leave the house in the night, while everyone was

sitting outside her apartment during the wake. "She can still be around the house," said Ganit, a young man who helped me to translate the comments of the other villagers. "If you fill a plate with ashes from the fire and put it outside the door this evening, tomorrow morning you can see the footprints of the spirit" (Ganit, Interview 24 April 2011).

6.6. Photographs as collective assemblages

The above examples have suggested that photographs were not only created through the agency of the photographer; they were also, and to a varying extent, "'collective assemblages' of photographer, viewer, and photographed subject" (Eileraas 2003: 811). Increasingly, critics have examined such photographs for traces of these subtle collaborations. Colonial photographs have been reframed as "contested sites of encounter and cultural exchange even within asymmetrical power relations" (Morton & Edwards 2009: 4). The Sarawak Museum photographs contained such traces of agency, collaboration and exchange, and the collaborations and the intricate power relationships between photographer and subject became visible. Some photographs from the Sarawak Museum collection clearly indicated the photographer's power and the helplessness of the subject. For instance, two photographs showed a woman, bare-chested, feeding her chickens. The image is taken from above as if from the window of the longhouse, and is slanted, stolen, and unnoticed by the woman. The photograph seems illicit, the semi-nakedness of the woman amplifying this effect (see figure 6.12). In another image, the

Figure 6.12) Woman feeding her chicken in Long Teru, 1975

museum photographer Junaidi Bolhassan is shown with three young girls. Presumably, a colleague had taken over the camera. In the photograph, Bolhassan's arms rested on the shoulders of the two taller girls, one of whom hid her face behind her hand, while the other looked to the side. Only the smaller girl on the side focused

the camera with a stare (see figure 6.13). Again the women were shown bare-chested, dressed in *sarongs* wrapped around their waists. This style of dress was common in the rural villages but was even then increasingly seen as unsophisticated (Harrisson 1956). The photograph reinforced the impression that the photographer controlled and even dominated the subject. Reading the posture and composition, it was easy to assume that the photographer, although he was situated in front of the camera instead of behind it, was in a position of power not only over the content and composition of the photograph but also over the people he captured in his images.
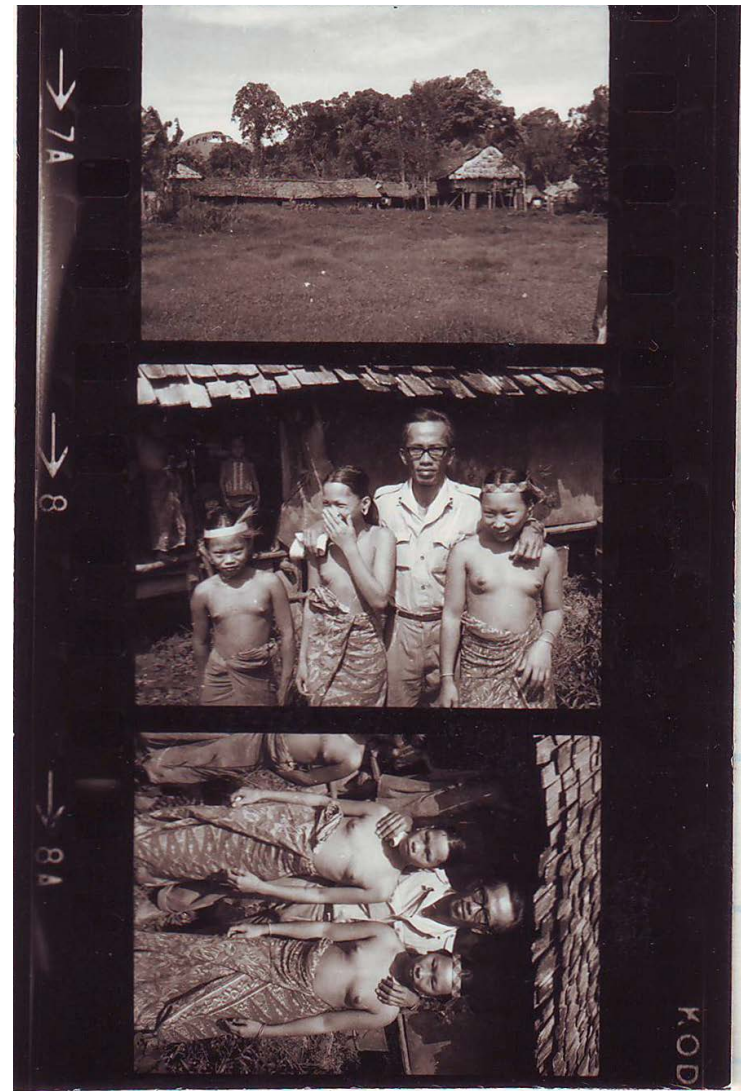
Figure 6.13) Museum photographer Bolhassan with Penan girls, 1971

Similarly, in other photographs the authority of the photographer as a member of Museum staff becomes visible. In one photograph, a woman is holding a ceramic plate for the camera (see figure 6.14). In the next photograph she is holding it so that the rear with the stamp of the Chinese manufacturer is visible (see figure 6.15). Here, the connection with the Museum and its research and conservation work is most obvious, as the Museum holds a large collection of heritage ceramics and jars, and research about the subject has revealed many insights into historic trade relationships between Sarawak and China (Harrisson 1975; Christie 1985).

Other traces of intervention by the photographer are visible in several shots where traditional practices—dancing, weaving or preparing food—are shown outside of the longhouse, on the boardwalk or the outer verandah traditionally used for drying produce. Such crafts would more commonly have been practised inside the longhouse,

on the common verandah or inside people's homes. In one example, a girl is pretending to work on an already finished sun hat with an elaborate bead decoration (see figure 6.16). In another photograph, a woman is showing a dance on the verandah. In yet another a woman is shown cutting tobacco on the outer verandah, while in two other photographs she is shown doing the same task with another woman inside the communal verandah, indicating that she has been moved by the photographer constructing the scene and make use of the natural lighting outdoors (see figures 6.17). Here, not only the technical considerations of the photographers

Figure 6.14) Woman holding her heirloom ceramics for the museum photographer, location unknown, 1968

become visible in the photographs, but also the ability of the photographer to command, direct, compose and move the subject bodies around with the authority of his occupation as photographer and member of staff at the Sarawak Museum (see figure 6.20).

However, in other photographs this power seems to vanish. The subjects decline to participate, they turn away, the photographer forgotten, disregarded. One image shows the backs of a group of people, moving somewhere, looking at something, and in the foreground a dog is biting his haunch (see figure 6.18). Here the photographer is on the margins, pushed aside, ignored. In another photograph from Long Teru Junaidi, Junaidi Bolhassan, the photographer, is shown running towards the camera, his face painted black with soot—a practical joke played on him by someone in the village—while a number of laughing girls look on and clap their hands (see figure 6.19). These examples suggest that a collection such as the one contained in the archive of the Sarawak Museum would not have been possible without the contribution and collaboration of local source communities.

Figure 6.15) Woman holding her heirloom ceramics for the museum photographer, location unknown, 1968

That Indigenous people visited by foreign researchers were neither ignorant of the process of photography nor naive was observed by medical researcher Anton Willem Nieuwenhuis, who travelled through Kalimantan in 1904. Taking photographs of the people whose villages he visited, Nieuwenhuis noted that, "[o]n some occasions I heard old men explain that they would not want to be photographed, because their pictures might be later put in a book and seen by everybody" (Nieuwenhuis 1904). To

Figure 6.16) Girl pretending to work at a sun hat on the boardwalk in front of the longhouse, Long Jegan, 1956

argue that Indigenous communities had no ways of resisting or mitigating the activities of foreign researchers in their communities would be to deny them voice and agency. This is not to imply that communities and researchers met on an equal footing, or had the same kind of leverage over the outcomes of the investigation or on the interpretation or analysis of the collected data. Nevertheless, the stories related by people in the source communities during my work with the Sarawak Museum photographs suggested that the photographs depended on complex and personal interactions between the photographer and the subject, in which the subject played a role.

6.7. The Sarawak Museum and its source communities

Collaborations between researchers and staff from the Sarawak Museum happened on different levels. On their trips through the communities to conduct conservation work,

Figure 6.17) Woman performing a Hornbill dance, Long Jegan, 1956

for instance to restore or document the traditional burial poles, to record local oral history or to acquire artifacts, museum staff relied on their local contacts for transport and accommodation and were entangled in the local networks of sociability. This is because as guests their role and their treatment was defined by the social rules of hospitality of the communities. Museum Director Ipoi Datan, who is a Lun Bawang from the north of Sarawak, described some of these rules to me in an interview. With regard to Tom Harrisson's visits to rural communities, he recalled:

> Some of the people [in my community] remembered, oh, they said, Tom Harrisson or some staff came to our place; my father told me that they took some old jars [which are valuable heirloom artifacts] back to Kuching. [Harrisson] paid maybe only some token sum, because part of our hospitable nature is that we like to give souvenirs to visitors. So some village would give him antiques from the past, they would give him things like baskets, hats, or mats; it's the normal practice among Lun Bawang... And if they really thought highly of you in the past, if you were to go up, it was regarded as an honour for the host (Datan, Interview 23 February 2011).
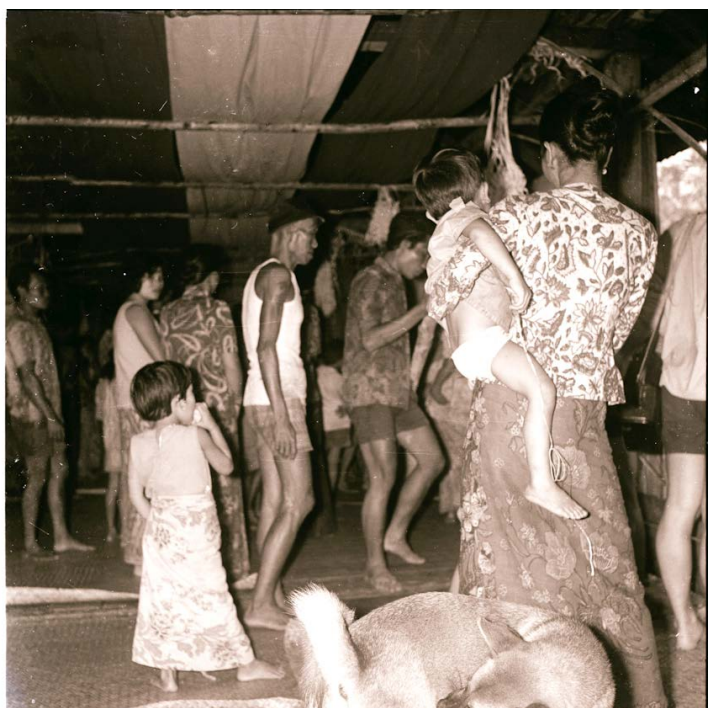
Figure 6.18) People's backs turned towards the photographer, Long Teru, 1975

The rules of sociability and the status of the visitors defined the relationship between host and visitors. While the interactions between the colonial administration and the local population were backed by government authority, they were not impersonal but based on the interaction of individuals. Collaborations were often reinforced through personal acquaintance and conviviality. Ipoi Datan remembered how visitors would be invited for dinner by every family in the longhouse:

If you were to go to a longhouse with ten families, ten doors in the past, some of the old museum staff still experienced it, if you stay up there, once you had your dinner, the kids from next door will be waiting at the door. If you are done here, they will pull you to go over [to the next apartment] and you may end up having ten meals. That was the practice last time among the Lun Bawang (Datan, Interview 23 February 2011).

On such trips local community members provided the expertise and competencies without which this kind of trip would not have been possible. This collaborative relationship between the communities and outside visitors is documented in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum. One series of photographs shows a member of staff or visitor, clad in white and seated in a longboat, shooting down a set of rapids in the river with his local crew, throwing his arms in the air and finally arriving in the quiet water beyond the rapids together with the local crew with an air of accomplishment and relief (see figures 6.21 to 6.22). In this photograph the staff member from the museum depended on his local collaborator for his welfare and safety as well as for information. "When you do field work is not like you are in an area where things are under your control," said Ipoi Datan, who has travelled in the region for most of his life, since the Lun Bawang are one of the Orang Ulu groups living the highlands of the interior. The creation of the photographs, along with the collection of museum objects or the establishment of research data, was a highly personalised process within which the Museum staff and the local communities collaborated with each other.

Figure 6.19) Junaidi Bolhassan with soot in his face, Long Teru, 1975

6.8. Research under critique

The collaborations between the Sarawak Museum and its source communities had been established during the decades in which museum staff had carried out research, acquisition and conservation work in the communities. These collaborations continued when Tom Harrisson left the Sarawak Museum in 1966 and Benedict Sandin took over

171

Figure 6.20) Jaba Busan, Lalleng Ugang, Ubung Balan, Jala, Unyang Jaba, Keyong and Urieng Langat of Long Tejoi, 1956

the role of curator. An Iban from the Saratok division, Sandin had been working at the Sarawak Museum for years under Harrisson. He was the last director to hold the role of Government Ethnologist.

In the context of criticism directed at colonial anthropologists investigating Indigenous communities (James 1973; Asad 1973; Cohn 1996; Pels 1997; Kuklick 2008), the question arises whether the relationship between the communities and researchers from the Museum changed because of the fact that after Sarawak's independence and merger with Malaysia in 1963, it was not the British colonial administration but the federal Malaysian government that provided the administrative authority behind the Sarawak

Museum. This question becomes salient in the light of criticisms of the relationships between researchers and source communities, as expressed by Smith (1999) and Pratt (2004). Did the nature of museum work change because from then on the leadership of the Sarawak Museum was conferred on a local curator rather than a foreign one? Did the relationship between the researchers and the source communities change because the administration of the museum and the administration of the state had changed?

These considerations complicated my investigation of the Sarawak Museum material, but the photographs from the archive give no direct answer. The photographs provide evidence for Ipoi Datan's assertion that many of the researchers, workers and artisans who worked at the Sarawak Museum belonged to the same communities that were under investigation, or to other minority Indigenous groups. Several of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive document these collaborations. For instance, one photograph showed Tom Harrisson with Tama Run, a Kenyah artist from Long Nawang in Kalimantan, Indonesia who during his visits painted most of the Kenyah motifs in the Sarawak museum. These can be seen in the background of the photograph (see figure 6.23). Another series of photographs showed local artists painting a large mural onto the walls of the upper floor of the Sarawak Museum (see figure 6.24). Some of these collaborations, namely when local artists came to Kuching to create artworks commissioned by the museum, were similar to Pratt's definition of contact zones where people come together to explain, perform and share their cultural practices (Pratt 1991). Is it still possible, in the instance of Indigenous people carrying out research in Indigenous communities, to talk about "its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument" (Smith 1999: 3)?

Looking at the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, this criticism seems to be an over-simplification of the relationships between museum staff and local communities in Sarawak. After Harrisson left the museum, work in and collaborations with people in the source communities continued to be documented in the photographs. A photo series from 1976 documents the process of making a *sape*, a local string instrument resembling a guitar, demonstrated by the headman of Long Makabar Pa' Tanyit and his son Jalong Tanyit. Several photographs show Pa' Tanyit working on the body of the *sape*, assisted by Peter Kedit, a member of Museum staff who later became its

Figure 6.21) Local crew and museum staff after braving the rapids on the Tinjar river, 1956

Director. Kedit is holding the wood for Pa'Tanyit to work on (see figure 6.25). Subsequent photographs show Jalong Tanyit and some other young men playing their instruments, with a tape recorder in the foreground as some of the visitors were recording the traditional music played on the instrument whose making was documented in the earlier photographs (see figure 6.26).

 Other photographs show the museum crew being entertained in the longhouse, and museum staff onboard longboats together with local collaborators heading towards their destination. These photographs suggested that museum work was carried out as it had been during the time when the Sarawak Museum had been an institution under the British colonial administration, with Tom Harrisson as curator.

 As museum director Ipoi Datan suggested, working relationships between museum staff and local communities remained subject to negotiation between the

Figure 6.22) Local crew and museum staff after braving the rapids on the Tinjar river, 1956

collaborating parties, and were not always straightforward. Datan experienced how people in the communities could resist planned activities by the Sarawak Museum and bring their interests to bear. In this case concerning the carved burial poles called *salong*, Datan recounted:

> In the mortuary practices of the locals...you don't usually go to the burial ground, as and when you like. You only go there when there is a death ... And if you go, you have to conduct certain rituals. So if you want to go, you have to give them something, then they will conduct a ritual, there will be a pig, a few bottles of tuak [rice wine]. Plus if you are found to have trespassed to the burial areas, you could be fined. So, if you have a budget of 10.000 [Ringgit] for the conservation, maybe half of it will go on these rituals ... people try to take advantage, too. Ok, they say, we have a few burial poles in the cemetery. It would have been good, if they

175

have ten, you just conduct one ritual, and the thing is done. But they say sometimes, each of them has to do it separately! That is why I told the [Government Resident in the district], I said, we are doing conservation for these people but don't take advantage of us! If we were to bring 10.000 [Ringgit] and half of it goes to the rituals, then what's left for the real work? (Datan, Interview 23 February 2011).

As these examples of interactions between the Museum staff and the source communities indicate, the activities of the Sarawak Museum were not one-directional flows of objects, information and knowledge from the source communities to the Museum, and neither was the process controlled and directed by the Museum alone. The roles of the Sarawak Museum photographer and source communities were not as clear cut as writers such as Smith and Pratt would have suggested (Smith 1999; Pratt 1991, 2004). Theories of the unequal power distribution in anthropological research and documentary photography, even suggestions of violence as expressed in Sontag's analysis of photographic jargon, suggest that photographs are dominated by the photographer, to which the subject, the photographed, has little or no opportunity to contribute (Sontag 1977). However, photography can rarely be entirely dominated by the photographer (Maxwell 2008). Taking into account the roles of the source communities as well as that of the photographer brings depth and nuance to the discussion and interpretation of ethnographic photographs.

Figure 6.23) Tom Harrisson and Tama Run, a Kenyah artist from Long Nawang, Kalimantan, 1963

6.9. Photographic representations, oppression and agency

As I have argued, the criticism addressed at scientific research carried out in Indigenous communities by academics and activists such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith indicated the chasm

between source communities and researchers, and suggested that there was little tangible or intangible benefit resulting from anthropological research for source communities. In Smith's words,

> Indigenous peoples have been, in many ways, oppressed by theory. Any consideration of the ways our origins have been examined, our histories recounted, our arts analysed, our cultures dissected, measured, torn apart and distorted back to us will suggest that theories have not looked sympathetically or ethically at us (Smith 1999: 38).

Smith defines research and theory as oppressive positivist concepts foreign to Indigenous peoples. She does not specify whether this includes local researchers and local institutions, and thus whether this critique is applicable to the Sarawak Museum, but her critique focuses on Western theories and methods, on which research at the Sarawak Museum was based. According to Smith,

Figure 6.24) Orang Ulu working on a mural at the Sarawak Museum, 1960

[m]ost indigenous criticisms of research are expressed within the single terms of 'white research', 'academic research' or 'outsider research'. The finer details of how Western scientists might name themselves are irrelevant to indigenous peoples who have experienced unrelenting research of a profoundly exploitative nature. From an indigenous perspective Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition. It is research which brings to bear, on any study of indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power (Smith 1999: 42).

Smith's critique focuses on Western systems of knowledge production which I discuss more closely in Chapter Seven. Her criticism also suggests that ethnographic research in Indigenous communities is an extension of the frameworks of dominance established during the period of colonial control over foreign territories by Western nations, and subsequently taken over by national authorities and their institutions.

177

Smith's view is an important contribution to the history of research and its practices, and sheds light on the injustices that have been perpetrated in the name of research. However, her critique frames the collaborations between researchers and source communities as coercive one-way flows of information and knowledge from communities to researcher in which Indigenous communities had no stake or interest, and from which they derived no benefit. This was not substantiated by my research.

Figure 6.25) Peter Kedit holding a sape for Pa' Tanyit, Long Makabar, 1976

Setting out with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum to visit the source communities that had been subject to such academic examination and analysis, I had expected to experience criticism about the photographs, comments on how the photographs represented local communities, the slant of the photographer, of the intrusive qualities of some of the images, for instance those taken at funerals, during ceremonials or other private scenes. Yet none of the people with whom I spoke during the photo elicitation interviews expressed this kind of sentiment. As Smith (1999) has suggested, people internalised the kinds of narrative that resulted from such research, and this may distort people's sense of what appropriate representation might look like. In Smith's words,

> the collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized (Smith 1999: 1).

However, during my discussions with people in the source communities, the narratives about how the photographs were taken suggested that the interpretation of the photographs as acts of coercion and domination would have fallen short of acknowledging the role of the people in the communities. To apply Smith's critique to photographs, and

Figure 6.26) Jalong Tanyit and friends playing the sape, Long Makabar, 1976

in this specific case to the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, would mean to deny source communities the opportunity to identify with acts of agency and collaboration, self-determination, as well as care, concern and ownership over their cultural heritage represented in the photographs. As Edwards has put it, such "homogenizing models of overt power relations," while addressing larger issues related to the inequalities inherent in the photographic practices of foreign researchers as well as colonial administrators in Indigenous communities, failed to

> destabilize or displace [these tropes] but merely reproduced the power
> relations they were intended to critique. The Other, the photographic
> subject rendered as Object, remained powerless, passive, voiceless,
> and objectified. Such an analytical position allowed little space for an
> Indigenous voice (Edwards 2011: 175).

As Edwards' argument suggests, the denial of the agency of Indigenous communities in these collaborations serves to reinforce the argument of their voicelessness rather than empowering them to resume ownership over the material. In addition, as I have argued, it was not the lack of agency in the process of taking photographs that led to the kinds of representations of Indigenous communities that have come under critique. It was more the lack of access to the interpretive analysis of the photographs taken in Indigenous communities through the descriptions and contexts that were established around the photographs. Therefore, I suggest that documents such as ethnographic photographs are valuable to Indigenous communities if they are removed from the contexts in which they had been positioned in ethnographic publications, museums and archives. I argue that the deconstruction and re-appropriation of the meanings established around museum artifacts by foreign specialists, which I have called the contextualisation of museum artifacts, is potentially empowering for source communities. The agency of source communities to interpret and construct the meaning of museum objects corresponds to Tsinhnahjinnie's (1998) concept of photographic sovereignty. In a wider sense, I refer to this as what Brown has called 'cultural sovereignty' (Brown 1989), defined as the self-directed representation of their own culture by members of the source communities.

The critique of academic research in Indigenous communities risks reinforcing the schism between Indigenous self-representation and the documentation of Indigenous culture by outsiders. This occurs through a wholesale rejection of the outcomes of the efforts of anthropological research and documentation and the rejection of the outcomes of such investigations such as the photographs from the Sarawak Museum. My fieldwork indicated that people in the source communities in Sarawak were intensely interested in the photographs that documented their communities, regardless of who had taken them. During my visits to villages along the Tinjar and Baram, people asked me to bring out the prints if I had stored them away, because they wanted to look at them and show them to others throughout the day. People took hours to look through the books, and then looked through them again the next day. On occasions I was woken up in the middle of the night because somebody had just heard about the photographs and wanted to see them.

People took the books with prints to other people's houses around the village to show them to friends and family members, before conscientiously returning them to me. This sense of concern for the photographs and the ways in which people connected their oral

histories and cultural practices to the subjects shown in them indicated that the photographs were meaningful for source communities. It also demonstrated that the participants in photo elicitation interviews and group discussions were willing to take their institutional origins into account without further reference to who had taken the photographs, or why. The photographs were reinterpreted by people in the source communities, conceptually removed from the academic context for which they were created and re-contextualised according to the views, memories, oral histories and agendas of the people in the source communities.

Smith's insightful critique of research conducted in Indigenous communities raises the question as to who is entitled to carry out research, and under what circumstances. Research carried out by the Sarawak Museum was conducted in collaboration with staff members who were often from the same ethnic groups as those communities under investigation. Harrisson employed Indigenous artists who created objects for the museum, co-authored articles in the Sarawak Museum Journal with local people and maintained close relationships with the political leaders and community elders from the source communities. The photographs from the archive showing him in the company of important personalities from the Ulu imply this. These questions complicate the criticism of research in Indigenous communities. Nevertheless, criticism such as that of Smith (1999) and Pratt (1991, 2004) provides valuable insights into the lack of inclusiveness of Indigenous communities in the analytical outcomes of academic research of which they were the subject, and the lack of reciprocity and exchange. The lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous types of knowledge criticised by Smith and Pratt in their work are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. Critique of the projects of ethnographic representation, such as that of Smith, has contributed to the growing awareness among writers, academics and activists that Indigenous groups should have the right to access and use the material, and to determine the ways in which it is used by others. Requests for the repatriation of museum objects are evidence of this increasing awareness by Indigenous peoples of their rights to intellectual property, such as objects and documents relating to their cultural heritage.

6.10. Indigenous intellectual property rights

Since the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, the agency of Indigenous peoples over material relating to their culture is not only a moral obligation for museums but has become an issue of intellectual property rights. The principles set down in the declaration provide "the foundation for the exercise of cultural rights as human rights" for Indigenous peoples (McKemmish et al 2012: 94). An earlier report stated as the main concerns for Indigenous cultural rights, among others,

> [t]he right to own and control Indigenous cultural and intellectual property[, t]he right of prior informed consent for access and use of ICIP [, t]he right to prevent derogatory, offensive and fallacious uses of ICIP—the right of integrity [and t]he right to be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of culture (Janke and Iacovino 2012, 153).

Because of these developments it has become a matter of concern for museums and archives to share their documents with source communities, to make their material available to communities and to collaborate with communities in the curation and conservation of cultural heritage. It has also become important for signatory nations to adhere to human rights principles as stated in the UN declaration. Even if the issue of copyrights and use-rights to material such as photographs is not addressed, this is an important shift in the conception of Indigenous rights.

For Indigenous communities, the debate around intellectual property rights exceeds the concern for objects kept in museum collections, and extends to more general concepts of what constitutes Indigenous culture. Claims to intellectual property rights over Indigenous knowledge have been used by a number of communities to distinguish what they perceive as their cultural identity from that of mainstream culture (van Meijl 2009). Other Indigenous communities have engaged with cultural property rights with the aim of preventing appropriation of Indigenous knowledge, crafts, material objects and other aspects of Indigenous culture by outsiders (Nason and Peter 2009). This can include tangible as well as intangible culture, for instance designs and patterns, music, songs and dances as well as elements of language and oral history. While many communities are concerned with the recording and transcription of their cultural heritage to ensure its continued existence and relevance, this process can also make such heritage more

easily available to outsiders (Pigliasco 2009). The adoption of the declaration in 2007 has therefore led to an increasing body of literature concerned with Indigenous intellectual property rights and how these can be ensured.

Questions of intellectual property and Indigenous cultural rights with regard to museum collections are similarly complex and are still being debated by museum specialists, activists and Indigenous groups. Not all museums choose to repatriate collections even if requested to do so by source communities, pointing to their own proprietary rights over the material (Curtis 2006). Not all source communities request or even favour repatriation (Simpson 1996; Fierup-Riordan 1999). To address these issues, museum theorists have come to approach property rights over museum objects from different angles. According to Busse, property rights do not have to be framed in terms of ownership of objects, but can be concpetualised as "nonproperty relationships" between objects and people, with resulting rights and responsibilities with regard to care for, access to and use and interpretation of objects (Busse 2008: 193). This would give both museums and source communities particular roles in the care of museum collections. As this notion has been one of the main principles of new museology, many museums are exploring ways of carrying out these collaborations (Fienup-Riordan 1999; Curtis 2006; Simpson 2009; Clapperton 2010). What this means in terms of economic use of copyrighted material such as photographs, however, would depend on how these collaborations are framed.

What has become clear during my research is that the the social biographies of objects after the moment they become part of a museum collection also need to be taken into account. Discussions of property and ownership risk neglecting the fact that the history of museum objects includes their origins and role in the source communities as well as their appropriation by and inclusion in a museum collection, and their subsequent lives within the institution.

My interviews and discussions with the people from the source communities suggested that few people in the communities were aware of how the photographs from the Sarawak Museum had been created and by whom, what had motivated their creation, and how the photographs had been interpreted in publications and by specialists within and outside Sarawak. During my research I found that few people in the source communities knew where the photographs had been kept, for what purposes they had been taken, and how they had been contextualised in the past.

As I have discussed in this chapter, the relationship of the Sarawak Museum with its source communities was one in which both sides maintained agency, but it is

nevertheless important for the source communities not to take the institutional origins of the material covering their communities for granted, and to question the motives that led to the creation of the archive. Raising these questions is important for people in the source communities because the answers can provide them with insights into how the colonial Government viewed their communities and how the conclusions drawn from ethnographic material collected by colonial governments resulted in development policies applied to modernise the rural villages. As I will discuss in Chapter Eight, this is important for the period of colonial governance as well as for the role of Indigenous communities since Sarawak became part of the federation of Malaysia.

I suggest that the museum can potentially engage with the institutional background of the material in order to enable viewers to interpret the material adequately, while it is the source communities that are able to supply information about the meaning and social context of the photographs. This would be an important step for a museum aiming to be a site of exchange and collaboration or a contact zone. As Dibley, a critic of the concept of the contact zone has put it,

> [a]ny formulation of museums as sites of exchange, as relations of reciprocity, has to be informed by a history of museums that is attentive to the entanglement of the projects of democracy and those of colonialism (Dibley 2005: 17).

6.11. Conclusion

The theoretical debate around Indigenous cultural and intellectual property suggests that the access to and control over representations made by researchers, anthropologists, or photographers is a key concern for Indigenous communities. My research confirmed that such material is of considerable contemporary importance to the communities, and is relevant for their cultural continuity as social and economic changes impact on their traditional lifestyles.

In this chapter, I have examined the involvement and acts of agency inherent in the process of picture-taking, and the ways in which people reflected upon their own contributions to the photographs from the Sarawak Museum during photo elicitation interviews and discussions. In putting the Sarawak Museum material into context with the urgent criticisms expressed by Smith (1999) and Pratt (1991, 2004), I have also attempted to provide a conceptual framework for my own work in Sarawak's Indigenous communities,

including the preconceptions and expectations with which I approached this research.

I have argued for a nuanced approach to ethnographic photographs, one that takes into account the acts of agency of the photographer and the motives that informed his activities, as well as the subject, who also contributed to the creation of the photograph. Referring to examples from the Sarawak Museum archive, I have argued that in the process of photographic documentation, the people in the source communities were aware of their own acts of agency and that of their friends and family members who were depicted in the photographs. Assessing the photographs from the Sarawak Museum from this angle reinforces the intellectual and creative rights of Indigenous communities to the material to which they contributed. This facilitates people's assertion of sovereignty over the photographs, and allows viewers to re-interpret them independently of the purposes for which they had been created, or of earlier interpretations made by other people. While acknowledging the agency of the photographic subject, such an approach must also take into account the diverse circumstances in which ethnographic photographs were produced, for instance at the Sarawak Museum. This includes the participation of a variety of actors, foreign, local, and from different ethnic and social backgrounds.

Map 6.1) Long Sobeng

185
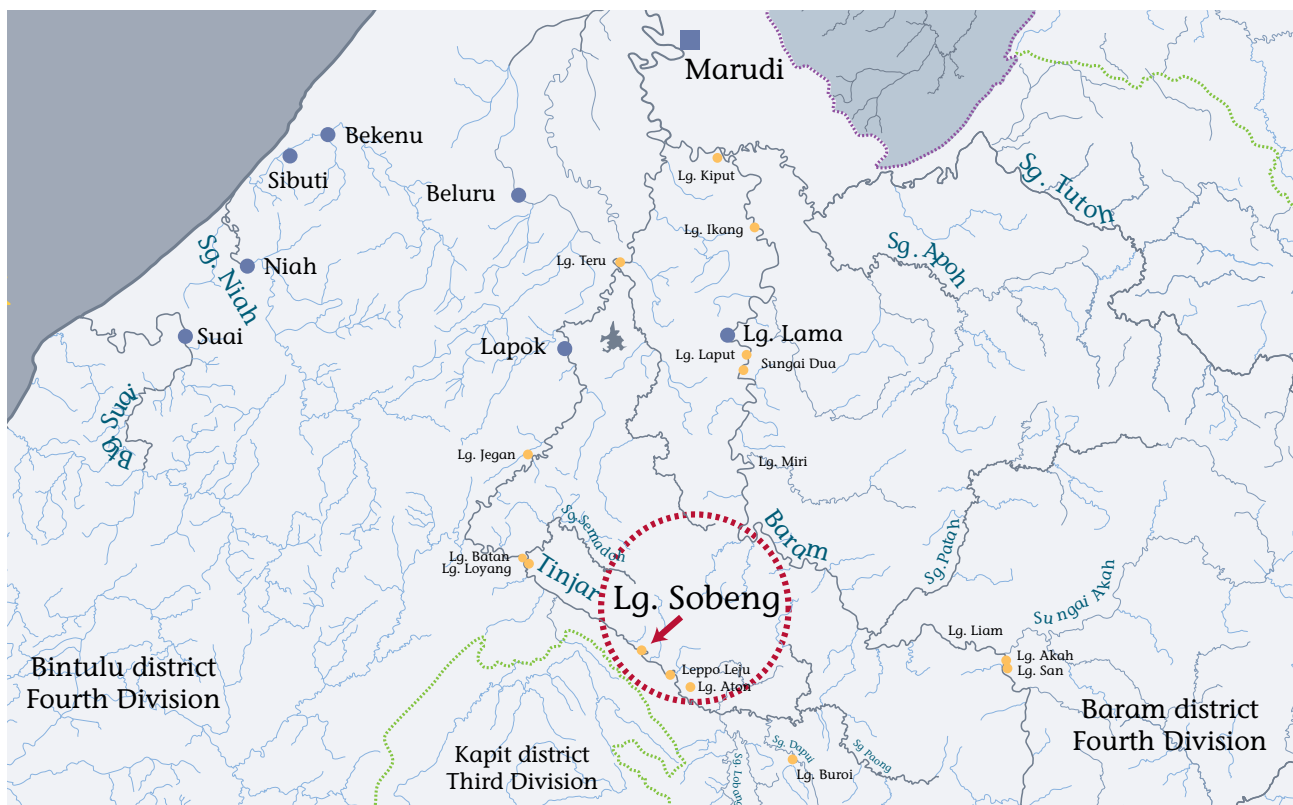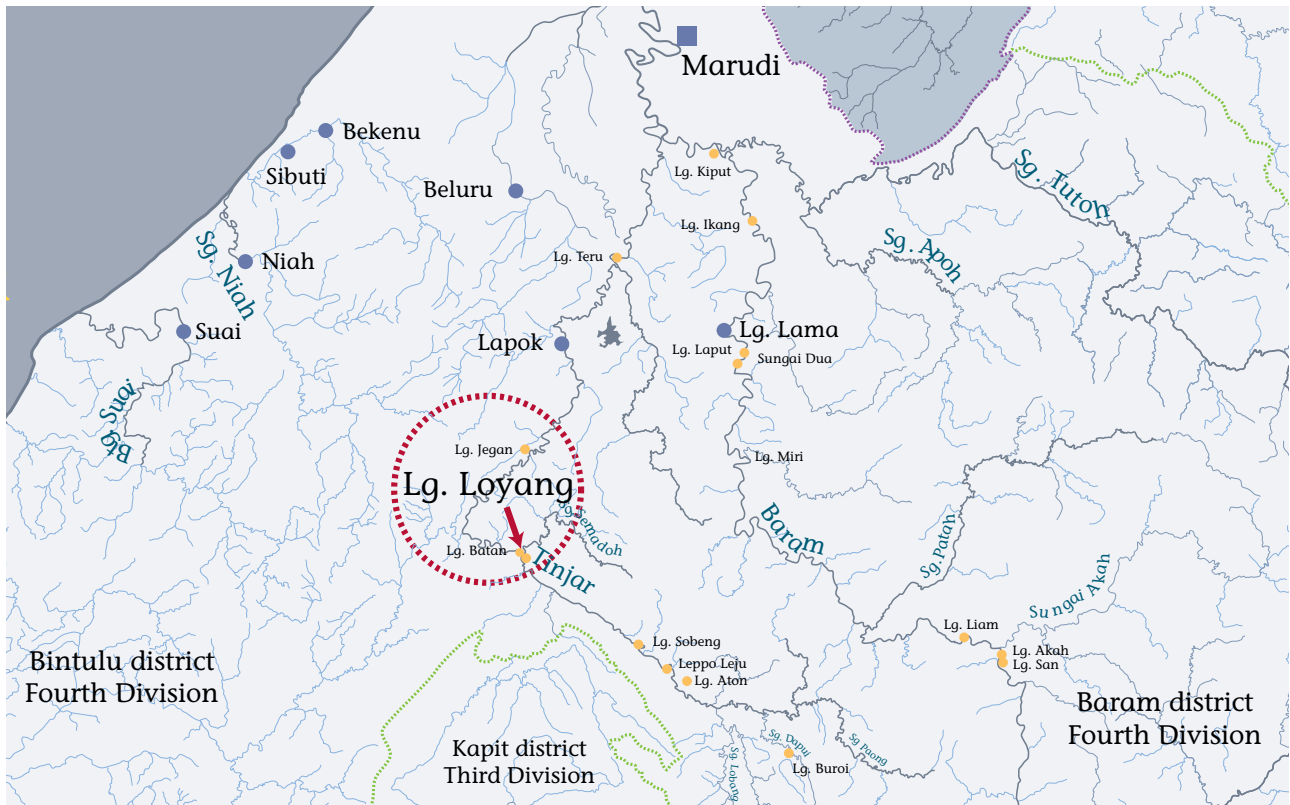
Map 6.2) Long Loyang
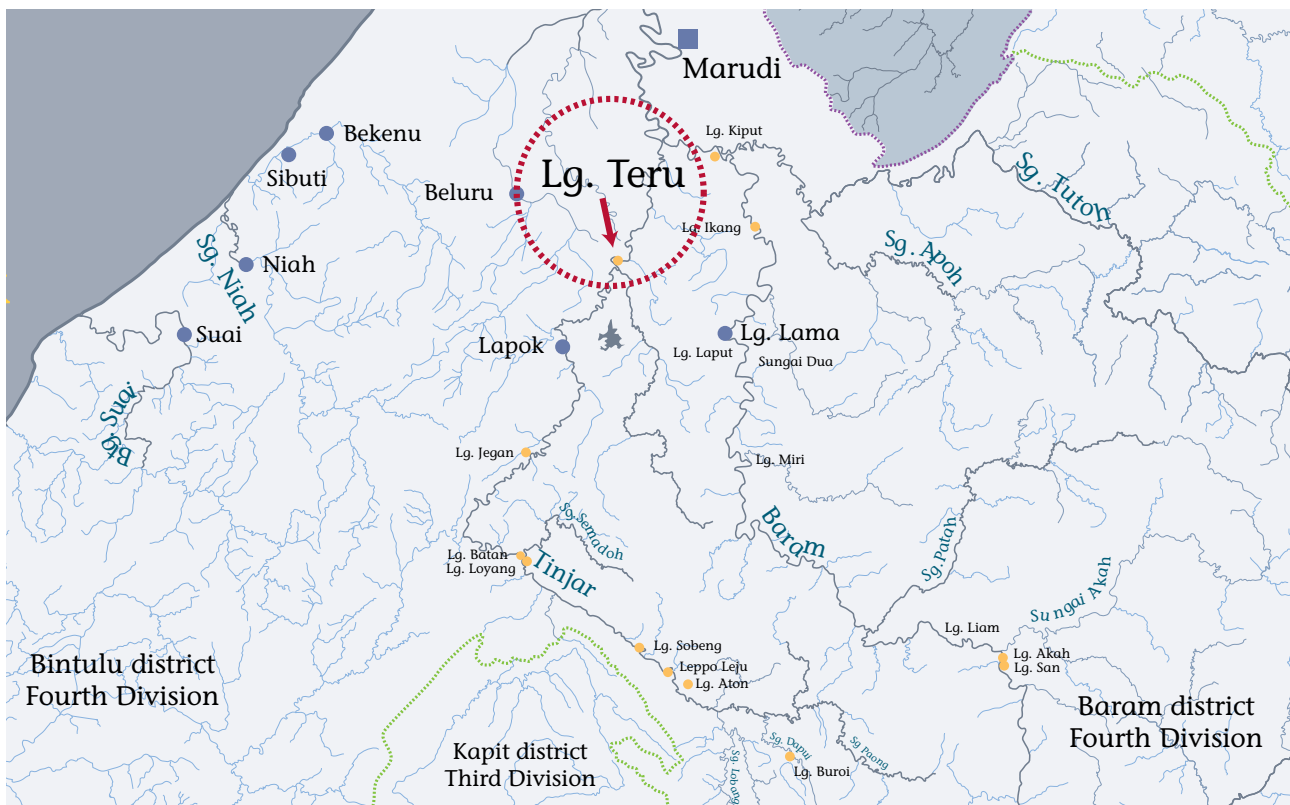
Map 6.3) Long Teru

Figure 7.1) Datuk Moyang Jau playing the engkolorai, Long Jegan 1956

Chapter Seven: Performing the Archive

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate the potential of repatriation and return of artifacts and photographs as a museological method for community co-production projects at the Sarawak Museum. I examine how the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were interpreted during my fieldwork in the villages and longhouses along the Baram and Tinjar river, and assess the role these contributions can play within the context of museum representations. The people in the source communities provided information about details shown in the photographs, in particular elements of local culture and traditional customs, which positioned the photographs and the scenes and objects they

showed within the cultural context of community practices. The interviews and group discussions also temporally situated the photographs and the scenes, locations and objects in them, as people described the changes in practices that had occurred since the time the photographs were taken. Acknowledging such changes in the meaning and social role of museum objects is becoming increasingly important for museum practitioners working with ethnographic artifacts (Schildkrout 2006).

I then go on to discuss the relationship between photographs and oral history in Sarawak. In the photo elicitation interviews I conducted during my research, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum evoked many subtle and complex narratives connected to the content of the photographs. In groups and on their own, people from the communities recounted stories evoked by the photographs for me to collect and transcribe. As Edwards has pointed out, there is a close connection between photographs and oral history, which includes not only the re-telling of stories and legends, but social exchanges such as debates and arguments, questions and answers, through which people establish different narratives prompted by photographs (Edwards 2006).

These social interactions that constitute the performance of oral history are not only oral versions of textual information, as I discovered when I transcribed the narratives contributed by participants in my research. Oral history comprises not only vocalisations but other embodied and sensory experiences, including gesture, sound, pitch, rhythm, activities such as audience participation and the interactions between listener and narrator. During my research, people also established the social context of the Sarawak Museum photographs through performative and experiential means that exceeded textual and verbal descriptions. These performative and embodied practices provided me with valuable insights into the social context of the photographs from the museum collection. While many museums have taken important steps towards inclusion of source communities, museum practices have in the past been focused on Western models of creating and disseminating knowledge. Alternative or Indigenous curatorial practices were often not recognised as such (Kreps 2003; Srinivasan et al 2009). Senses beyond the visual were excluded through the "visualist" models that governed the creation of knowledge in Western culture (Pels 1997; Classen & Howes 2006).

I argue that although museums have had little room for such performative contexts and the embodied and experiential methods through which knowledge can be created and transferred, these are part of the social context of their artifacts and collections. Boast and Srinivasan have called such knowledge and methods of transferring it "contrasting

and fluid ontologies" (Boast and Srinivasan 2009: 399). Such ontologies, defined as "modes by which knowledge is articulated, expressed, interpreted, and formalized" (Srinivasan 2012:3) have the potential to provide additional layers of knowledge about museum collections and their social contexts.

More importantly for my research, I argue that photographs, which can be considered to be among the visualist methodologies employed in scientific disciplines such as anthropology, can provide a method of engaging with these sensory and embodied cultural contexts of museum artifacts. My argument is informed by the work of Edwards (2006) and Geismar (2009), who have pointed to the oral and performative aspects involved in viewing photographs. As Geismar has suggested, "looking at photographs is an embodied practice, deeply embedded within local experience" (Geismar 2009: 59). Drawing from Edwards' and Geismar's work with museum collections and from theories of the role of sensory knowledge at museums (Classen & Howes 2006; Ouzman 2006; Losche 2006; Saunderson 2011; Dudley 2013), I discuss how photographs, whose relevance is usually framed in terms of their visual content rather than their materiality, can connect visual and sensory, experiential and embodied approaches to knowledge.

7.2 VISUAL EXCESS AND PHOTOGRAPHY'S INDISCRIMINATE NATURE

Looking at photographs on the communal verandah of a Tinjar longhouse together with people related to the men and women in the photographs is very different from studying negatives in a museum archive. The silence of the Sarawak Museum archive was only interrupted by the comings and goings of Abang the archivist and the consistent sound of the air-conditioning unit overhead. By contrast, in the village there was noise and movement, and it was hot until the occasional downpour of rain would suddenly cool the air. A young girl from one of the apartments nearby would appear with a tray containing glasses of tea, coffee, or milo. Old women and men smoked their home-grown tobacco or chewed small parcels of wrapped leaf—called daun sirih in Malay—filled with lime and betel nut. People came together to look at the photographs when they had a minute between chores, and handed around the books containing the printouts, asking each other for opinions or pointing out specific details. During these debates it was often hard for me to get a word in, frame a question, or encourage somebody to repeat what they had just said about a photograph. People argued about little details in the photographs that I had not noticed, and I was struggling to keep up with my notes.

The various comments, stories, observations and remarks suggested that each photograph I had brought to the community contained numerous details that became the subject of participants' attention. There were different layers of information contained within each image (Sontag 1977; Sturken 1997; Frosh 2001; Poole 2005; Morton and Edwards 2009; Morton 2009; Edwards 2011).

It is this feature of the technology, photography's "random inclusiveness" (Morton and Edwards 2009: 4), that enables some observers to draw subtle conclusions about the scenes, subjects, or artifacts shown in photographs that may not be obvious to others. This effect is reinforced through the cultural knowledge about the content of photographs that some viewers are able to tap into while others cannot (Appleton 2011).

Figure 7.2) Sekua and Laeng Teging cutting tobacco, Long Jegan, 1956

Figure 7.3) Penghulu Apoi Njau, Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau and Penghulu
Tama Bulan Lian in Harrisson's bungalow, Kuching, 1958

Photographs are indiscriminate in a way that lies beyond the control of either photographer or subject. It is the element of accidental inclusion, of things in the picture because they were there and nobody thought anything of it. For instance, there is the bottle of Chinese liquor—locally called Cap Apek—inconspicuously placed next to the old man called Datuk Moyang Jau who is playing the engkolorai and who is being recorded by somebody with a microphone seated outside the frame of the photograph (see figure 7.1). It is the big cigarette balanced on the lips of Sekua as she and Laeng Teging are cutting their home-grown tobacco with bamboo knives on the Long Jegan verandah (see figure 7.2), or perhaps the matching jacket and trousers of Penghulu Apoi Njau from Long Langor in Kalimantan that make him look like he is wearing his pyjamas as he stands next to Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau and Penghulu Tama Bulan Lian in Harrisson's bungalow (see figure 7.3). It is the small details that were included because neither subject nor photographer noticed them that constitute photography's indiscriminate nature.

This excess of detail and meaning has led critics to reconsider colonial archives with renewed scrutiny in recent years. It is acknowledged that the purpose for which a photographs was originally taken may in later years turn out not to constitute the most important narrative in the photograph. This argument has been elaborated upon by writers such as Poole (2005) and Morton and Edwards (2009). In the context of the Sarawak Museum archive, this assertion has retrospectively substantiated Harrisson's inductive or open-ended method, in spite of the criticism he received during his time with Mass-Observation and for his work at the Sarawak Museum, when his methods seemed to his contemporaries to lack methodology and focus.

Figure 7.4) Gurong Lanu in Long Loyang, working on a sculpture, 1956

As a part of the re-evaluation of colonial archives, many in the field of visual studies have come to understand that such material carries a wealth of detailed information that can provide valuable insights into the historical conditions under which it was produced (Edwards 2001; Stoler 2002; Maxwell 2010). The material at the Sarawak Museum archive was collected according to Harrisson's principle of gathering a maximum amount of information, and is full of such visual 'excess' (Poole 2005). During my research, different photographs from the Sarawak Museum became important to different people for a variety of reasons. People discovered elements recognisable only to somebody with the cultural knowledge to understand what they signified.

During my research, people contributed knowledge about the photographs in different ways that related to their own personal memory and cultural knowledge. The interviews and group discussions resulted in detailed descriptions of the objects, locations and practices in the photographs. I investigated and transcribed these. The photographs facilitated the exchange of stories and the recounting of oral history, because each viewer could focus on details that were personally meaningful and discuss them with his or her friends and family members. For museums, the significance of collaborating with source communities in the documentation of photographs, as in other co-production projects, lies in this multiplicity of views, voices and opinions that provide a wide and

multi-faceted approach to the interpretation of museum photographs. Collaborations between museums and source communities also allow museums to engage in the processes through which objects, practices and customs change over time, a process that is halted once artifacts enter museum collections. During my research, the contributions of people in the source communities not only referred to the cultural background to the photographs, but also to the historical processes through which practices changed. For museums that want to address the social contexts of their collections to avoid their exhibitions being "out of date" (Schildkrout 2006: 128), keeping track of the temporal development of cultural practices with regard to museum objects is an important aspect of community co-production projects.

7.3 PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEMPORAL EMBEDDEDNESS

During my fieldwork, the changes in cultural practices and traditions became evident in numerous discussions with people in the source communities. Much had changed during the fifty or more years since the photographs had been taken, and many participants in my research commented on these changes. Visible changes included people's clothes, the architecture of longhouses, tools, implements and other practical improvements. Other more subtle changes emerged slowly during interviews and group discussions. For instance, during my visit to Long Loyang several old men explained the meaning of the statues that used to be placed between the river and the longhouse to ward off evil in the old days. Annual rituals had been carried out then, in which spirits were called upon to inhabit the wooden effigies that had been discarded when the villagers converted to Christianity. These statues, called *tegulun*, had not been carved by anyone in the village for a long time. However, several of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum showed a prominent Orang Ulu artist living in Long Loyang, Gurong Lanu, carving a statue in front of the longhouse (see figure 7.4).

Figure 7.5) Datuk Moyang Jau, working on a sculpture, Long Jegan 1956

Figure 7.6) Sculpture by Gurong Lanu,
Long Loyang, 2012

In the photograph, two animal shapes with long teeth and horns are entwined together, painted in various patterns. As in other photographs, it seems that the scene had been arranged by the photographer, since the statue appears to be finished rather than a work in progress. This suggests that the photographer asked the artist to pose with one of his completed works in front of the longhouse. Another series of photographs shows a different artist working on a statue in the longhouse (see figure 7.5).

Statues similar to the one seen in these photographs were on display at that time at the art gallery of the Sarawak Museum, and several more were kept in storage. At the museum, however, there was little information about them available because none had been recorded when the statues were acquired. During my research in the source communities, a number of people commented on the role of such carved effigies in local culture. Kapit from Long Loyang explained that these little carvings were just playthings, never believed to be spiritually powerful like the statues by the river. Nevertheless, when Gurong Lanu died, his son had destroyed all the pieces left by his father for fear that they might still be powerful (Pur, Interview 28 July 2012). Kapit also showed me a much smaller statue the artist had given to her as a gift, a beautifully-crafted tiny wooden carving of a dog figure similar to that in the photograph (see figure 7.6).

These stories about the photograph suggested that the collaborations between the Sarawak Museum and the local source communities were managed by both sides according to their expectations of the exchange. I have discussed this in Chapter Six. The local artist did not supply the original spiritual pieces, but less spiritually-charged copies, which were then sold to the museum staff. These stories contributed by participants in the source communities suggested that sculpture as a cultural practice had undergone a variety of changes in the last fifty or more years, when sculptures and carvings had been charged with spiritual significance. Works of art had since become a commodity for local

Figure 7.7) Lydia Anyie dancing in Long Pilah, 1968

artists in their trade with the museum. During my visit in 2012 the practice had almost ceased, although as Kapit put it, some people still believed that such statues could be heard in the night whispering and gnashing their teeth (Pur, Interview 28 July 2012). People elaborated upon subtle changes in the use and interpretation of objects, such as the *tegulun* statues in Long Loyang, as local practices changed over time. This outcome of my work with the Sarawak museum photographs was significant, because it was these temporal changes and cultural developments in community practices that had long been denied by some museum curators, who presented their collections and their cultural context in the never-changing ethnographic present (Schildkrout 2006).

Repatriating the photographs from the Sarawak Museum enabled me to investigate these cultural changes that held significance not only for the photographic archive but also for other artifacts in the museum collection, because people directly referred to these objects, such as the sculptures created by Gurong Lanu. During the interviews people spoke about these subtle changes in practice and tradition. The photographs also revealed the traces of these changes, and gave evidence of temporal change through details included in the photographs.

One series of photographs showed a religious ceremony in Long Tejoi. Two men, one of them the headman of Long Tejoi, are seated in the midst of other people in front of neatly-arranged dishes containing food and drink, which were part of the ritual (described in Chapter Six). The photographs were significant because they were the only visual documents representing *bungan*, a religious cult that had arisen in the Ulu some years earlier, and which was to give way to Christianity shortly.

The photographs contained a number of other telling details. For instance, one photograph showed the longhouse verandah and the elaborately-decorated wall of the headman's apartment with a great painted mural and several pictures pinned up on the wall (see figure 6.1 to 6.3). During a group discussion in Long Jegan, Penghulu Patrick pointed out that the picture was of the king, and the one next to it a photograph of the British Governor of Sarawak and his wife. In 1956 when the photograph was taken, King

George VI had been replaced on the British throne by his daughter for four years. Another photograph taken in 1968 showing a performance by a young dancer, Lydia Anyie from Long Liam, also shows the photos of political dignitaries lined up on the longhouse wall above the performer, but this time showing the Sarawakian Chief Minister between 1966 and 1974, Tawi Sli (see figure 7.7). This example suggests that photographs can contain numerous different clues to personal as well as historical narratives, and that these traces were not necessarily obvious to the photographer, and therefore not necessarily intended for inclusion. As I have discussed in Chapter Six, sometimes these traces led people to discuss their own acts of agency in the creation of the photographs. At other times, as in this case, these traces related to the relationship between local communities and the political administration. On other occasions, however, it was only people with cultural and communal knowledge of the specific content of the photographs who could recognise and interpret the details they contained, as in the case of the *tegulun* statues.

For the last two decades academics have engaged with the subtle underlying traces in photographs that communicate more information than either photographer or subject was aware of (Appadurai 1997; Stoler 2002; Poole 2005; Morton and Edwards 2009; Banks and Vokes 2010). As researchers re-assessed the archival photographs, looking for details that had escaped previous investigations, the unexpected details they encountered provided new and different meanings other than those originally intended for the photograph.

7.4 Photographs and their social meanings

Photographs can be placeholders for traits and characteristics as type photography, or function as ethnographic documents. At the Sarawak Museum, photographs were used to illustrate objects in the collection and to provide audiences with an example of how artifacts were used. Photographs can also be considered according to their individual social biographies, the personal identity and history of the people in the photos, and the stories connected to the scene represented. The difference is that between conceiving of "the object as specimen, and the object as embedded" (Boast and Srinivasan 2009: 269). This difference between the two conceptual approaches became clear through the discussion of a series of photographs taken in Long Jegan.

Among the photographs from Long Jegan was a series of photographs showing two women tattooing a third, who is lying on a mat on the floor of a longhouse verandah

(see figure 7.9 and 7.10). In the photograph the two women, Sedoyang Toba on the left, and Loya on the right, are working on the forearm of the third woman who is lying on the floor. Holding the arm down with her feet, Loya is applying the tool with the needle, tapping it into the skin with a second device. Next to the three in the photograph is a pot with the mixture of soot and other ingredients used for ink (see figure 7.10).

These photographs, unlike most other photographs in the archive, were exhibited as part of the ethnographic displays at the Sarawak Museum in the ethnographic section on the first floor of the old wing. The photographs were shown at the Sarawak Museum as an example of the tattooing practices of the Orang Ulu, together with the implements in a showcase nearby, needles, cases and examples of the delicate patterns used by Orang Ulu women on their hands, arms, legs and feet. These were recorded by early researchers such as Charles Hose (Hose & McDougall 1912) and Anton W. Nieuwenhuis (1904).

Figure 7.8) Sedoyang Toba and Loya tatooing a third woman's forearm, Long Jegan, 1956

The role of the photographs in this context corresponds to what has been defined as the "type" photograph (Poole 2005), a placeholder representing a category of local practices. However, the people in Long Jegan recognised the individuals and the scene, and the complex social context of the photograph emerged as they discussed the practice of tattooing in their community. Instead of being a typical or even stereotypical representation of a cultural practice, the photograph became an object embedded in narratives of local identity, and connected to the personal history of the people shown in the image. This caused stories about the cultural traditions of local people to emerge in the discussion. Looking at the photographs with people from Long Jegan, I was told that the woman who was tattooing belonged to a different ethnic group from a different river system quite far away. There was nobody in Long Jegan who had the skills, tools and knowledge of the patterns necessary for tattooing. The woman was from Kampong Baleo from the Rejang River and had visited the village together with her husband. She practised her skills in tattooing in exchange for little gifts. "The tattoos were made so that they could act as a guide, a torch, in the life after death," Laing from Long Jegan explained (Laing, Interview 17 September 2011). Referring to the patterns on her fingers, she pointed out the different designs, providing the name of each one of them. The process was so painful that many people could not go through

with it. Another woman who had taken part in the discussion surrounded by numerous grandchildren showed me one foot, which was covered in dark blue patterns, and her other with no tattoos. "I had this one foot done," she said, "but then I could not go on, because it hurt so much."

The social embeddedness of these photographs—the cultural practices and personal narrative which they prompted when viewed in the source communities—provided a complex and detailed account of the cultural practice of tattooing among Orang Ulu. A number of authors have written about the significance of tattooing among Indigenous groups in Sarawak

Figure 7.9) Sedoyang Toba and Loya from Kampong Baleo, Rejang, tatooing a woman from Long Jegan, 1956

198

Figure 7.10) Sedoyang Toba Loya from Kampong Baleo, Rejang, tatooing a third woman, Long Jegan, 1956

during Charles Hose's time as Government Resident in Marudi (Hose and McDougall 1912), and later again by Patrick Synge, a member of Harrisson's expedition to Borneo in 1932 (Harrisson 1932). However, the women in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum are not just representative of a cultural practice; they are also individuals with names, and the stories of their lives were recounted by friends looking at the photographs from the Museum.

This cultural embeddedness is an important aspect of material artifacts, and is relevant for museum practice, because as Marstine has pointed out, when objects enter a museum collection they are removed from the social contexts that supplied their meaning and are "no longer connected to the culture that produced them or to the present" (Marstine 2008: 15). Their meaning changes through what Alpers has called the "museum effect" (Alpers 1991: 26). The objects are removed from the society that provided their social context, but at the same time they are inserted into a new context that imbues them with a different representative value and significance (Alpers 1991). Museum objects are dependent upon the social, experiential and embodied contexts that provide their meaning, and these fall away in the museum environment. Collaborations between museums and source communities could help museum workers to engage with the social and cultural role of artifacts and also to accommodate on-going social change that leads to re-definition of the meaning of objects (Schildkrout 2006).

To accurately describe the role of an object in a community would mean either framing it historically, as Evans-Pritchard (1950) and Cohn (1980) have suggested for the ethnographic description of culture, or to engage in an on-going discussion about the object with source communities. Photographs are given their meaning through complex but often ordinary, everyday social practices, which provide the background to the interpretation of the photograph, or what Edwards has called the "apprehension" of the photograph (Edwards 2006: 27). Returning photographs to their source communities

as a collaborative method enables museums to examine the shifting interpretation and significance of objects in their collection. During my research, the varying narratives participants contributed to each photograph suggested the many ways in which the practices that culturally embed objects change over time. This indicated that returning photographs to their source communities to engage in photo elicitation, as a method of co-production, can enable museum workers to engage with the changing role of museum artifacts.

7.5 The last kechai in Long Jegan

During my fieldwork, the photo elicitation interviews with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum prompted people to tell numerous stories linked to the objects, people and scenes shown in the photographs. Some of these stories relating to traditional customs and practices addressed the cultural, social and economic changes that had occurred in the communities since the photographs had been taken. For instance, one of the photographs showed a small hut-like structure on the verandah of Long Jegan. The construction is decorated with paintings of a human being and a dragon, with its carved tail and head protruding on the left and right. A sun hat, thermos flask and various other items are suspended on rotan strings near the roof, which is covered with a sarong. The structure, called *kechai* in Berawan, contained a coffin with the body of a deceased person. The body was kept on the communal verandah for months and sometimes years, with a little bamboo pipe draining the fluids out of the coffin. According to Penghulu Patrick, the Berawan practice in Long Jegan was very similar to the one in Long Teru described in Chapter Six, since Long Teru is also a Berawan longhouse. Once only the bones remained in the *kechai*, they were transferred to a burial site and put to rest on top of a burial pole. The secondary burial required a feast for all inhabitants of the longhouse and communities in the vicinity. These celebrations were expensive and a family or community had to save up money and resources, sometimes for several years, before they could conduct the ceremony. The *kechai* in the photograph from the Sarawak Museum is decorated with designs and carvings such as depictions of humans and dragons, which in many communities were strictly limited to members of the aristocratic class. Somebody, perhaps a child home for the holidays practising her letters, had written the word "kechai" onto the wooden structure (see figure 7.11).

When I took the photograph of the *kechai* to Long Jegan, the longhouse where the photograph had been taken in 1956, I showed it to the family and friends of Penghulu Patrick Jelaman. Several people from the village had been invited by the Penghulu to come to his house and look at the photographs, and they had brought other people, from aged grandparents to young children, and the latter were running around in between the heavy, dark Chinese style furniture. The older community members were immediately interested. Some remembered the name of the deceased person in the *kechai*, Jeluing Monen. They remembered that this had been the last time a secondary burial was practised in the longhouse, as most of the community had converted to Christianity by then.

Figure 7.11) Kechai on the verandah of Long Jegan, 1956

In this photograph, somebody from the village added a descriptive label by naming the object in the photograph as *kechai*. The word provided an indication of what the object was and represented a moment when somebody in Long Jegan started to use written words instead of oral narratives to contextualise cultural artifacts. I will discuss this transition to "self-conscious tradition" (Clifford et al 2004) in Chapter Eight. While a written context was provided in the photograph of the *kechai* by somebody in Long Jegan, most ethnographic photographs are described and contextualised outside the communities by researchers, anthropologists or, in the case of museums, by the experts and specialists charged with curating Indigenous artifacts. The texts that accompany objects in museum exhibitions provide the audience with signals and pointers to guide the interpretation of the artifact. The addition of words and text to photographs has the capacity to alter the meaning of the photograph, but can overwhelm its visual content (Sontag 1973; Barthes 1984; Felstead et al 2003). Descriptive texts direct the attention of viewers to some aspects of a photograph while distracting them from others, and provide selective interpretations of the narratives of the photograph at the cost of other, alternative explanations (Price 1994; Geismar 2009). At the same time, photographs without captions or descriptions can be hard to interpret (Price 1994). A lack of description can limit the apprehension of a photograph, as I had experienced when first viewing the photographs from the Sarawak Museum collection. Without any knowledge about what they contained, many of the practices, activities and objects were mysterious to me. In the photograph of the *kechai*, somebody had written the word onto the wooden structure. Why was it written there, and by whom? The word clashed with the drawings and decorations, communicating more traditional messages of status, genealogy, myth and legends, and representing a move from pictorial and abstract representations to more definitive, absolute meanings of written words. But the word also took on the role of a caption supplied not by external mediators but by the source community, and even perhaps provided the understanding that as a cultural artifact, the *kechai* was in some respects special and unique.

For my fieldwork in the Orang Ulu villages, I set out to talk about the photographs with the people in the communities, and during my interviews I continued to transcribe the stories, memories and legends prompted by the photographs. In the process I became aware of the fundamental difference between the written notes I collected and the oral narratives that emerged during the interviews and discussions. As Classen and Howes have argued, this difference originated in a hierarchy of the senses fundamental to Western concepts of scientific thinking (Classen & Howes 2006).

7.6 MUSEUMS AND THE PRIMACY OF THE VISUAL

In its permanent exhibition, the artifacts from the Sarawak Museum collections were displayed in showcases and on plinths filled with objects: baskets, masks, stuffed and mounted animal skins, and miniature longhouses with accompanying labels and texts. Knowledge and interpretation were provided through the arrangement and placement of objects and through descriptions and documents, with additional information available in the form of publications such as the Sarawak Museum Journal for sale at the Museum shop. These textual descriptions fit in with the origins of the institution which, as Bennett argued, contributed to and perpetuated the scientific disciplines that had emerged as discrete fields of knowledge during the Enlightenment (Bennett 1988). Museums were grounded in the methodologies, conceptual frameworks and communication practices of Western sciences, which determined the ways collections were classified, exhibited and contextualised. These frameworks, in which museums were embedded, were "peculiar to, and characteristic of, nineteenth-century Western culture" (Bennett 1995:1).

The preoccupation of museums with the visual over sensory or embodied knowledge was, in the eyes of critics, the result of the "primacy of the visual" (Edwards 2006: 28) in the West that was closely connected with the scientific approach and the attempt at hierarchical ordering in the budding scientific disciplines in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Visual technologies such as photography were symptomatic of a scientific approach (Classen & Howes 2006). This "ocularcentrism" (Edwards 2006: 28; Classen & Howes 2006: 199) led to an emphasis of the visual over other senses as a tool for acquiring knowledge. Museum objects, including those coming from distant continents and faraway people, were inserted into this construct. As Classen and Howes have put it,

> [t]he traditional glass cases of the museum present little impediment
> to the eye but they are not ideologically transparent... glass cases are
> ideological framing devices within the larger frame of the museum itself
> (Classen & Howes 2006: 218).

The Western model of the institution of the museum was challenged by critical approaches emerging from the museum field from the 1960s onwards (described in Chapter Three). Under the increased influence of new museology, curators and museum workers addressed the prevailing lack of engagement with other forms of knowledge and with senses other than the visual through alternative and inventive curatorial interventions (Losche 2006; Ouzman 2006). Museums started to integrate Aboriginal

and other Indigenous or local communities into the process of museum and exhibition making (Clapperton 2010). These collaborations were designed to assure the culturally-sensitive display of items and to produce more varied approaches to the meaning of artifacts beyond the understanding of Western sciences. Positioning museums as contact zones, Pratt (1994) aimed to establish opportunities for dialogue and mutual exchange between museum workers, source communities and the museum audience.

The critical examination of their own practices and theoretical foundations by museum theorists and practitioners led to a greater appreciation of the complex embodied and sensory aspects of artifacts. Museum practitioners started questioning the scientific underpinning of museum practices that had informed exhibition narratives, and started to engage with performative, embodied and experiential aspects of the cultural context museum objects. Critics in the museum field argued that for a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural significance of objects, museum exhibitions needed to include intangible culture, cultural practices, performances, oral narratives or embodied and sensory experiences that shape the meaning of the object (Boast et al 2007; Srinivasan et al, 2009; Srinivasan, 2012). Since then, museum practitioners have also become more interested in oral history and its potential for museum methodologies (Green 2007; Brown 2011), and in exploring the complex relationship between objects such as photographs and oral history (Edwards 2006; Geismar 2009; Abrams 2010).

7.7 Photography and oral history

Oral history was popularised as a research method during the second part of the twentieth century, as historians, sociologists and anthropologists became increasingly interested in the voices of people who had not previously been included because of a lack of literacy and access, and because they were not deemed appropriate historical subjects (Cohn 1980; Thomson 2006). In the first half of the twentieth century, oral narratives had been critiqued by historians as being too subjective and personal to count as reliable historical sources. When historians and anthropologists started to doubt the universalist potential of the material they had previously relied upon, in particular written and printed documents, these traits of oral history were increasingly seen as the strength of the method (Portelli 1998; Abrams 2010). The inherent personal bias of oral history that had been critiqued up until then became part of its relevance. The growing interest

in subjective accounts in anthropology, as well as in other disciplines, accompanied the theoretical shift away from positivist knowledge and towards the inclusion of a more varied and personal set of narratives and perspectives. As Abrams has put it, "oral history based on memory offers up insights into the interplay between the self and society, between past and present and between individual experience and generalised account" (Abrams 2010: 81). Historians incorporated oral history as an additional source besides written documents, and the method established itself as "a methodology able to expose ignored topics and present diversified perspectives of the past" (Sangster 1998: 87). Cohn, for instance, argued that oral history could help researchers access the historical accounts of a section of the population not sufficiently represented in written media (Cohn 1980). While oral histories complement, contrast and at times contest these other forms of history, oral histories are transmitted differently, and depend on the personal interaction between researcher and source.

Photo elicitation as a method for obtaining oral history relies on the close connection between photographs and oral narratives (Clark-Ibáñez 2004; Edwards 2006; Geismar 2009). In photo elicitation interviews, researchers make use of the evocative nature of photographs. Photographs prompt people to tell stories, because they evoke memories, connotations and associations, and may bring up complex stories through a series of personal associations by the viewer. As Edwards has suggested, "[p]hotographs and voice are integral to the performance of one another, connecting, extending and integrating ways of telling histories" (Edwards 2006: 37).

During my research, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive prompted people in the source communities to recount oral histories and narratives, along with their individual memories of the past. They moved from their own memories to the stories they had heard from others, to the myths and legends which were many generations old. The photographs acted as memory prompts that led to discussions among the older participants, who debated the details of a story or memory, as younger participants inquired about names, events or other parts of the story. The lengthy and heated discussion about the photographs in the source communities suggested that people engaged with the photographs not only to see what they contained but also to exchange opinions and stories, to talk about the people in the photographs and the places and scenes they saw, and to use the photographs as the basis to re-tell stories and legends that were part of their traditional oral history. This experience mirrors that

of other researchers who have carried out photo elicitation interviews with museum photographs (Appleton 2011).

During the group discussions, the photographs became "a form of Interlocutor" (Edwards 2006:39), prompting the discussion of details, the explanation of interpretations and the re-telling of memories, thereby "enabling knowledge to be passed down, validated, absorbed and re-configured in the present" (Edwards 2006: 39). The connection between photographs and oral history is so palpable that Edwards has suggested that "we should consider photographs not only as visual history but as a form of oral history, and by extension, the way in which the oral constitutes an embodied vocalisation" (Edwards 2006: 37). This connection between photographs and oral history is an important feature of photo elicitation (Samuels 2004). As a museum practice, photo elicitation allows researchers to investigate the excess of detail contained in photographs, as well as the cultural background to objects and artifacts in museum collections.

During my research, these stories covered a range of individual memories and experiences as well as communal oral history, local myths and legends. Among the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were many showing local villages, the longhouses, the jetty on the river, and the padi barns, which were constructed by each family near their apartment to store their rice harvest safe from fires, flood and pests.

These structures also feature in local beliefs, as this was said to be the home of the spirit of the padi (figure 7.12). While I was looking at some photographs of padi barns with Clement Langet Sabang from Long Loyang, he explained the purpose of the padi barns, as well as their entanglement with local beliefs and traditions, and social and moral conditioning. He remembered:

> My mum always told me that we had to be very quiet when we went
> together to fetch something from the barn, in order not to disturb the
> spirit of the padi. So we had to sneak into our own padi barn, as if we
> were stealing the rice, although it was our own! (Sabang, Interview 26
> July 2012).

Most indigenous people in Sarawak rely on rice agriculture for subsistence, and there are numerous rites, rituals and beliefs surrounding padi. According to tradition it was forbidden to sit, rest or sleep on sacks of padi, because the spirit was embodied in the grains, and the gunny sacks filled with padi needed to be treated accordingly.

"One man in Long Loyang, some time ago, fell asleep on the padi, and he dreamt that there was a man in a chawan [loincloth] standing next to him, and looking down, and it was the spirit of the padi. The man was here from the village. And his family has had bad harvests ever since," Clement said (Sabang, Interview 26 July 2012).

Like the stories of the spirit of the padi, Indigenous knowledge in the Ulu was traditionally transferred from one generation to the next through songs, stories, myths and legends as much as practical experience, hunting, gathering and preparing medicinal plants, practising agriculture, and many other skills. Among this knowledge were those relating to belief systems, religion and the spiritual world, but also others concerning space, location, the local environment, material culture, architecture and agricultural practices. The narratives included stories of ancestors, heroes and heroic deeds, ghosts and spirits, but also chronicled wars, migrations, and other historical events. They related to myths and legends, to past events such as migrations, battles, and the rise and fall of communities and community leaders. Many of these narratives have never been written down. History and culture were passed on through stories told by the old people of the longhouse on the verandah in the evening. Clement Langet Sabang remembered his childhood in Long Loyang:

> When I was a boy I slept out here, because there is a bit of wind, it is
>
> not so hot like inside. All the boys, and some of the men slept outside.
>
> There was not much else to do, no electricity so there was no light. But
>
> my grandfather would tell us stories, every evening, until everyone had
>
> fallen asleep (Sabang, Interview 26 July 2012).

While I was working with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum in collaboration with people in their communities of origin, I primarily engaged with participants through discussions and interviews, which I recorded and transcribed, or documented by taking notes in the case of casual discussions. The people living along the Baram and Tinjar traditionally relied on oral history as a method of transferring knowledge, and in my research I investigated the oral history people recounted prompted by the photographs from the archive to assess the relationship between these narratives and the written documents I had accessed in archives in Kuching. However, during my research it became clear that oral history as a method of transferring knowledge includes performative and experiential aspects that reinforced the difference between verbal and textual descriptions.

Figure 7.12) Padi barns in Long Buroi, 1956

7.8 Photography and embodied and sensory knowledge

As my research with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum suggested, photographs are closely linked with oral history. Oral history is more than merely spoken words. It encompasses other aspects of the body, for instance the movements that add emphasis to spoken words, the intonation of the voice, the performative aspects of oral narratives, and the embodied experience of storytelling and listening. As Edwards put it,

> photographs operate not only simply as visual history but are performed…
> as a form of oral history, linked to sound, gesture and thus to the relationships in which and through which these practices are embedded (Edwards 2006: 29).

Throughout my work with the material from the Sarawak Museum, the photographs prompted participants to tell the stories that were part of local oral history and tradition and included the performative and embodied features Edwards has described (Edwards 2006). The oral narratives related during the photo elicitation interviews were the expression of cultural knowledge about the people, places and objects shown in the images. As Edwards has noted, oral history includes a range of performative aspects that have rarely been acknowledged in the past. When I visited people in the source communities and asked them about the photographs, the ensuing discussions often led to other activities through which people provided contexts to the photographs. These were embodied manifestations of cultural knowledge. As Christie has pointed out, all cultural knowledge is embodied and performative as it "comes out of the routine practices of everyday life and makes those practices possible" (Christie 2008: 273). Rather than being anchored to structured methods of learning or textual devices, such knowledge "is embedded in the ways people live out their daily lives" (Christie 2008: 273). Christie goes on to argue that the cultural knowledge of a community is dependent on people's "social practices, structures, and performance traditions, as well as in the physical features of their environment" (Christie 2008: 274).

During my work with the Sarawak Museum photographs I experienced how people established the social context of the photographs in ways that exceeded verbal descriptions and explanations. They took me to see the places they had told me about: petrified longhouses along the river, places where spirits were thought to have grown their tobacco in the old days, or places where houses had previously stood before burning down or being abandoned. They showed me the practices related to material culture seen in the photographs—people making baskets from strips of rotan vine, or sun hats from dried palm fronds—and helped me to try out their techniques (see figure 7.13 and 7.14). They showed me the dances and played music on the instruments shown in the photographs, and proceeded to include me in the performance. People led me to their apartments to show me objects similar to those in the photographs or re-created the

Figure 7.13) Jenun Batok in Long Nuwah, working on a sun hat, 2012

scenes in the photographs by staging performances, preparing foods, singing songs or playing instruments. Such activities provided a background to the photographs through sound and taste, through sensory experiences, along with the oral narratives prompted by the photographs. Performing rather than explaining cultural heritage was a way of overcoming the language barrier imposed by my lack of local languages and dialects. Even with an interpreter, the intricate ways in which language conveyed culture was difficult to translate into other languages. Moreover, the performative methods through which people related to what they saw in the photographs suggested that knowledge about certain aspects of culture was more complex and comprehensive than verbal description, whether written or oral. They encompassed other sensory experiences such as texture, taste, smell, sound, rhythm, melody and movement.

Figure 7.14) Woman in Long Selapun working on a basket

For instance, one series of photographs from the Sarawak Museum contained a range of separate photographs showing the process of making tapioca flour. The process included harvesting the root, grating it into fibre and draining the starch, and finally the preparation of a dish called *na'o* that was made by boiling the flour into a viscous dough. During my visit to Long Loyang, Melai Apui, one of the girls shown grating tapioca in the photograph, came to see me to look at the prints, together with two friends and their husbands. We were sitting on the floor of the family apartment of Clement Langet Sabang together with Clement's sister-in-law, Kapit. They were chatting to the four visitors engaged in riffling through the books with photographic prints from the Sarawak Museum.

Looking through the books with the printouts together, we discussed the photographs taken in Long Buroi before the community had moved downriver to Long Loyang where they now lived (see map 7.1). The photograph of her grating the tapioca was one of a series in which the processing of tapioca is documented. The first photograph shows a man bringing his harvest in from the field (see figure 7.17). The next shows three women grating the tapioca with thorny stems of rotan (see figure 7.18). Next come two series showing the grated tapioca fibre laid out on a mat in a boat. A woman is treading the fibre while pouring water over it from the river to drain the starch out. The boat is filled with the milky starchy water (see figure 7.19). The last photograph in the series

shows two old women, eating from great woks filled with a whitish substance (see figure 7.20). Looking through the photographs from Long Buroi, Kapit and Melai selected these photographs and described their significance. As they explained, to process tapioca the root is dried, cut and then grated. Then the starch is washed out of the fibre.

> First you clean the boat. It has to be very clean! Then you place the mat in it. You put the tapioca on the mat, pour water from the river over it and step on it so that the water washes out the starch. The more you do this the more the water that comes out turns white. (Apui, Interview 28.07.2012).

Kapit explained that the *na'o* has no taste on its own, and is usually eaten together with other dishes:

> We eat na'o with the small bamboo shoot, and also it is very nice with wild boar meat. But now we don't have to do all this work anymore. We just go to the shop and buy the flour (Pur, Interview 28 July 2012).

After a while Melai Apui and her friends had finished looking through the photographs and left to go back to their house a few doors down in Long Loyang. When the sun set, they returned with some other friends, and started to prepare *na'o* for Clement, Kapit and me. They boiled water in a large wok, and then poured the contents of a packet of tapioca flour into the water. Slowly, the mixture turned from white to transparent (see figure 7.23). "There is a special kind of fork to eat *na'o*", said Kapit. The implement looked like a pair of chopsticks merged at one end. "You stick it into the dough, and twist. Then you pull a bit out from the dough, and dip it into the soup." The *na'o* was difficult to eat, and it had no taste of its own. It was a glutinous texture and it went well with the green mango, mani chai and other vegetable and meat dishes (see figure 7.24).

Figure 7.15) Woman preparing banana leaves for cigarette papers, Long Sobeng, 2012

The photographs from the Sarawak Museum did not relate to sensory and experiential knowledge in the way that other objects and artifacts do (Claasen and Howes 2006). Photographs or photographic prints do not have the same tangible qualities as other objects. While photographs are not without interest as material objects (Edwards 2002), they have little substance and even less texture, scent or other qualities of materiality. Nevertheless, they evoke the material world

Figure 7.16) Melai Apui and friends in Long Loyang, 2012

which they represent. As Bell (2010) has pointed out, photographs relate strongly to embodied experience and are "social objects that are embedded in gesture, and oral expositions, and, indeed, are generative of them" (Bell 2010: 353). Photographs encourage discussion, oral narrative and the types of embodied performance that go with it, but photographs also encourage mimesis, imi.tation and reproduction (Bell 2010)

In Long Loyang, as in Long Jegan and Long Nuwah, the people who had seen the photographs from the archive and who had spoken to me about them tried to provide more tangible links to the scenes, events and objects in the photographs. Sometimes these activities also formed part of traditional hospitality, for example the dances and musical performances, or invitations to meals. Sometimes the sociable atmosphere and interest in foreigners led people to invite me to take part in their activities, such as helping to harvest and cook food or prepare dried leaves for basketry. People also asked me to join them when they went to bathe and catch fish in the river. In many cases the people who discussed the photographs with me made an effort to demonstrate the traditional practices shown in the photographs in real life. I was brought to see people building boats (see figure 7.23), pounding padi with a large wooden mortar and pole, drying and cutting tobacco (see figure 7. 15) and preparing the wild banana leaf for cigarette paper (see figure 7.24). All these activities were connected with the objects, scenes, practices and activities shown in the photographs.

I argue that some of the activities through which people performed their knowledge of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were more loosely

based on the content of the photographs, for instance when participants took me to see objects similar to those shown in the photographs, or when they pointed out places that related to the people or scenes they had discovered in the material. At other times, people re-enacted the performances in the photographs closely, paying attention to the details they had noticed in the photographs.

Many of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive showed scenes of celebration. There were images of people dancing on the longhouse verandah, singing songs, and

Figure 7.17) Bujang Lenyap coming back from his farm with his harvested tapioca, Long Buroi 1956

playing music. In Long Nuwah, the whole community came together in the evening to perform the long dances shown in the photographs I had brought, as well as several

Figure 7.18) Melai Apui and her friends grating tapioca, Long Buroi, 1956

other dances not shown in the photographs. During the afternoon, our host Jenun Batok had noticed a series of photographs showing three women from nearby Long Atun performing traditional welcome songs for visitors on the longhouse verandah (see figure 7.26). He rallied a number of other men and women to sing these songs for me and Clement Langet Sabang, and at the end of the song offered the glass of rice wine depicted in one of the photographs (see figure 7.27). These performances and activities, which were prompted by the photographs, were sometimes carried out by individual participants during interviews, but at other times were concerted efforts by a number of people from the community. In Long Jegan I carried the photograph of a young man with a sape, a popular local string instrument roughly similar to a guitar (see figure 7.29). As I found out, the

Figure 7.19) Sakan Kamiong processing tapioca in her boat, Long Buroi, 1956

name of the young man, who still lived in Long Jegan, was Lepo Kukum, and he was well known for his musical performances (see figure 7.30). After our interview, my host, Penghulu Patrick, asked Lepo to play his sape in the evening in his house. After much deliberation he agreed to play. During the evening, Lepo and his family, followed by most inhabitants of the village, congregated one by one in the house of the Penghulu, and proceeded to stage a performance of traditional dance and music. The women, who had come early, dressed in their traditional clothes and headgear and started to move in single file into the living room through a side door, dancing the traditional longdance. Other styles of dance followed. At last, two women, accompanied by Lepo and another sape player, performed the *dayung* ceremony that was formerly part of healing rituals. The two performers—older women who remembered the time before the

Figure 7.20) Two women eating na'o in Long Buroi, 1956

214

practice had ceased with the community's conversion to Christianity—did this with much laughter because they had not danced the *dayung* style dance in many years and were feeling a little embarrassed.

During my research, different methods people used to contextualise photographs complemented each other as photographs were described and narrated through oral history and performed through

Figure 7.21) Eating na'o in Long Loyang, 2012

the more experiential and embodied methods described above. These contributions informed my investigation of the photographs and enabled me to witness and take part in the performance of dances, singing of songs, preparation of food, and other social activities. During my research these practices allowed me not only to talk about local culture with people in the communities, but also to learn about the intricate embodied and sensory experiences that formed part of these practices. It was these performative and embodied practices that constituted the social context of the photographs.

This connection between objects and experiential and sensory knowledge has become the subject of theoretical discussion in the museum field (Edwards, Gosden & Phillips 2006; Dudley 2013). Some museums have become more interactive and participatory, but many embodied and experiential activities people use to contextualise objects may be beyond the scope of the institution and would necessitate a repositioning of the responsibilities of the museum and the ways in which knowledge is generated at museums (Classen & Howes 2006; Golding 2009). To be sure, objects may suffer from handling and touch if made accessible to audiences for handling, and may be destroyed in the process, but there are already various methods of overcoming

Figure 7.22) Eating na'o in Long Loyang, 2012

this issue, for instance by selecting which objects can be touched and preparing and creating objects for audiences to engage with in embodied ways (Saunderson 2011; Rees Leahy 2013). Sensory interactions with material objects can provide much more diverse experiences for visitors, and the lack of attention to encounters with materiality can distract audiences from the object by focusing attention on issues of presentation and context (Saunderson 2011). Limiting museum encounters

Figure 7.23) Man working on a boat, Long Loyang, 2012

between visitors and objects to the visual reinforces a specific cultural and historical approach. However, as Golding has argued, sensual and embodied experiences "are fundamental to our common humanity" (Golding 2013: 226) and even though sensual hierarchies are constructed differently in various parts of the world, acknowledging the role of such experiential knowledge can open up a range of educational strategies for museums. In particular, sensory engagement requires more active, creative and experimental intellectual engagement on the part of the visitor, and can change the role of the audience from passive consumption to active participation (Golding 2009). Some museums are engaging with the sensory experiences which occur when visitors enter a museum and are making them explicit in the way their exhibitions are set up (Rees Leahy 2013). However, integrating such embodied methods into museum practices is difficult because sensory experiences may be difficult to control, and even harder to

Figure 7.24) Womanc cutting tobacco in Long Loyang, 2012

made to contribute to specific learning outcomes. For instance, a visit to the Sarawak Museum is a sensory experience. The different scents in the old and new museum wings, the texture of aged wood and glass of the showcases and the sounds of people shuffling around the hardwood floors quietly discussing the objects on show contribute to the audience's experience of visiting the museum.

216

However, these sensory experiences are by their nature very different from those experienced when someone encounters artifacts or photographs within a community context, and do not relate to the object in a way that would contribute to a better understanding of the social role of the object.

As Srinivasan has pointed out, not enough museums engage with experiential and performative aspects of knowledge relating to their collections (Srinivasan et al 2009; Srinivasan 2012). This omission may have been due to the institutional setting and approach or scope of activities of individual institutions. Nevertheless, as we have seen, embodied, experiential and performative activities relating to photographs provide a complex and nuanced approach to the understanding of museum objects, as well as insights into the experiential ways of learning about objects and people.

Figure 7.25) Women dancing a longdance in Long Teru, 1956

7.9. CONCLUSION

Since the Sarawak Museum's inception, museum staff have collaborated closely with local communities, and in turn artists and artisans from different ethnic groups have regularly worked at the Sarawak Museum. Many of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were taken by local staff, and followed Harrisson's principles, including his tendency for inductive research and his assumption that a large body of material would benefit later researchers.

These combined principles and methods led to a comprehensive and detailed documentation of local communities through photographs with which people in the communities were able to engage during my research.

Nevertheless, at the time of my research, the photographs at the Sarawak Museum archive, along with many of the museum's artifacts, were still awaiting the
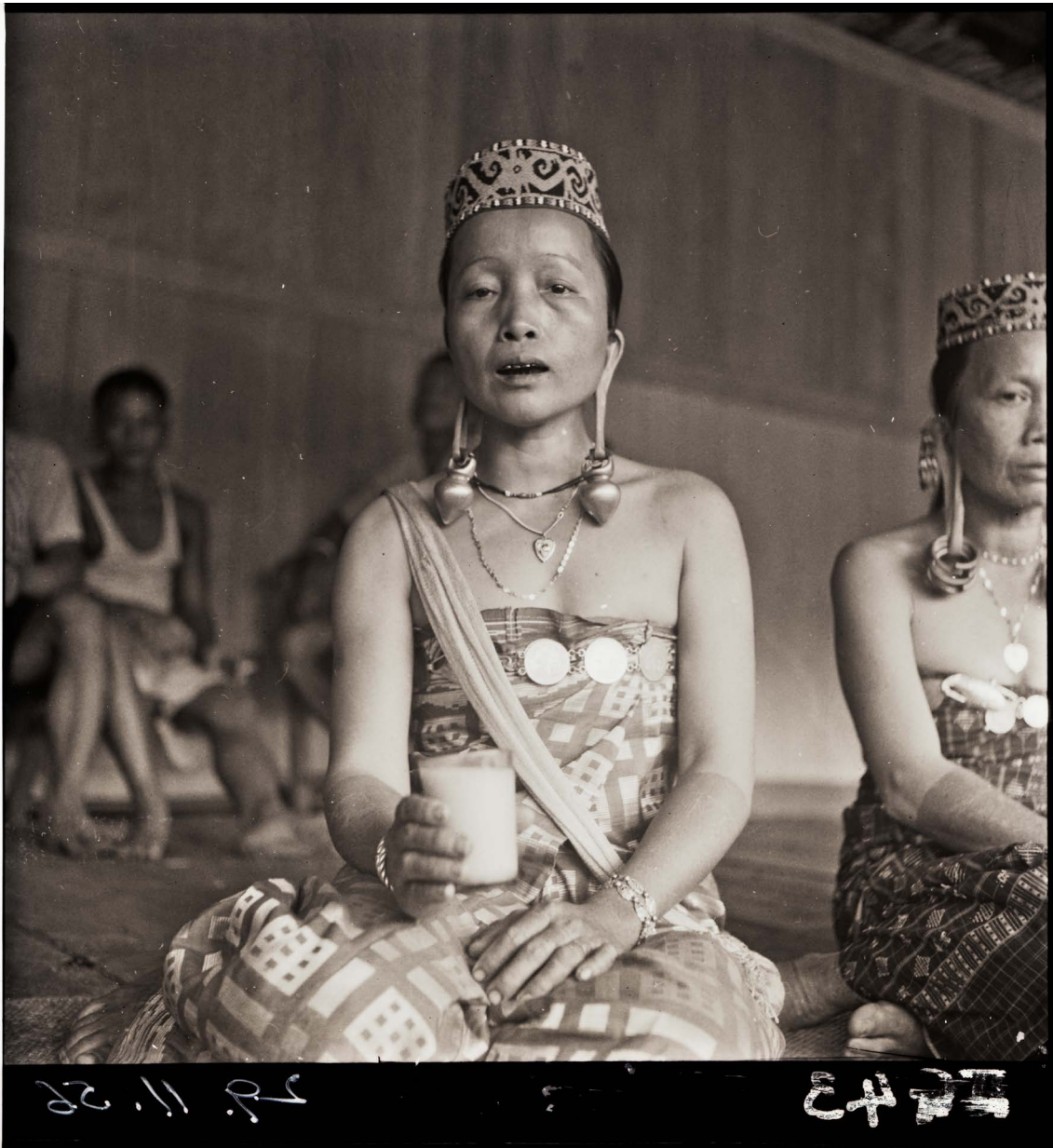
Figure 7.26) Lalang Saging singing a traditional Kenyah song to visitors, Long Atun, 1956

attention of historians, sociologists and anthropologists to conduct the kind of research Harrisson anticipated. The use of the photographs was complicated by the fact that many of the photographs and artifacts did not contain descriptions, designations or labels. In some cases, the acquisition records were not extant.

The status of the Sarawak Museum archive and the photographs contained in it suggested that neither academic engagement with its collections nor co-production or co-curation projects had been a priority for the museum administration. Much of the collection still awaited professional scrutiny when I worked at the museum from 2010 to 2012.

Figure 7.27) Jenun Batok singing a welcoming song in Long Nuwah, 2012

The results of my work with the Sarawak Museum photographs indicated that an approach combining the methods of the museum and the knowledge recorded in archives, and the oral, embodied and experiential knowledge through which objects acquire social meaning, are significant aspects of cultural heritage and its practices. Both museums and source communities stand to benefit from such collaborations. Collaborations between source communities and museums can provide museums with a better understanding of the narratives and practices that form the social context of objects in the collection. This includes the intangible practices, the performative and embodied knowledge through which objects become meaningful. These interactions add to the comprehensive understanding of the museum objects and their social and cultural meaning for museums and their audiences. The integration of these narratives into museum collections is a move towards acknowledging alternative types of knowledge. This approach would also help to assure that these narratives continue to circulate as cultural change affects traditional modes of relaying oral history. The embodied and sensory ways in which people from the source communities contextualised the photographs during my research suggested that the material provided tangible links between the visualist methods of museums, and embodied and experiential knowledge.

Acknowledging these embodied and sensory cultural practices surrounding objects has presented new challenges to museum workers. In the context of the recent efforts by museums to transform what Geisbusch has called the "locus of modern ocularcentrism" (Geisbusch 2012: 211), to integrate multiple voices and

Figure 7.28) Jenun Batok performing a traditional dance, Long Nuwah, 2012

Figure 7.29) Lepo Kukum in Long Jegan, 1956

to include their audiences as well as their source communities in the processes of museum work, the embodied and sensory aspects of museum artifacts present valid methodologies for museum workers to explore (Saunderson 2011). Turning away from a mostly visual engagement with objects and allowing other embodied, sensory and performative approaches to come to the fore would also mean that museum staff and audiences would engage with and even disassemble what Classen and Howes have described as a social hierarchy of the senses (Classen & Howes 2006). This sensory ordering, based on nineteenth-century scientific empiricism and the emerging emphasis on visual observation and surveillance, emphasised the relationship between the visual sense and the mind, rationality and reason, as opposed to the "lower" senses of smell, touch and hearing (Classen & Howes 2006: 206).

I suggest that collaborative projects have the potential to address these preconceptions and to contribute to the museological and curatorial approaches through which museum objects are contextualised. They may also result in relevant insights, not only

Figure 7.30) Lepo Kukum playing the sape, 2012

220

into objects and ways to represent them to museum audiences, but also into different perceptions of the ways in which knowledge is created. This allows museum workers to re-consider proprietary approaches that give authority of interpretation, access, use and guardianship to any one entity, and instead to "take account of the distributed and composite personhood of objects" in order to encourage multiple and well-informed interpretations of museum collections (Busse 2008: 193). These curatorial experiments can result in exhibitions that question social preconceptions and represent objects in a culturally sensitive way (Ouzman 2006).
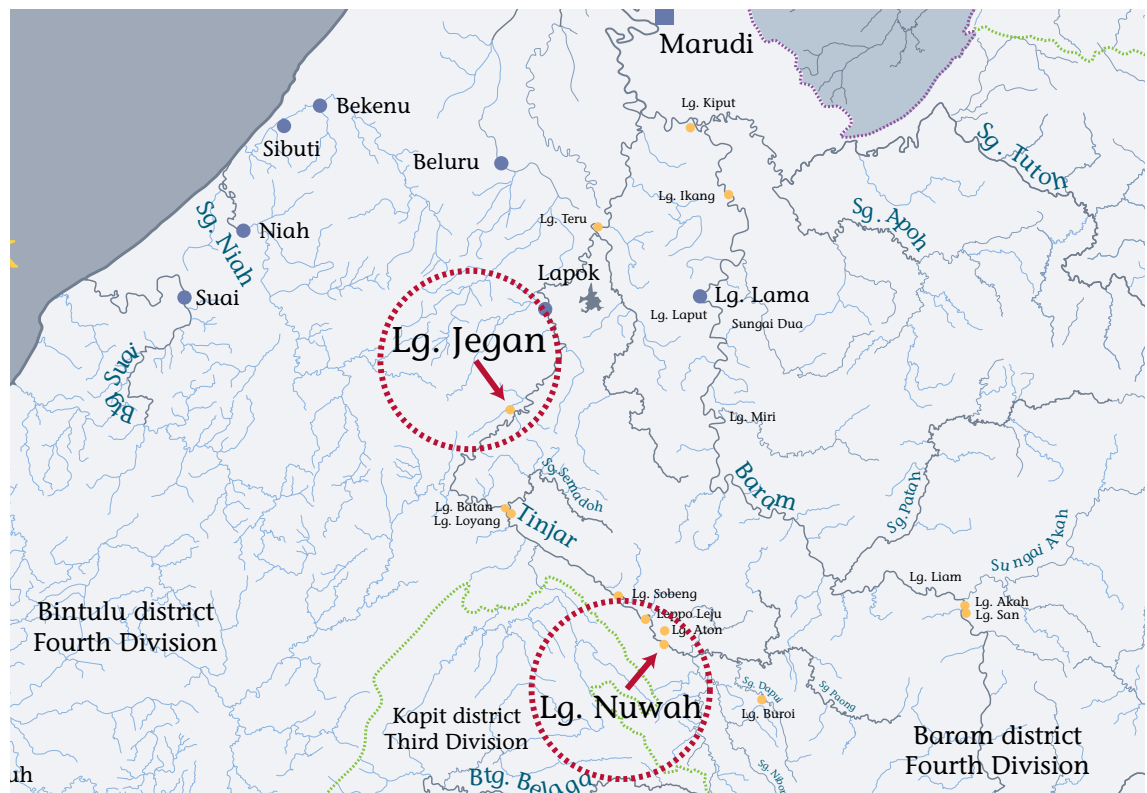
Map 7.1) Long Jegan and Long Nuwah

Figure 8.1) Datuk Penghulu Oyong Lawai Jau

Chapter Eight: Photographs, Modernity and Indigenous Heritage

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the role of the Sarawak Museum photographs in the engagement with cultural heritage in Sarawak during my research in the communities along the Baram and Tinjar. I examine the role of Indigenous cultural heritage in the social, economic and political development of the communities I visited, and the ways in which the photographs from the Sarawak Museum provided visual links to enable people to engage with that heritage. For this purpose I define heritage as "that part of the past which we select in the present of contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social" (Graham et al 2005: 29). As Graham et al have pointed out, the value of elements of culture singled out as heritage "rests less in their intrinsic merit than in a complex

array of contemporary values, demands and even moralities" (Graham et al 2005: 29). The engagement of a community with its own heritage turns culture into "self-conscious tradition" and is symptomatic of the experience of cultural change and loss (Clifford et al 2004: 6). While heritage is therefore related to the past, it is also constructed and defined through frameworks of political and economic power, and engagements with heritage are often motivated by stakeholders' interests invested in specific elements of past or present culture (Chua 2012; Logan 2012). Museums are implicated in this process, since they are part of what Laurajane Smith has called the "authorised heritage discourse", dominated by acknowledged experts and specialists such as museum staff, and through government and policy frameworks (Smith 2006: 29).

During my research I sought to investigate whether people in the source communities would be able to use the photographs from the Sarawak Museum to define their cultural heritage, as research with other photographic collections has suggested (Geismar & Tilley 2003; Peers & Brown 2003). Access to museum collections can allow source communities to revive traditional practices, customs and historical narratives, and to recreate material culture, thereby ensuring its continued significance for Indigenous groups (Binney & Chaplin 2003; Lydon 2010). My research enabled significant insights into the processes by which people identified elements of their culture they perceived as significant, subject to conservation and part of their cultural identity. However, it also became evident that the processes through which heritage was defined were subject to complex negotiations between different actors, based on economic and political considerations.

To begin the discussion of photographs and heritage, I focus on the role of Indigenous heritage in Sarawak. I examine administrative approaches to Indigenous culture during Sarawak's period as a British colony and discuss how heritage politics in Sarawak changed when Sarawak became part of Malaysia. In Malaysia, ethnicity, together with concepts of Indigeneity, belonging, religion and traditional culture, were highly politicised (Aiken & Leigh 2011; Hazis 2012; Chua 2012). As discussed in Chapter Four in relation to the role of the museum, Sarawak's Indigenous population was included in affirmative action policies implemented by the Federal Government, but Islam and Malay culture constituted the basis of Malaysian identity (Hazis 2012).

The resulting marginalisation of Indigenous culture, in the case of the Orang Ulu, was compounded by the Federal and State Government's efforts to develop the region where their traditional lands were located. I discuss how projects aimed at development undercut the value of traditional culture through the promotion of narrowly-defined concepts of progress and modernity (Majid Cooke 2006a). In Sarawak, traditional customs were consolidated with the political frameworks of the nation state through the transcription of *adat* or native customary law. Through the discussion of *adat*, I examine why it has been difficult for Indigenous people in Sarawak to reconcile their traditional culture with new practices. I then examine how, during my research, people sought to use the photographs to recreate objects they considered cultural heritage. I also assess the outcomes of the exhibition I held at the Sarawak Museum during my research to discuss the "museum effect" (Alpers 1991: 26) which objects undergo once they enter museum collections and exhibitions. I examine the potential that digital technologies offer in broadening the reach of collections held by museums and archives and in enabling contributions and exchanges with audiences and source communities. I also discuss existing barriers to community participation in digital archives in the Sarawak context.

My research suggests that Sarawak's Indigenous communities are increasingly engaging with their own culture in terms of heritage, and that the collections from the Sarawak Museum play an important role in this. The re-positioning of traditions as heritage is symptomatic of a community's efforts to confirm local identities in the face of social and cultural change. It is a method of reconciling traditional culture with modernity and development, as "the possession of heritage—as opposed to the way of life that heritage safeguards—is an instrument of modernization and mark of modernity" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 61).

8.2. The photograph of Datuk Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau

Among the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were some that differed in format or style from the rest of the material. The Sarawak Museum archive collected photographs through donations or acquisition from a variety of sources. It also re-printed photographs taken from books and other publications, but did not register where these

images had come from. Some such photographs were handed to me in folders by Abang, the archivist, or Mr Voon, the photographer, while they helped me locate photographs that belonged to the region and communities I was investigating. Others I found while rummaging through folders, boxes, shelves and drawers. Browsing through a stack of folders, I noticed a thin envelope underneath some books, which contained several printed photographs. One of them caught my eye. It was a print with worn edges, without captions, descriptions or dates. The scene was obviously staged. It showed Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, paramount chief of the Baram, exiting from an airplane parked before an indefinite grey background of concrete slabs and overcast sky. One of his bare feet rests on the ledge of the airplane door while the other is placed on the ladder leading down. In his left hand he is holding onto the frame of the airplane. In the photograph, the Temenggong wears the traditional haircut, his fringe cut straight high above his eyebrows. Clouded leopard teeth protrude from his upper earlobes. He wears dark shorts, a light shirt with short sleeves, and underneath a garment with black-and-white stripes. Just below his knees he wears a multitude of *rotan* bands, a traditional decoration of Orang Ulu men. The Temenggong is looking at something outside the frame of the photograph with a serious countenance. On the side of the airplane large black letters spell "Malayan Airways" (see figure 8.1).

I estimated that the photograph had been taken sometime after World War II but before the creation of Malaysia, since Malayan Airways was founded in 1946 and changed its name in 1963 to Malaysian Airways. To me, the photograph presents both the modern and the traditional aspects of local culture, and the Temenggong seemed to bridge the two effortlessly. The way he was shown from below, on his own in the centre of the image and gazing to the side, projected power and authority, while his bare feet and accessories provided references to his ethnic background. Emerging into the modern world and at the same time merging the modern with the traditional, the Temenggong seemed to defy the idea that because his people belonged to a minority from the remote regions of the state, they might not be engaged in the socio-economic and political processes that were transforming the region. If it was a publicity shot, the photograph may also suggest that Indigenous peoples were a potential market for the airline industry, with growing incomes and leisure time.

However, my research with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum indicated that this contrast between the modern and the traditional, so strikingly constructed in the photograph, was not easily reconciled among Sarawak's Indigenous groups. The common stereotype according to which the rural and traditional is opposed to the modern and developed originates in ethnographic representations of the culture, societies, customs, and practices of Indigenous people established around concepts of alterity and difference (Pratt 1991; Ulin 2001; King and Wilder 2003). In the nineteenth century, this difference was framed in evolutionary terms, as indigenous peoples were viewed as primitive and confined to earlier stages of evolutionary development. When the concept of social evolutionism came under critique, it was reformulated in terms of modernity and development (Evans-Pritchard 1950). By the beginning of World War II, the aim of the British colonial administration in Sarawak was to guide the peoples under colonial control towards progress and social and economic development, and eventual independence (Leach 1950). This conferred on the colonial powers the responsibility of guardianship over peoples who were at times referred to in terms of child-like powerlessness and naivety. In Southeast Asia, people like Malcolm MacDonald, the British Governor-General of Malaya until 1948 and later Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, expressed this view by suggesting that

> great changes in the life of the pagan peoples were not only inevitable but desirable. Civilized man can introduce bad habits into such unsophisticated native communities, which destroy them; but he can also bring knowledge and services which give them a securer, broader and higher life….In the end the change will no doubt progress very far. Iban and other pagan society as we know it will disappear as a result of a continuous and, eventually, complete process of advance. Once such a movement begins, it cannot be checked. The original impetus persists. The first set of changes produces a desire for further changes, and so-called progress works out its inexorable evolution. (MacDonald, cited in Wong 1960: 13-14).

MacDonald's words exemplify the notion of cultural supremacy that informed the moral reasoning supporting the British colonial Government. The quote also reflects

the idea that modernity was exclusive to some societies, and could not be initiated by Indigenous communities without the involvement of outsiders. It would, however, once it had been initiated, lead to the eventual disappearance of Indigenous culture. Implied here is that Indigenous people themselves would reject their own culture in favour of what Macdonald refers to as the "process of advance" (MacDonald, cited in Wong 1960: 14). Because of this, Indigenous peoples, in particular rural Indigenous communities, were framed either as traditional and authentic or as modern but inauthentic, because their culture had been impacted by the influence of outsiders (Cohn 1980). As Schildkrout has argued, the representation of Indigenous culture in museums as authentic only if untouched by outside influence re-confirmed this stereotype (Schildkrout 2006).

When I started working with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, it became clear that they had not been taken to illustrate this stereotypical representation of Indigenous peoples, from which traces of change and development were removed. Photographs such as that of Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, as well as many others, indicated that social and cultural change was evident in the photographs at the archive rather than having been carefully avoided or removed by the photographer. Numerous photographs, which I will discuss in this chapter, showed how the communities changed over time, in particular with regard to the material culture as well as to traditional practices such as costumes, dances, musical performances and religious rituals. The collection was an ongoing effort initiated in the 1950s and carried out continuously until today, and enabled me to investigate how people reflected upon the changes that had taken place. During the interviews and group discussions with people from the source communities, some participants pointed out details that they felt indicated how things had changed, while others spoke about the changes they thought had not materialised in terms of infrastructure and economic development. As these contributions indicate, many participants in the interviews struggled to improve their economic situations and standards of living while at the same time maintaining their traditional cultures, traditions and practices.

8.3 Development policies in Sarawak

In Sarawak, the modernisation and development of the territories under their control was one of the main concerns of the British colonial administration (Porritt 1997; Bissonnette 2011), and this remained so when Sarawak joined Malaysia in 1963 (Grijpstra 1976). The focus of British development policies was the modernisation of traditional shifting agriculture, and improved healthcare and education.

After Sarawak's merger with Malaysia, the terms 'development' and 'modernisation' acquired new and subtle political overtones as the development aims and economic projects of the Government became entangled with political patronage. Traditional shifting agriculture was increasingly seen as outdated and wasteful in terms of labour and land (Porritt 1997). Large-scale plantation agriculture and logging became the focus of the economic efforts of the Government in the remote regions of Sarawak, and small subsistence farmers were perceived as a "stumbling block" to these industries (Ngidang 2005: 49). Modernisation and development for local communities was made dependent on political support for the governing party coalition in Sarawak, Barisan Nasional or BN. In terms of cultural and social development, the priorities and policies of the Sarawakian Government, as summarised by Aiken and Leigh, were

> to maintain stable ethnic relationships, to foster a more inclusive, cross-ethnic sense of national identity, and, of overriding importance, to promote development. Narrowly construed to mean 'modernization,' development policy aims to replace 'tradition' with 'modernity.' Tradition was equated with 'indigenous'; modernity, with 'progress' (Aiken & Leigh 2011: 480).

This narrow definition became entrenched in the perception of urban as well as rural Sarawakians, who were seen as remote and backward (Majid Cooke 2006a; Cramb 2007; Aiken & Leigh 2011). In Malaysia, concepts of ethnic belonging and difference were highly politicised, and the role of ethnic, cultural and religious identification had a major impact on the way different Indigenous groups engaged with their own cultural heritage. The politicisation of culture, ethnicity and religion in Sarawak is not a new process, as Winzeler suggested, but

Figure 8.2) Group picture with Tom Harrisson in Long Buroi, 1951

the tendency to turn native lifeways into matters of objective contemplation and selection as ethnic traditions doubtless became far more important and pervasive under European colonial rule and still more so during the postcolonial period (Winzeler 1997: 224-225).

Indigenous peoples in Sarawak were aware of the strong association of ethnicity and politics, and engaged with cultural heritage as a means of contesting rights, agency and self-organisation around cultural lines (Chua 2012). Creating cultural continuity and sovereignty by means of cultural heritage became a method for Indigenous communities to negotiate questions of ethnicity and political engagement (Winzeler 1997). While some have argued that Indigenous communities use concepts and definitions of heritage for a variety of contemporary cultural and political motives (Alivizatou 2012), the transformation of lived cultural traditions into elements of heritage is problematic. The outcomes of heritage discourses are often determined not at a grassroots level but through frameworks of political, social and economic power (Logan 2012).

8.4. Orang Ulu heritage and traditional land

Among the oldest photographs in the selection I used in this research was a group photograph showing three European men amidst a group of Orang Ulu. While information about most other photographs from the archive depended on the description of people in the source communities, the origins of this photograph were matched by an article in the Sarawak Gazette describing the event during which the photograph was taken (Harrisson 1951). In search of the Usun Apau plateau, the mythical homeland of most Kenyah groups in Sarawak, Tom Harrisson, Leech (the Director of the Lands and Surveys Department) and Griffin (the local District Officer from Marudi) had travelled to the farthest reaches of the Tinjar in 1951 to cross the highlands and re-connect on the other side with the tributaries in the watershed of the Rejang river (see figure 8.2).

For the Sebup, an Orang Ulu group considered a sub-group of the Kenyah, Long Buroi was an important settlement. In 1958, the community re-located downriver on Government orders. The Government wanted the community to move closer to the administrative centre. In the resettlement site, they were allocated a school, something the community did not previously have (see map 8.1).

During my visit to the Tinjar, the past locations of communities and their trajectories were often described during conversations with local people. To prepare for the re-location from Long Buroi to the new destination, people disassembled the entire longhouse and floated the larger posts down for the construction of the new longhouse. The durable and highly-valuable ironwood posts were floated with the help of rafts. This was because ironwood or *belian* is so heavy it does not float on its own, remembered Melai Apui from Long Loyang, who had been a young girl when the community re-located (Apui, Interview 28 July 2012).

During my visit to Long Loyang, and throughout the photo elicitation interviews, the stories of the migration from Long Buroi as well as the trajectories of the ancestors down from the ancestral homelands in the Usun Apau, were important and recurrent themes. In the diverse communities of the Baram and its tributaries, the location of a community was the basis of its cultural coherence and ethnic identity (Metcalf 2010: 9). Self-identification was based on narratives of affiliation with communities and locations,

which longhouses one's ancestors came from, where that community had been before its current location, and its relationships with other communities in the past.

The relationship of Indigenous communities with their environment is fundamentally different to the understanding of land as a colonial commodity and later the national government (Majid Cooke 2006; Logan 2012). For Indigenous communities, land not only represented a means for

Figure 8.3) Batu Gading on the Tinjar, 1956

subsistence, but provided links with the communal past, cultural identity, religious beliefs and traditional lifestyles. Indigenous populations are concerned with the protection of their environment because "their cultural survival is directly linked to their intimate connections to their territorial homelands" (Corntassel & Primeau 1995: 1).

The comments and contributions of my interviewees suggest that in Sarawak, the history and culture of ethnic groups was embodied in the land and attached to specific environmental features, and this knowledge was transmitted via oral traditions within the community. Using the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive, participants in the photo elicitation interviews defined the meaning of place and location for local communities, articulating local knowledge systems in contrast to the concepts that informed the administration of the colonial Government. Melai Apui's narratives about the re-location of Long Buroi constituted one example among many of the significance which specific locations held for the people I interviewed during my research. This became evident not only in the numerous photographs of landscapes that were immediately recognised and described by participants during interviews and group discussions. For instance, one photograph showing the rocky banks of the Tinjar was identified as the location of a longhouse that, according to legend, had been turned to

stone in a mishap involving a villager who laughed about a wild animal. This was strictly forbidden in the old belief system (see figure 8.3).

The strong connection between local customs, oral history and the land was also the subject of narratives relating to local legends and beliefs. For instance, during my visit to Long Loyang, a number of people discussed a photograph showing two women visibly in distress (see figure 8.4). The two were mourning beside the coffin of a dead relative, Kapit and several of her friends from Long Loyang explained. Prompted by the photograph, they elaborated upon the traditional practices following a death in the community. As they explained, complex songs were sung during the nights of the wake to guide the deceased to the afterlife, a place they called *Alo Malau*.

> First the dead person travels with a boatman called Uyau Avid, who picks
> him up from his longhouse and brings him downriver to a longhouse
> called Long Lidan. From Long Lidan the person must go on foot, and
> leave behind all his possessions, everything he brought from his home.
> From Long Lidan he will continue on foot to Alo Malau (Pur, Interview
> 28.07.2012).

Alo Malau was described as a beautiful shallow river with plentiful fish, clear water and many longhouses. As Kapit explained, the songs recounted the life of the deceased and also listed each tributary of the river from the longhouse of the deceased person to Long Lidan, to direct the soul of the deceased. "Today we don't sing those songs at the wake," chipped in Kapit's friend Melai, "because nobody can recall the names of all the little tributaries" (Apui, Interview 28 July 2012).

Stories that related to traditional oral history and the environment, such as *Alo Malau*'s, were prompted by looking at photographs of the landscapes, villages, and river scenes contained in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum. They were indicative of the complex connection between Indigenous peoples in the region and their land. This was expressed through the mythology and beliefs of Indigenous peoples and through oral history closely connected to the landscape and its features. As Bulan has put it, these "songs and stories speak of people's proprietary rights [and] responsibilities on the land and tell of regimes that govern relationships to the land" (Bulan 2011: 54). Indigenous people's claims over traditional land have led to conflict between Indigenous groups and

the Government over the right to occupy and use land in the area. The environmental changes that have taken place a have affected the local communities not only in terms of their traditional rights and economic situation, but also through the disruption of cultural traditions related to the environment. These conflicts of interest pitch Indigenous communities against national governments, and this is not only in Sarawak. As Logan has put it, cultural heritage for Indigenous communities is

> deeply embedded in, and requires the protection of, traditional territory and its sacred sites. This puts indigenous groups into conflict with national governments on both political and economic fronts (Logan 2012: 238).

For the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, the connection between people and their land was evident in the oral narratives prompted by the photographs. These recounted people's provenance and the history of migration that had brought their communities to their current location, and the stories and beliefs connected to specific locations. For instance, in Long Atun, a number of women pointed out the specific sites where spirits, named Bali Sungai, had been sighted. In an interview with Simpson Njock from Long Moh, Njock pointed out a number of well-known local sites where spirits had fought battles, led unsuspecting villagers astray or otherwise interfered with people's lives. During my boat trips between communities, the boat driver or other passengers pointed out to me legendary longhouses along the river that had turned to stone, as well as the names and locations of communities once situated nearby, but which had since moved to other rivers (Njock, Interview 05. 09. 2012).

These narratives, along with the story of *Alo Malau* and Harrisson's

Figure 8.4) Two women mourning next to the coffin of a deceased relative 1956

233

trip to the Usun Apau, indicate the close connection between location and traditional oral history. These narratives also imply how environmental and demographic changes impact upon the traditional culture and heritage of local communities. They suggest that cultural change often cannot be negotiated by Indigenous communities but is subject to external pressures. They also indicate that the experience of cultural loss is closely related to economic and social development.

For the Sarawak Museum collection, these narratives indicate that the photographs, in their potential to emulate material culture and to evoke memories of people, places and scenes, will become increasingly significant in anchoring oral narratives as the places to which they relate change, and as the structures and traditions upon which the transmission of such narratives relied disappear. As my research has shown (Chapter 6 and 7), the photographs prompted people in the communities to tell the stories related to the locations, objects and scenes in the photographs, and thereby promote oral history, not only when the photographs were shown in the communities, but also in other contexts, for instance as part of museum exhibitions (Appadurai & Breckenridge 1999). In the context of cultural heritage, my research indicates that the processes through which heritage is defined were dominated by economic and political considerations that often proved to be coercive for Indigenous communities. In Sarawak, the pervasive stereotype that positioned Indigenous communities as backward and in need of development has meant that development takes precedence over other considerations such as the cultural continuity of the communities. It has also meant that the cultural continuity of communities on which local identities are based stands in the way of development because people's traditions run counter to development and modernity (Aeria 2005). However, as I will argue, this is not the only complication for Indigenous communities trying to maintain their cultural continuity while making traditional customs compatible with modern lifestyles.

8.5. Native customary law, tradition and development

In Sarawak, some elements of Indigenous culture have been acknowledged by the Government for historical reasons dating back to the Brooke Rajahs. The Malaysian legal system integrates Indigenous law in different forms, and some of the land rights of Sarawak's Indigenous peoples are enshrined in common law as well as in the constitution.

To an extent, this includes traditional rights over land (Bulan 2006, 2011; Colchester & Chao 2011; Majid Cooke et al 2011). My photo elicitation interviews with people in the source communities suggest that not only the loss but also the transcription and preservation of traditional culture and customary law were problematic for Sarawak's Indigenous peoples.

The traditional social and cultural framework of human behaviour and conduct in most of Sarawak's Indigenous communities is the *adat*, a word derived from Arabic that can be translated as 'native customary law' (Winzeler 1997). *Adat* encompasses customary law, but also governs many other kinds of social interactions and activities (Galvin 1975; Metcalf 1991; Chua 2012). To an extent, native customary law or *adat* is integrated in Sarawak's legislative framework (Bulan 2010). Many of these traditional systems of law remain unwritten (Bulan 2006, 2011). However, the *adat* of a number of Indigenous groups in Sarawak has been transcribed by the Majlis Adat Istiadat in Kuching. In its offices, books containing the collected traditional law of many of the different Indigenous communities can be consulted, for instance the *adat* of the Iban, the Bidayuh, the Kayan, Kenyah and other groups (Langub 1996). The *adat* is upheld by local courts, *Mahkamah Bumiputera*, and by headmen in their villages (Bulan 2011). In the course of my fieldwork, a number of people suggested that although Orang Ulu communities moved away from the old religion and converted to Christianity, their traditional customary law remained important. Jarau Braim, whose father was the headman of Long Sobeng, confirmed this during my visit to the community. "We cannot get away from the *adat*. Cannot. The *adat* is really fixed and we have the book, and we cannot get away from the *adat*" (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

Adat can be more broadly defined as the traditional customary lifestyle as well as a system of legislation, and it varied from one community to the other. During my work with the Sarawak Museum photographs, many of the practices and objects shown in the photographs were related to *adat*, as the participants explained. According to Jarau, *adat* was predominantly practised when there were internal issues and breaches of traditional law, and fines were traditionally paid in gongs, *parangs* and beads rather than in the national currency, the Malaysian Ringgit. Viewing images of the old heirloom objects, gongs and other artifacts of the Sarawak Museum, he explained how *adat* governed social life in Long Sobeng:

Figure 8.5) Lau Kukum dancing on the boardwalk leading to the river, Long Jegan 1956

> In the year 1983, I got married to my wife, and because she is from a
> royal family [from the aristocratic class], I have to go and look for a
> gong. We managed to find the original gong in Miri, I bought it for 700
> [Ringgit, ca. AU$230], at the antique shop (Braim, Interview 21.09.2011).

Apart from the high price, it was difficult for Jarau to find the item he needed
to comply with *adat* on the market. He explained that sometimes money can now be
used in compensation when it is not possible to find heirloom artifacts in payment
of traditional *adat*. He also explained that *adat* payment was variable in terms of
monetary value:

Recently the Sabahans [people from Sabah, the Malaysian state in the

north of Borneo] are also making a lot of gongs, the new ones. These

gongs are not really expensive, they are reasonable, so now people buy

these gongs.

However for some heritage objects, Jarau explained that a substitute was not suitable. Pointing at a young woman wearing a bead necklace shown in one of the Sarawak Museum photographs (see figure 8.5), he explained the significance of her valuable heirloom beads, also a requisite for marriage in the local *adat*:

The Kenyah call it inok, it's a bead, but not any bead. Kenyahs have a

lot of beads. And the most expensive one and the most royal one is the

klembao. If I cannot find one of these, I cannot marry. One klembao…

For one year I looked here and there, after all the adat says that when I

get it, only then I can get married (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

These elements of *adat* are lingering vestiges of the traditional class system, which has not yet lost its relevance for the more traditional communities, though it has officially been abolished. In Long Sobeng, Jarau's father, as headman, exercised authority over traditional law. Jarau's explanations suggest that some issues subject to native customary law demonstrate the complicated relationship between the communities and the modern urban regions along the coast:

Last week, there is one girl, she went to study in Mukah, and then she met

one guy and she got pregnant [without having been married]. In our adat,

we cannot accept this... So what happened, they came back last week

[and the family] asked my father, what is our punishment to be like this?

So my father said, according to our system from old, old time, in a case

like this—he opened the book, the adat istiadat—you have to sacrifice

one pig. One pig and you have to give to the village one gong. So that is

the adat (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

He went on to explain that it was mainly the older generation of headmen like his father who were knowledgeable about and insisted on enforcing traditional law (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011). Unlike previously, when knowledge of *adat* was subject to oral transmission, the transcription of *adat* now meant that there was little room for interpretation. The transcribed *adat* contains a clause in which the limitations of the

tome are acknowledged, and which refers practitioners back to the oral traditions of the community (Bulan 2011). Nevertheless, as Jarau pointed out, it represents a rigid framework of rules not always compatible to changing social and cultural realities. "I don't really like the *adat*," Jarau concluded, "but it's already in the book of our *adat istiadat*, so everybody has to follow" (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

These narratives suggest some of the conceptual obstacles to combining local law and state law. While the acknowledgement of native customary law as part of state law has a long history from the time of the Brooke Rajahs, and while its transcription was a way of preserving its relevance for contemporary Indigenous communities, the transcription diminished its original fluidity and its ability to accommodate change. Customary law, through transcription, was institutionalised according to government authority, and

Figure 8.6) School in Lepo Luju, 1956

Figure 8.7) School in Lepo Luju, 1956

thereby "its codified version was blended into western understandings of legality and plurality" (Bissonnette 2011: 342). Such instances of traditional law suggest that it was not always appropriate for Indigenous communities to hold onto customary and traditional laws even if they were integrated into larger frameworks of state law (Logan 2012).

During my research, the interviews carried out with people in the source communities led to detailed discussions about how local communities engaged with social and cultural change, and how the different developments ran counter to each other. For the people who discussed the importance of *adat* during the photo elicitation interviews, *adat* remained an important part of traditional culture, but its defects and limitations were also pointed out. According to Jeffrey Jalong from the Marudi District Office, who is from a small Kenyah subgroup called Ngorek, *adat* had different social and cultural components, some of which were not commensurate with modern life:

> Some of the adat of the Orang Ulu cannot be accepted at all. For example, you are married to someone else. But the community leader, the Penghulu, the Tua Kampong, what not, he can anytime ambil [take] you to become his wife. Anytime. Your children, he can adopt them anytime. Because he is from the [aristorcratic] Maren class. We cannot accept this culture and tradition. No more, that is what we call against modern living, it's abuse (Jalong, Interview 13 September 2011).

The processes by which social change was managed and negotiated mirrored the narratives of other interviewees about the conversion from local religious beliefs to Christianity in the Ulu (discussed in Chapter Six). This change was driven by complex political and social considerations (Chua 2012). Similarly, cultural changes and transformations in the

239

communities were also subject to local negotiations and arbitration by different actors. Indigenous communities maintained some agency in the processes of modernisation and development. Nevertheless, many elements were not under their control, for instance the economic activities of operators in the region, and the kinds of development projects carried out by government agencies. However, the narratives about *adat* and modernity that emerged during photo elicitation interviews with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum suggest that people were acutely aware of the social and cultural changes experienced by the communities and felt strongly about preserving some aspects of traditional culture, while rejecting others. These interviews also suggest that social changes were ongoing and contested, and were, for instance, exemplified in the influence of the aristocratic classes in the village communities, or in the application of native customary law. The interviews also suggest that the processes of development were complex not only because of the interplay of policies and strategies of the colonial, and later the State Governments, but also among local communities coming to terms with elements of traditional culture such as the practice of *adat*. The processes through which cultural traditions became enshrined as part of local heritage or even law, as in Sarawak, had the potential to reconfirm Indigenous culture as well as constituting an obstacle in the self-directed development of the communities.

Figure 8.8) Carved and painted salong burial pole near Long Jegan, 1956

The transcription of traditional law, *adat*, as well as the reconfiguration of culture as heritage, signifies the essentialising of formerly fluid systems capable of accommodating change, in spite of the fact that even in its transcribed form, *adat* is assumed to have some flexibility (Bulan 2011). As we have seen in the example of the transcription of *adat*, people's selective engagement with aspects of cultural tradition continues to shape the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples. As Appadurai has said,

culture is open to revision, re-vitalisation or subversion. It is the function

of norms governing the unavoidable debates about the past to ensure that when change does occur, it is not entirely at the cost of cultural continuity (Appadurai 1981: 218).

During my research, people demonstrated the processes of selection through which cultural heritage was defined. As I have demonstrated in the case of culture pertaining to location and place, these processes were dominated by economic and political considerations. However, as my interviews regarding local *adat* suggest, people continually made choices about which elements of culture they considered valuable and important for their cultural identity, and which were deemed outdated.

Figure 8.9) Woman dancing at the Marudi Regatta, 1959

8.6 Schools in the Ulu

During the time the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were taken, the region experienced change on social, cultural and economic levels. A major focus of the British colonial Government's development policies was to provide education and health care for rural Sarawakians. During the reign of the Brooke Rajahs, there had been no schools in the Ulu (Leach 1950). The first school in the Baram region opened in 1947, and from then on the number of rural schools in the area grew. A series of four photographs I took on my trips to the Baram and Tijar documented one of the first schools in the Tinjar area. The photographs show rows of tables on a patch of lawn outside the government fort in Lepo' Luju. Seated at the tables are children of different ages holding books and pens, and the teacher standing to the side with a book opened in his hands (see figures 8.6 and 8.7). The photographs were taken in 1956.

When travelling to several villages along the Tinjar, I met people along the way who, when they heard about my work, invariably asked to see the photographs to find out if anyone they knew was represented. The discussions resulting from these

encounters were coincidental rather than the outcome of targeted interviews. On a stopover in Lapok, a small town on one of the main logging roads in the area, I met William Dueed Ruth, headman of Long Teran, who had come by boat to fetch some children home from the large boarding school located in Lapok. Looking through the photographs, Ruth recognised himself in one of the images from Lepo' Luju (see map 8.2). He was one of the young boys seated in the front row. "That is me!" he said, and then started naming other children in the class. "This is Surang Belawing, from Long Loyang. This here is Lemi, she was the only girl. You know, most parents did not want to send their girls, they were worried because everyone was boarding together," he explained, and continued to recall how the photographer had asked the students to remove the tables and chairs from their classroom inside the government building where classes were usually held to make use of the natural daylight for the photographs (Ruth, Interview 13 September 2011).

The same series of photographs prompted numerous discussions about the time when Orang Ulu children first started going to school. Because villages were not easy to access, children generally had to board at school together with other children from various other communities. In Long Loyang, a woman looked at the photographs of a girl wearing heavy brass rings in her traditionally-elongated earlobes. "I had those as well," Melok remembered. "Then I started going to school, and I got embarrassed about it! So I just took my sister, and together we went to the doctor and asked to him cut them off. We didn't even tell our mum" (Melok, Interview 28 July 2012).

The photographs from the Sarawak Museum also contained various visible traces of the emerging literacy and numeracy in the Ulu.

Figure 8.10) Orang Ulu costume, ca. 1978

Figure 8.11) *Keju Aren* pole in Long Jegan, 1968

In the photograph of a *salong*, a large burial pole, taken in 1956, the name of the deceased is written on the trunk of the tree used in the construction in between two pictures of human figures (see figure 8.8). In other photographs, such as one showing two women, Lateng Teging and Sekua, cutting tobacco on the longhouse verandah, handwritten letters cover the wall of the longhouse in the background (see figure 7.2). Traces of what Appadurai has called "experiments with modernity" (Appadurai 1996: 90) can also be seen in other photographs. In a portrait of Lepo Kukum, in which Lepo is shown with his *sape*, he is wearing a wristwatch, a symbol of modernity and numeracy (see figure 7.29). In the photograph of the *kechai* in Long Teru discussed in Chapter 7, someone has written the local name of the construction onto a part of the wooden structure (see figure 7.11).

The photographs from the Sarawak Museum indicate cultural change in the communities over time. For instance, a large number of photographs cover celebrations and festive occasions showing traditional dance performances. The dancers are frequently dressed in the Malay-style *kebaya* top with a *sarong*, and wear *rotan* headdresses, beads and other ornaments (see figure 8.9). One photograph, taken in 1978, shows a couple in what would later become more commonly appreciated as Orang Ulu style, namely a long black skirt and waistcoat decorated with the spirals and tendrils of the traditional local design (see figure 8.10). The change in costume implies a greater self-awareness and cultural differentiation by moving away from the styles commonly worn by Malay women, as well as acknowledging the culture of others by the relatively modest cut that presumably made the costume compliant with the expectations of Malay audiences. These photographs suggest the influences that prompted cultural change, and the processes through which these changes were negotiated by the communities.

They indicate that traditional culture was constantly re-defined in order to remain suitable to the aspirations of its practitioners, through experiments with modernity as well as through engagements with other people and cultures around them. The photo elicitation interviews I conducted during my research suggest that modernisation, cultural continuity and the conservation of cultural heritage were major concerns for people in the communities. The responses also suggest that a process of curation was applied to determine which elements of culture were relevant and appropriate. While looking at a series of photographs depicting local designs with Jeffrey Jalong at the Marudi district office, I asked Jalong which particular features of local custom and traditions he considered important and which, according to him, should be preserved. "I think everything" he replied, and then specified: "Every part of the *adat* and traditions which is not opposed to the modern standard of living" (Jalong, Interview 13 September 2011).

8.7. Photography and the recreation of heritage

While some of the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive imply the kinds of change and transformation experienced by people in the Ulu, the interviews with people from the communities and with those who had moved to the cities suggest that traditional culture and modern lifestyles were not easily balanced. There were few sources of income in the villages other than the cultivation of cash crops, and people had few options other than moving to the city to find employment. Once they had moved, it was often difficult for people to return to their home communities as often as they would have liked due to the state of the roads, which made travelling costly, time-consuming and dangerous. On some occasions, almost everyone from a community would try to return. For the Orang Ulu, most of whom were Christians, this occasion was Christmas. However, Sarawak's Indigenous communities have traditionally marked their agricultural cycle with their own traditional celebration, the annual harvest festival, celebrated among the Iban, the Bidayuh and most other Indigenous communities. To accommodate this tradition, the Sarawak Government allocated a public holiday on the 1st of June, called *Gawai*, in order to allow people working in the city to return to the villages to celebrate. The traditional festival, formerly celebrated independently by villages when the harvest was finished, was thus channelled into a more narrowly organised timeframe.

However, the celebration of Gawai, although customary for many communities dependent on rice agriculture, was based on the cultural traditions of one group of Indigenous people only. Looking at several photographs from his village, Jarau Braim from Long Sobeng explained that *Gawai* was not actually an Orang Ulu festival, but originated in the Iban communities, who represent around 35% of the population of Sarawak:

> Gawai was celebrated by the Dayak, the Iban. But because the Sarawak Government is giving us a day off for Gawai, so might as well we celebrate the Gawai together with the Iban! (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

In the last few years, some of the communities decided to revive the older celebration with which the harvest was celebrated. Jarau explained that several communities organised their traditional version of the harvest festival:

> We have our celebration, but we don't call it Gawai. We call it Suen. S-U-E-N. Suen means to celebrate our harvesting, our achievement. We celebrated that Gawai [the word is here used as a general term for a celebration] in Long Sobeng some years ago. We made a very high pole called belawing and we invited everybody to come to Long Sobeng (Braim, Interview 21 September 2011).

With a diversity of small and very small groups in Sarawak, and in particular among the Orang Ulu, cultural conservation and continuity was a complex issue. To a degree, the diversity of cultures among Indigenous peoples was subsumed among generalised concepts of indigeneity managed by the State Government in order to incorporate traditional culture with modern urban lifestyles. However, in this process, the culture and customs of the smaller groups, often confined to the rural communities, were rarely accommodated. As Jarau Braim's narratives of the *Suen* celebration suggest, people are increasingly rallying around traditional culture. These activities

Figure 8.12) Datuk Moyang Jau playing the Engkolorai, 1956

suggest that for Braim and other Orang Ulu, who live and work in the cities, events such as the *Suen* celebration in Long Sobeng constitute a self-conscious engagement with culture to which they have access only when they return to their villages during holidays or on special occasions, rather than being a lived set of everyday practices. However, it was not only people from the cities who engaged with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum with the aim of reinstating, recreating or reinventing elements of cultural heritage. During my visit in Long Jegan, Penghulu Patrick Jelaman looked through the photographs of his village in the 1950s, and focused on a photograph featuring a wooden pole surrounded by decorative leafy plants that was standing in front of a number of small huts in the vicinity of a longhouse.

> These poles, we called them Keju Aren, were constructed after the padi harvest. They were made from Jingin Tela'o, a tree in the forest, its fruit is eaten by barking deer. In the old headhunting days, skulls were located underneath the pole. A smaller pole in the same style is called beran and is placed in front of the rooms of dayung, the women that can conduct ceremonies, dance ceremonial dances and give blessings (Jelaman, Interview 16 September 2011).

During our interview, Penghulu Patrick suggested he would like these poles to be re-constructed in his community, the way they had been when he was young. The photographs would help, Penghulu Patrick said, to faithfully re-create these carved and painted poles including the dried leaves used as decoration, the painted decorations and ornamental carvings (see figure 8.11). The construction of the spirit poles was not a return to the old animist religion and the aspects of *adat* related to it, as nobody in Long Jegan followed the old religion anymore. As Penghulu Patrick explained, the poles were unique to local Berawan culture, even if they were not thought of as spiritually significant anymore. "It is not that we believe in the spiritual aspect of it," he said, while looking at the photographs. "It is because these things are part of our culture" (Jelaman, Interview 16 September 2011). For Penghulu Patrick, documentary photographs such as those from the Sarawak Museum archive provided a means of recreating cultural heritage in order to maintain the cultural continuity of the communities.
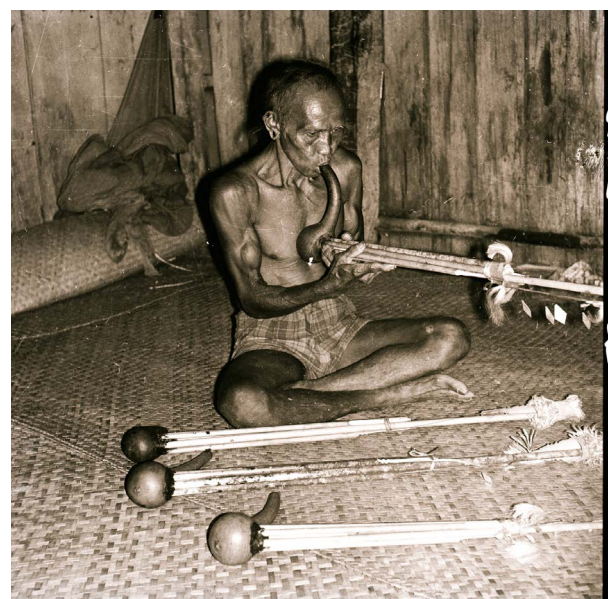
Figure 8.13) Tama Usang Weng Malang with keledi at Long Teru, 1975

246

Other people from the communities felt that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum would enable people to reproduce traditional objects even if the knowledge about the methods and materials used in their production was not available in people's living memory. Clement Langet Sabang from Long Loyang suggested that it would be possible to recreate the traditional instrument played by many Orang Ulu groups called *keledi* or *engkolorai*. The instrument, made from a hollow gourd and several bamboo pipes, had not been used by the people in his community for a long time, but as the photographs suggest, had once been commonly played on festive occasions (see figure 8.12). Not only had people forgotten how to make the instrument, but the raw materials were not available anymore. "We don't grow this type of gourd now," Sabang said while looking at the photographs of the instrument. "I can still remember the sound though, when it was played on the radio sometimes" (Sabang, Interview 25 April 2012). With the help of the photographs, he said, it would be possible to recreate the instrument in exactly the same way it had been traditionally used in the villages (see figure 8.13).

These engagements with the Sarawak Museum photographs imply some of the processes through which culture becomes heritage, and which in the examples above were consciously managed by people in the communities. The examples also imply people's concern for cultural loss. The development from culture to cultural heritage is related to processes of development and modernisation, and the photographs from the Sarawak Museum offered the people in the source communities a way of engaging with their cultural heritage. The engagement of Indigenous communities in Sarawak with their own cultural heritage marks people's efforts to reconcile traditional culture with development and modernity. Modernity in this case can be conceived not only in technical terms as infrastructure, education, and access to conveniences, but also in terms of equality and agency, as Carol Symes has suggested:

> This is what we talk about when we talk about modernity: rights of equal (historical) representation, complexity of consciousness, capacity for agency, the dignity of being considered relevant and fully real (Symes 2011: 717).

In academic debate, heritage is often referred to as either tangible or intangible, but also encompasses environments or natural heritage. However, these different types of heritage cannot be so neatly divided. As we have seen in the examples above, objects and practices related to objects are closely connected. If a *keledi* can be considered cultural

heritage for Kenyah, then the processes and techniques through which it is produced can be considered intangible heritage, and the materials from which it is made also fall under the category of heritage. For many Indigenous communities, heritage also hinges on how people relate to their environment, and on traditional narratives, practices and knowledge that relate to the land. Heritage, like knowledge, can be conceived of as performative and embodied. As I have argued in Chapter Six, people from the source communities expressed their own agency and that of their friends and family members, as well as a sense of agency over the ethnographic material from the Sarawak Museum. As I have contended in this chapter, not only were processes of ethnographic documentation initiated and negotiated by people in the source communities, but also processes of social change. However, the prevailing development paradigms promoted by the Government and reflected in the press and public opinion have complicated the engagement of Indigenous communities in Sarawak with their cultural heritage.

While this situation results in what I suggest is a relative marginalisation of the culture of minority Indigenous groups in Sarawak, in fact Sarawak has a long history of engagement with local heritage. Since its inception, the Sarawak Museum has focused on Sarawak and its cultural and natural heritage long before these terms were appropriated and re-defined by UNESCO and other international bodies. The Sarawak Museum, through its activities and its efforts to investigate and conserve aspects of local heritage, contributes to the processes through which culture becomes heritage and part of the discourse of development and modernity. As Appadurai and Breckenridge have argued, "the museum experience is part and parcel of learning to be cosmopolitan and 'modern'"(Appadurai and Breckenridge 1996: 416). Talking about museums in Kalimantan in Indonesia, Kreps wrote that "museums are seen as both a symbol of modernity and a tool of modernization, and becoming museum-minded is largely about becoming and being modern" (Kreps 2003, p.24). At museums, the present was juxtaposed with the past, and change, development and modernity were put into context through this comparison.

8.8. Audience responses to the photographic exhibitions

When I started to work with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, I assumed the existence of a working relationship between museum staff and administration, and

people in the source communities. Other photographs showed community elders and artists from as far as Indonesia who visited the Museum, contributed to its collections and worked as museum staff for periods of time. Among these were Tama Run, an artist from Long Nawang, and Tusau Padan, who worked at the Sarawak Museum for many years. There were various other photographs showing how people from the communities had worked at the Museum and with museum staff. Other indicators of this relationship were articles in the Sarawak Museum Journal where people from the source communities had written about their oral history, material culture and myths and legends. The exhibition of photographs I organised at the Sarawak Museum aimed to build on this relationship to make the photographs available to people in the source communities. I assumed that if people recognised their own home communities, and perhaps even family members or friends in the photographs, they might engage in further research with the photographs from the museum archive and perhaps other objects in the collections still awaiting description and inclusion in public exhibitions or displays. As the remarks of Penghulu Patrick, Jarau Braim and Clement Langet Sabang suggest, members of the Orang Ulu communities were increasingly concerned with reproducing elements of traditional culture to reinforce the cultural identity of local communities.

Through the exhibition and the publication of the photographs (see Appendix IV), I sought to make them available to the people in the communities for potential future heritage projects. As Schildkrout has pointed out, access to material heritage kept in museum collections is a key concern for Indigenous communities, because it enables communities to work with the material evidence of local narratives of the past, to reinvigorate historical practices and skills, and because curating material heritage can "prompt the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations" (Schildkrout 2006: 6). According to Appadurai and Breckenridge, museums offer audiences the opportunity to exchange narratives and discuss objects interactively (Appadurai & Breckenridge 1999), a process similar to the transmission of oral history which, as I have suggested, has diminished as a method of transmitting knowledge in Indigenous communities due to demographic changes. In addition, museums can potentially contribute to the discussion of cultural heritage by adding information about the provenance and social biographies of the objects, and their role as museum artifacts. As I have argued in Chapter Six, this is an important contribution, in particular for photographs created as part of projects of ethnographic documentation.

The exhibition of the photographs I organised during my research was intended as a point of departure for people in the communities to appropriate the Sarawak Museum material for potential future projects involving the cultural heritage depicted in the photographs. The exhibition was not intended to engage with the alternative ontologies and methods of curation discussed in Chapter Seven. Rather it was intended to provide access to the material in order to open up the possibility of such projects to people in the communities, and to establish the significance of the collection for local heritage in the context of its creation during the period of colonial governance described in Chapter Three. My research sought to test the potential of collaborative museum methods in engaging source communities in the processes of heritage creation by exhibiting the photographs from the Sarawak Museum together with the information I had gathered during my work with the photographs. As described in Chapter Two, the objective of the exhibition was to make the photographs available to the public, most of all to members of the source communities living in the cities. The aim was also to allow for grassroots projects such as those put forward by Penghulu Patrick and Clement Langet Sabang, who proposed using the photographs to recreate elements of material culture. The exhibition also allowed me to investigate the role of the museum in defining and curating local heritage by examining how the photographs were received by viewers. The photographs, by becoming part of an exhibition, experienced what Alpers has called the "museum effect". According to Alpers, this effect transforms objects in museum exhibitions into works of art by implying their cultural relevance and visual appeal (Alpers 1991). During the exhibition at the Sarawak Museum, visitors subjected each frame to thorough scrutiny and contemplation.

Numerous visitors viewed the exhibition, and the entries in the visitors' book suggest some of the impressions of the audience. "Interesting & very seldom people do this," read one entry by a visitor named Ajang on 11 November. "Great job! Never seen this B4!" noted another visitor, Laing Erang. "Splendid... Just saw a photo of my friend's great grandfather! What a coincidence... Thanks for the wonderful photos" wrote Arwin Lashawn, also on 11 November. One visitor used the visitors' book to express his opposition to the proposed hydroelectric dam in the region. Its construction would submerge many of the villages in the photographs, and the exhibition prompted this anonymous visitor to note: "All go to stop the Baram Dam.... Pls stop the Baram Dam!!!" Several other visitors asked for additional photographs from other communities.

Mostly, however, visitors commented on the photographs in terms of the scenes, places and people they remembered. There were no comments on the institutional provenance of the photographs, or their origins as documents from the colonial archive, apart from one critical viewer who contacted me by email. He wrote:

> I refer to the photograph exhibition "Memories of Baram" where photos
> taken by white men on their romantic adventures in the interior of the
> Baram and Tinjar during the British Colon[nial] period without naming
> the persons and places visited. I don't know what sort of document
> history and culture of the communities can you compile? Please kindly
> enlighten me... Thank you for [the] exhibition (2011, private email).

This email represented the first expression of concern for the issue I had initially considered crucial, namely problematising the context and creation of the photographs and the motives and theories that had prompted their creation. During the exhibition, no other visitors referred to or enquired about the institutional context of the photographs, the reasons why they had been taken, or the uses to which they had been put in the past. However, people contributed a number of other remarks and information about the photographs during the exhibition, and some visitors even brought in their own old photographs to show me.

The second exhibition took place at the Sarawak Museum in Kuching, in the newly refurbished art gallery which is part of the museum complex. A number of people from the source communities attended the opening of the exhibition. Among them were those represented in the photographs, their children and grandchildren (see figure 2.20). During the opening these community members gave an impromptu tour for the press where they spoke about memories evoked by the photographs.

Again, a number of visitors recorded their impressions in the visitors' book. An anonymous visitor wrote: "After seeing this exhibit it just made me prouder to be a Sarawakian." Another visitor commented: "Awesome! Now if we can preserve Orang Ulu culture not just in photos but real life." This comment is evocative of the feelings of loss and nostalgia many visitors expressed during both exhibitions. However, there were others in the audience who focused instead on the overall setting or complained about the state of the museum: "Too few exhibits. Can improve. The air-cons are leaking water from the ceiling. Need to maintain," wrote one visitor, and another offered professional help: "Museum needs more drama and visual settings. Call me if you need serious advise [sic]",

followed by his contact details. The latter comments reflect important issues related to the capacity of museums such as the Sarawak Museum to fully realise their potential for heritage engagement. At a deeper level, they suggest that the strategies developed by Harrisson, and echoed in contemporary museum practice, require significant resources and attention. Those resources may or may not be available at an indeterminate point in the future when their heritage value is called into service. The exhibition ran for five weeks in Kuching, and afterwards it was moved to Marudi to the local museum housed in Charles Hose's old government fort.

As the reaction of visitors and the comments in the visitors book imply, the exhibition of photographs showing their culture and communities prompted feelings of pride about their cultural identity and background in people from the source communities. Some referred specifically to the conservation of heritage at the museum, for instance the comment by one visitor, who noted: "I'm proud to be a Kenyah. Happy to see a place where our heritage is appreciated," and another who wrote: "Keep our heritage," and "Thank you for sharing your heritage", by a non Orang Ulu visitor. These comments suggest that through being one of the institutions involved in the "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith 2006: 11), museum exhibitions can confer the status of heritage on artifacts or documents and thus position them as significant expressions of the culture of a people or ethnic group. Elevating elements of culture to the status of museum artifacts or to that of heritage validates not only these objects, but the communities from which they came, as well as their material culture, artistic skills and craftsmanship.

At the same time, as Alpers has pointed out, the insertion of an object into a museum has "the tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus to transform it into art like our own" (Alpers 1991: 26). The implication is that objects are inserted into the conceptual frameworks of museums and therefore are henceforth understood as pieces from a museum collection rather than as objects with a social function. The processes that turn objects into museum objects resemble those that turn elements of culture into cultural heritage. Heritage as representation of culture has an ambiguous relationship with concepts of authenticity (Alivizatou 2012). On the one hand, cultural heritage asserts an intrinsic claim to authenticity, while at the same time being a social construct (Cameron 2007). As some critics have pointed out, transforming elements of culture into heritage means "mummifying the present as well as the past" while at the same time inventing different and idealised versions of it (Samuel 1996: 260).

Heritage marks a community's self-conscious and selective engagements with the past, whether this is used to create historical narratives or to conserve historical practices, objects or customs (Graham et al 2005). For Sarawak's Indigenous communities, the engagement with cultural heritage is a mark of a growing consciousness on the part of Indigenous peoples of their traditional culture, and the engagement with cultural change as well as development and modernity (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). According to Smith, "[h]eritage is about negotiation - about using the past, and collective or individual memories, to negotiate new ways of being and expressing identity" (Smith 2006: 4).

8.9. The opportunities and barriers to digital heritage

The exhibition of the photographs at the Sarawak Museum during my research and the reaction of the museum audiences from the source communities suggest that museums have significant leverage in the processes by which heritage is defined. As I have argued, the inclusion in museum collections and exhibitions imbues objects and documents with cultural importance. Museums therefore play a significant role in the "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith 2006: 11). The inclusion of audiences and source communities, which has become an important aspect of museum work through the influence of new museology, therefore represents the opportunity for source communities to take part in the heritage discourse by participating in museum projects. A main obstacle in the co-production and collaboration between museums and source communities is limited accessibility, either because of physical distance between collections and source communities or because collections are not always on display (Chua 2009). One way that museums are increasingly extending the reach of their collections is through the use of digital technologies, and a number of museums, libraries and archives are using them to make their collections available online. These digital archives present opportunities and challenges. As Newell has pointed out, the transition from material object to digital file transforms artifacts and the ways in which they are experienced and interpreted (Newell 2012). During the creation of digital collections, the power of classification and indexing tends to be invested in institutional specialists even if the archives themselves allow interactivity (Boast et al 2007). As Srinivasan has pointed out, digital frameworks of interaction "emerge from the monocultures of Western corporations and cultural institutions, such as museums and libraries" (Srinivasan 2012: 3) and function within their established parameters. Other critics of digital archives have argued that digitising cultural artifacts tends to make Indigenous

heritage easily accessible. Such increased accessibility may prompt usage that infringes on the intellectual ownership of Indigenous communities as well as on the copyright of the proprietor of the documents or artifacts (Ginsburg 2008; Brown 2009). During my research, staff from the Sarawak Museum, including Director Datan, were conscious of the potential for illicit use of the collection's photographs and, as Datan put it, had experienced people using their photographs without permission or copyright reference to the Museum (Datan, Interview 23 February 2011).

While online archives provide increased exposure for artifacts and documents, digital technologies exclude parts of the population with limited access or technical abilities, for instance people in rural areas without internet connections, and make participation dependent on financial resources, since potential participants need to be able to afford the technology that would provide them with access.

Digital collections nevertheless present opportunities for museums and archives to engage with larger audiences interactively, and to offer their collections up for people to interpret and to find contemporary uses for the material. In 2012, staff at the Sarawak Museum started digitising the photographic collection more strategically. The Museum had already been working on an online archive of their artifacts when Zakaria Bojeng, the head of the exhibition section of the Sarawak Museum, initiated the digitising of the photographs with the help of a number of interns. While this led to an increasing amount of photographs being scanned, these photographs have not yet been made publicly available through the Museum's web portal and catalogue. This development is nevertheless promising. One possibility is that once the photographs can be accessed on the museum website, the origins, content, location and other details about the photographs may be pursued through crowd-sourcing techniques.

However, despite the appeal of such a project, my research suggests that the engagement of members of the source communities with digital copies of the Sarawak Museum photographs showed a number of marked differences to the engagement with people during the photo elicitation interviews. While the photographs were perceived as valuable historical documents by most people in the source communities, both in the rural villages and in the cities, online engagement with the photographs proved less successful in terms of participants' responses. In the course of my research, I uploaded photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive on a number of online forums where members of the source communities who had moved to the city discussed issues of cultural relevance. On being asked about the photographs, few members of these online discussion boards could provide details or information about the photographs.

This suggests that the second generation of Kenyah or Kayan living in the urban centres of Sarawak did not relate in the same way to the photographs, because their content was not part of the individual memory of many of the younger people.

Younger, urban members of the source communities often reacted strongly and emotionally to the images when they were shown in the exhibitions in Miri and Kuching, and were usually keen to find out more about them, particularly if their own family members were shown. During the exhibition in Miri, some visitors came back to see the exhibition on several consecutive days. One visitor started to cry and to tell me about her nostalgia for life in the villages, and another family told me they had driven all the way from Marudi to Miri, at least three hours on an unpaved road, to search for family members in the photographs. However, the people who engaged with the digital versions of the photographs online in forums or through email were often more reliant on the available descriptions and the information that accompanied the photographs. When asked to provide such information themselves, as had been the case in the Internet forums, those members of the community who had been born and raised in the cities were unable to do so. This lack of participation and contribution from a portion of the source communities, and the failure to engage with digital copies of the Sarawak Museum photographs, were limitations I experienced during the course of this research. This may change in the future, as more material becomes available and more participants access this kind of historical material in a digital format, for instance through the digital archive of the Sarawak Museum.

The observed lack of engagement with the photographs in a digital environment suggests that discussion of historical artifacts such as the photographs was encouraged by the social environment that enabled the circulation of oral narratives in the communities. During the interviews and group discussions undertaken as part of this research, photographs were often discussed in groups, and disagreements caused lengthy debates during which information was established and exchanged through contestation, expert opinions, and in other collaborative ways. Younger participants in these discussions often asked questions about the photographs, and these were answered by their elders. These social relationships were not mirrored in the online scenario, where discussion could only take place through comment and response in text form, and from which community elders, in particular those living in the villages, were excluded due to lack of technical knowhow and infrastructure. This insight confirmed observations about the interactive and embodied nature of photographs, and their connection with oral history (Edwards 2006; Geismar 2009). It reconfirmed the value of the returning photographic

prints as opposed to making photographs available online only, because the material objects, whether original or not, are accessed in a more social environment as opposed to digital images viewed on a computer screen.

While I experienced the limitations of digital access for co-production projects, I also became aware of the potential of digital technology. During my second visit to Long Loyang, I noticed one of the photographs I had circulated online displayed on the notice board of the Long Loyang Primary School. The photograph showed the first school in Lepo' Luju, with students seated on tables outside on the lawn in front of the government fort (see figure 8.6 and 8.7). Somebody, either a teacher at the school or a member of the community using the school's facilities or visiting from the city, had found the photograph and brought it back to the community. This suggests that the digital engagement by stakeholders with the photographs might take place in unanticipated ways. They did not necessarily conform to my requests for information, but they nevertheless had an interest in and a purpose for the photographs.

8.10. Conclusion

My research indicates that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were used by the people in the source communities to engage with issues of cultural heritage and cultural change, as well as to recreate elements of cultural heritage, and to reproduce material objects that had fallen out of use. As Tom Harrisson had suggested, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive documented social and cultural change, but beyond this role they allowed the source communities renewed engagement with their cultural heritage. The collections of the Sarawak Museum enabled the re-evaluation of its contents, which included tangible objects as well as documents such as the photographs. Methods such as returning photographs to their source communities or co-productive museum projects can provide communities with agency in the "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith 2006: 11) and shift authority from institutions such as the Museum to the source communities. Although they do not guarantee a reciprocal relationship or equal access and participation, digital technologies offer opportunities for museums and source communities to share information and access to artifacts and documents. My discussion of social change, development, modernity and heritage in Sarawak suggests that depositories of documents and artifacts such as museums provide a significant resource for Indigenous communities striving to engage with their traditional

culture. This engagement allows people to re-contextualise elements of culture and to integrate them into frameworks of cultural heritage for contemporary social and political purposes. It provides Indigenous communities and the people who belong to minority ethnic groups with the option of exercising cultural sovereignty over such material, and of re-constructing elements of cultural heritage they feel are relevant. As Colchester and Chao have pointed out,

> Indigenous peoples are neither struggling to reproduce frozen traditions of their essentialised cultures nor just responding to the racialised violence of the colonial and post-colonial frontier. Rather they are seeking to re-imagine and redefine their societies based on their own norms, priorities and aspirations. In these processes of revitalisation, and negotiation with the State and neighbouring communities, peoples' very identities will be reforged (Colchester & Chao 2011: 23).

My research has shown that the photographs from the Sarawak Museum provide an opportunity for people from the source communities to engage with cultural heritage as tangible or intangible, embodied or performed, and to use their heritage to construct cultural, economic and political identities.
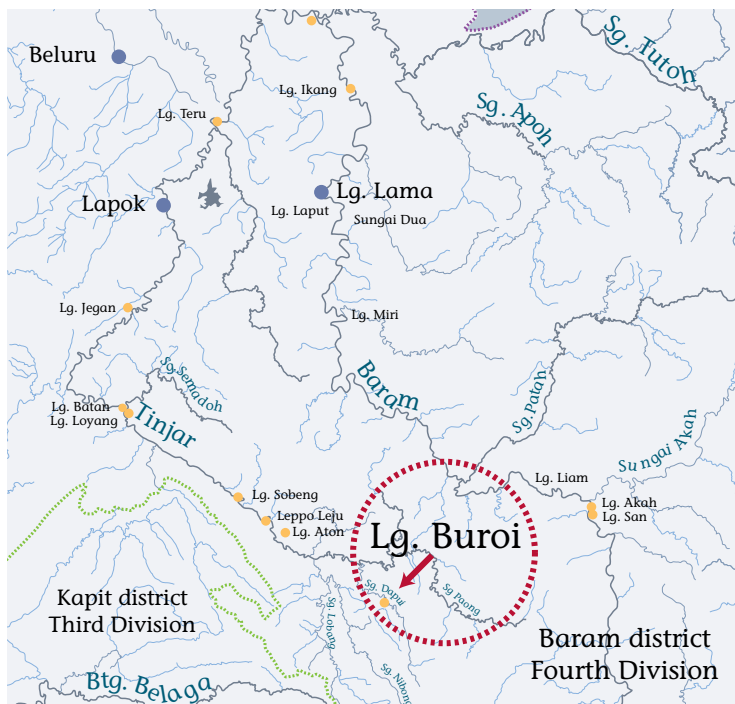
Map 8.1) Long Buroi, before the village moved to what is now Long Loyang
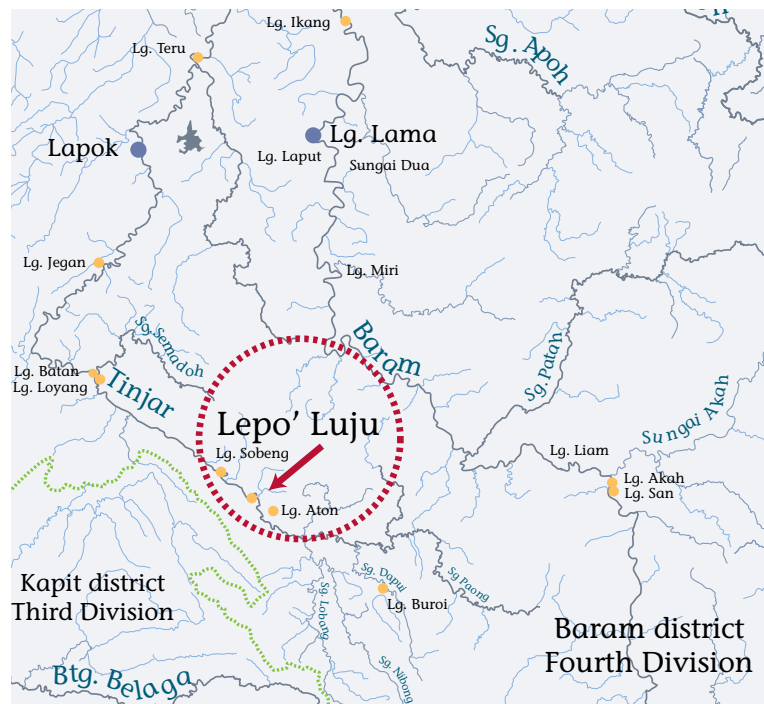
Map 8.2) Lepo' Luju, site of the first school in the Tinjar

Figure 9.1) Datuk Penghulu Oyong Lawai Jau

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1. Findings

One of the most striking photographs from the Sarawak Museum collection shows three people sitting in front of the old museum building in Kuching. The three, one man and two women, are sitting upright with their hands on their knees. They are looking directly at the camera. The women are wearing *kebaya* and *sarong*, the man a white jacket, short trousers and shiny black shoes. The women's elongated earlobes, the man's characteristic hairstyle with his fringe cut high above his forehead, and the *rotan* bands he is wearing below his knees speak of their Orang Ulu background (see figure 9.1). The photograph was taken in 1956, and the three people are Penghulu Gau, his wife A'an Kuleh, and the Penghulu's sister from Long Ikang.

This photograph of three people visiting the museum during a holiday implies the interest of Sarawak's Indigenous people in the Sarawak Museum, an institution conceived to represent them and their environment. It suggests that they are taking part in its project; they are engaged in the exhibitions presented to them at the museum. But how accurate is this interpretation?

For over fifty years, much theoretical literature has revolved around the role of Indigenous communities under colonial regimes, and the hierarchical ordering, stereotypical and classificatory representations and social evolutionist theories that positioned Indigenous populations as primitive and backward. What was the relationship between the Sarawak Museum and its audiences, and its source communities? How were Indigenous communities represented at the Museum, and how were they rendered visible in the photographs from its archive through its ethnographic documentation?

My research indicates that the investigation of archives and archival material such as the photographs from the Sarawak Museum can reveal significant insights into the relationships, ideas, theories and motivations of the people who created them, as well as the culture, traditions and practices of the people they documented. My research contributes to a growing body of literature that positions colonial and ethnographic photographs as encounters—as sites of engagement, negotiation and contestation (Fienup-Riordan 1999; Edwards 2002, 2006, 2011; Edwards & Hart 2004; Edwards and Morton 2009; Poole 2005; Buckley 2005; Maxwell 2008; Peers & Brown 2009; Binney & Chaplin 2003; Bell 2008; Smith 2008; Lydon 2010; Bradley et al 2013; Dobbin 2013). Drawing from their work, I have argued that photographs contain an excess of detail (Poole 2005; Morton & Edwards 2009; Edwards 2011) that allows alternative interpretations and meanings.

I examined the provenance of the photographs and what Edwards has called their 'social biographies' (Edwards 2002), their modes of creation, the people who created them and the theories that informed their creation. I also discussed the photographs with the people featured in them. However, my research was not aimed at the anthropological or ethnographic investigation of the photographs themselves, the communities they aimed to document, or the customs, traditions and practices they show. By making the photographs available publicly, I aimed to enable members of the communities to access and use the photographs, both in terms of their visual content and for the definition and creation of a heritage discourse that takes into account the unique culture and

history of each Indigenous group. Through the integration of collaborative methods of photo elicitation and community co-curation in my fieldwork methodology, I sought to explore the significance of these methods for the Sarawak Museum and for the source communities. My research in the communities indicates that in spite of their origins in the frameworks of colonial governance, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum are important cultural resources for the source communities.

As part of my research I investigated how the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were produced. I wanted to know who took them and under what circumstances. I was also interested in the motivation behind the project of photographic documentation undertaken by museum staff from the 1950s onwards. Returning the photographs to their source communities enabled me to accumulate information about the content of the photographs, to discuss how the people from the source communities experienced being the subject of ethnographic documentation, and how they perceived the results of this investigation. Tom Harrisson's curatorial work at the Sarawak Museum was marked by his experimental methods and theories. Were these methods and theories visible in the photographs from the Sarawak Museum, and did Harrisson's practices influence the content of the photographs? Harrisson was convinced that Sarawak's Indigenous communities were undergoing fast social and cultural changes. The Sarawak Museum collection, in his opinion, would one day represent a depository of material accessible to researchers to gauge these changes.

9.2. Tom Harrisson's influence on museum studies

The underlying assumption behind the photographic collection initiated by Tom Harrisson and accumulated by Museum staff at the archive of the Sarawak Museum was that it would document local Sarawak culture and provide a means for the source communities to participate in the representation of their culture and local historical narratives at the Museum. It would also constitute a resource for future researchers to gauge social and cultural change. I wanted to test this assumption. I have argued that by means of his experimental methods, Harrisson attempted to move on from the

lingering remnants of cultural evolutionism in anthropology, encoded in progressivist and developmentalist theories of contemporary anthropologists. As discussed in Chapter Three, Tom Harrisson, along with peers such as Evans-Pritchard, raised important criticisms of the discipline some decades before these were taken up by most other anthropologists. In Chapter Five, I argued that the methods and theories Harrisson established and applied to his work at the Sarawak Museum were indicative of the impending paradigm shift within anthropology and the museum field that later became firmly established in these disciplines. Due to the limited attention Harrisson's work at the Sarawak Museum has received from researchers investigating the history of anthropological theory and museum practices, this aspect of Harrisson's work has not been acknowledged to the same extent as his influence on cultural studies and the social sciences.

My research shows that although the photographs from the Sarawak Museum were produced for a colonial institution, and the archive was initiated by a curator who also worked as Government Ethnologist, Tom Harrisson engaged with anthropological representation of Indigenous peoples in a critical and reflexive way. Harrisson applied the theories and practices he had developed during his earlier engagement with Mass-Observation to his work at the Sarawak Museum, collaborating with local staff, emphasising the subjective nature of research and collecting data for his inductive research and for future researchers at the archive and in the collections of the Museum. As argued in Chapter Five, the material at the Sarawak Museum archive shows strong parallels with the data Harrisson collected during his work with Mass-Observation, for instance in the large scope of material and subject matter. Harrisson's methods led to the establishment of a photographic archive containing thousands of photographs from different locations, ethnic groups and communities around the state. Because of Harrisson's approach and in spite of their institutional background, the photographs from the Sarawak Museum archive were seen as a significant resource for the source communities by the people who took part in my research. This was substantiated by the interest participants showed in the material, but also by the interpretations participants were able to derive from the photographs, which complemented and contrasted with other archival accounts assembled by the colonial Government.

9.3. Re-assessing colonial archives and ethnographic photographs

The archive of the Sarawak Museum constitutes a valuable resource for assessing theoretical post-colonial approaches to colonial archives, in particular to ethnographic archives and the work of anthropologists during that period. Critics such as Asad (1975), Appadurai (1996), Pratt (2004) and Smith (1999) have pointed towards the repressive and exploitative nature of anthropological research and ethnographic documentation. As I have shown, such criticism can distract from the more subtle interactions and relationships between different actors involved in projects of ethnographic documentation, traces of which are contained within archives and archival material such as photographs. Furthermore, this overarching criticism does not acknowledge the agency demonstrated by the colonised, Indigenous, or otherwise non-Western subjects of such research and documentation in the processes through which the documentary material was created (Edwards 2000, 2011; Morton and Edwards 2009). My research contributes to a nuanced approach to the investigation of colonial ethnographic archives and the photographs contained in them that writers and academics like Edwards, Morton (2009), Geismar (2009), Binney and Chaplin (2003), Bell (2003, 2008), Poole (2005), Peers and Brown (2009), Lydon (2010) and Dobbin (2013) have established in recent years.

My research sought to evaluate a collection of photographs taken within the living memory of the people in the source communities. The relationship of the photographs to personal rather than communal or cultural memory of the source communities enabled me to explore the perspectives of the people in the photographs and their views about the project of ethnographic investigation and representation of which the photographs were a part. Members of the source communities elaborated on the ways they negotiated and contributed to the ethnographic documentation project of which they were the subjects. I argued in Chapter Six that the interviews and group discussions I carried out during my research suggest that people in the source communities exerted agency in numerous ways during the process of their ethnographic documentation. People narrated the experience of having their photographs taken, and traces of these collaborations became visible in the photographs from the archive. These acts of agency facilitated the appropriation of the photographs by people in the source communities who exercised

photographic sovereignty (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998: 42) over the photographs by re-framing them according to individual memories and communal knowledge.

9.4. Embodied practices, sensory knowledge and museums

My investigation of the archive allowed me to gain valuable insights into the role of embodied, experiential and performative practices people used during my fieldwork to provide me with knowledge about the cultural context of the photographs. As argued in Chapter Seven, the kinds of knowledge presented at museums differ in many respects from the social and cultural context in which objects are enmeshed within a community. Oral narratives, embodied and performative practices and experiential and localised knowledge inform the interpretation of photographs in the communities (Edwards 2006; Geismar 2009). In the past, these intricate and fluid meanings have rarely been acknowledged by museums, which according to critics have not engaged with alternative types of knowledge such as sensory, embodied and experiential knowledge (Boast et al 2007; Srinivasan 2009, 2012; Classen and Howes 2006; Ouzman 2006). My research demonstrates that collaborations between museums and source communities have the potential to provide museums with insights into the cultural import and role of their artifacts, and the embodied and performative practices that make them meaningful. For source communities, the value in co-production projects lies in the ability to access museum artifacts such as photographs and to take part in the interpretation of objects and documents that constitute historical and often rare cultural artifacts. Access to museum collections through co-production and repatriation enables source communities to use these artifacts for contemporary purposes such as the establishment of a heritage discourse by the communities (Peers & Brown 2003; Kristen 2013).

9.5. The Sarawak Museum and its role for local Indigenous heritage

In Chapter Eight, I argued that the Orang Ulu communities in which I conducted my research were struggling to preserve local culture and define cultural heritage because of economic and political developments over which they had little control

(Aeria 2005; Majid Cooke 2006, 2006a; Aiken & Leigh 2011). My discussion of native customary law transcribed as part of state law reinforced the need for heritage to accommodate social and cultural change in order to pursue contemporary aims and aspirations. The initiatives of some of the participants in my research, who sought to recreate cultural heritage objects with the help of the photographs, demonstrate the contemporary significance of the photographs for the source communities. This suggests that the collections from the Sarawak Museum can achieve practical utility for what Appadurai has called the "cultural continuity" (Appadurai 1981: 218) of the source communities.

The Sarawak Museum and its collections have an important part to play in defining the cultural heritage of minority Indigenous groups because the Museum is one of the institutions involved in what Smith has called the "authorised heritage discourse" (Smith 2006: 11). In this role, museums have the potential to inform local heritage discourses but also to supply the historical artifacts and documents communities can use to build historical narratives and define local heritage. By discussing the way people from Indigenous communities engaged with the photographs from the Sarawak Museum as representations of traditional culture, I have examined the processes of development and modernity in the Ulu and the ensuing transition towards "self-conscious tradition" (Clifford et al 2004).

In Chapter Eight, I assessed the influence of government policies on the cultural development of rural communities, and the ways in which Indigenous cultural heritage in Sarawak conflicts with government development paradigms, for instance in different conceptualisations of land ownership and in the integration of adat or traditional customary law (Colchester & Chao 2011; Bulan 2006, 2011; Majid Cooke 1997, 2006, 2006a; Aeria 2005). Examining the outcomes of the exhibitions I curated during my research, I have assessed the potential benefits and shortcomings of digital approaches for community co-production projects (Boast et al 2007; Newell 2012; Srinivasan 2012; see Chapter Eight). I have examined the growing concern among academics, activists and communities about Indigenous cultural heritage and intellectual property rights since the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 (Brown 1989; Janke and Iacovino 2012; Morse 2012).

Throughout my research I have endeavoured to show how the disciplines of anthropology and the museological field have aimed at greater inclusiveness of alternative voices and of museums' source communities. Increasingly, museum theorists and practitioners are addressing the diverse set of curatorial practices among different peoples who have been neglected at museums in the past (Kreps 1994, 2003, 2003a, 2006, 2008, 2011). As well as contributing to the debate concerning ethnographic photographs, my research aims to add to the growing field of inquiry about colonial museum collections and their curation. This thesis presents my research with the Sarawak Museum collection as an example of how a comprehensive investigation of such material can provide valuable insights into the contemporary role of museums and their collections.

9.6. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

When I first encountered the Sarawak Museum archive, it had received relatively little exposure and attention from historians, anthropologists and sociologists. The existence of the material was not widely known outside the museum, apart from some researchers who collaborated with the Museum and its staff, and who were able to access the material during their fieldwork in Sarawak. Hardly any of the numerous researchers investigating the legacy of Mass-Observation had looked into Harrisson's later work or drawn parallels between Mass-Observation and its connection with Harrisson's work in the museum field. As I have attempted to show, the unique scope and content of the material Harrisson collected at the Sarawak Museum makes the museum's archive a valuable resource for investigation. My work has focused on testing the significance of the archive for the source communities, but in the future, the archive may also provide a resource for others in the museum field investigating the development of curatorial practices and the role of museums in colonial territories. The archive also continues to be a repository of material for historians seeking to understand the history of Sarawak and its people, as well as anthropologists working on Orang Ulu culture.

The relatively scant amount of information available about the photographs, their content and provenance, as well as the circumstances of their creation, may be reasons why the archive has not received greater attention by academics and researchers. Very little contextualising material or descriptive text accompanied the prints and

negatives when I began my research at the archive, and the lack of a working index has prevented easy access to specific material for researchers. While the existence of the archive was known to some members of the source communities, as the handwritten comments in the photograph folders testify, the lack of information about the scope and content of the material kept in the archive limited the extent to which people from the source communities could access and use the photographs. The Museum permitted individuals to access the archive and to request copies of the photographs. However, before I started to work with the material, no concerted effort had been undertaken to register the identity of the people in the photographs, the precise locations or the subject matter. Therefore it was difficult for people from the source communities to locate the material they were looking for even if they knew it existed. My own work, as represented in the exhibition and book outputs (Appendix IV and V), goes some way to rectifying these deficiencies, but there is still more to do.

I have argued that both museums and communities can gain significantly from collaborations with the source communities, which, in the case of the Sarawak Museum, are facilitated by the close working relationships between the communities and museum staff. More collaborative work carried out in a timely manner would contribute to the growing efforts by members of the source communities to identify and conserve their own cultural heritage. Making the photographs available to the source communities online is a first step in this direction (although there are limitations to this approach, as outlined in Chapter Eight).

The collections of museums such as the Sarawak Museum remain important repositories of cultural and historical artifacts that can be used by museum workers, academic researchers and members of the source communities to explore alternative methods of curation, debate cultural heritage issues and look for photographs of friends and families.

Writers such as Smith (1999) and Pratt (2004) have criticised the relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities, arguing that the outcomes of projects of ethnographic representation were based on social inequalities and that Indigenous people did not benefit from the research to which they contributed. However, the re-positioning and re-framing of ethnographic photographs, and the re-appropriation of such material, has enabled Indigenous activists and academics such as Tsinhnahjinnie

(2003) to use such material to reinforce Indigenous cultural sovereignty and agency over contemporary representations of Indigenous culture. Photographs are not in themselves ethnographic, nor do they reinforce any cultural stereotype, prejudice or categorisation without having been thus interpreted, described and contextualised (Scherer 1995; Landau 2002; Edwards 2010). This characteristic of photographs has enabled a growing number of researchers to re-investigate colonial and ethnographic archives, and to make the photographic material they contain available to the source communities for re-assessment and investigation.

As researchers such as Geismar (2009) have shown, Indigenous communities that have acquired collections of photographs taken by colonial administrators and anthropologists during periods of colonial governance have found numerous ways of using such photographic material for the conservation and recreation of cultural heritage. In Sarawak, this appropriation of the photographic material has not yet occurred. During my research, I worked with a small selection of the Sarawak Museum photographic collection. Thousands of photographs remain at the Sarawak Museum archive awaiting digitisation, investigation and contextualisation. These photographs, taken throughout Sarawak, show Bidayuh, Iban, Penan, Punan, Berawan and other villages. If more of these photographs were to be returned to source communities throughout Sarawak, they would not only remain meaningful as historical material for projects of cultural conservation and heritage, but also for the families and friends of the people in the photographs.

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Appendix I
List of interviews

Apui, M. 2012. [Interview] Long Loyang, 28.07.2012

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Braim, J. 2011. [Interview] Long Sobeng, 21.09.2011.

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Sabang, C. L. 2012. [Interview] Long Buroi, 05.08.2012

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Tanyit, J. 2011. [Interview] Marudi, 30.09.2011

Tawai, H. 2011. [Interview] Kuching, 23.02.2011

Tingang, J.A. 2011. [Interview] Long Loyang, 25.09.2011

Ulok, S. W. 2011. [Interview] Kuching, 25. 08.2011

Wan, 2011. [Interview] Long Sobeng. 22. 09. 2011

Tanyit, J. 2011. [Interview] Marudi, 09.30.2011

Tawai, H. 2011. [Interview] Kuching, 23.02.2011

Tingang, J.A. 2011. [Interview] Long Loyang, 09.30.2011

Appendix II
Fieldwork timeline

Long San 28 - 30 April 2010

Marudi 30 April - 01 May 2010

Daleh Long Pelutan 01 - 02 May 2010

Long Sungai Dua 30 Sept - 01 Oct 2010

Long Lama 01 - 03 Oct 2010

Marudi 12 - 14 Sept 2011

Long Teru 14 - 16 Sept 2011

Long Loyang 24 - 25 Sept 2011

Long Sobeng 21 - 23 Sept 2011

Long Jegan 16 - 18 Sept 2011

Marudi 30 Sept - 10 Oct 2011

Long Beruang 13 May 2012

Long Nawang 14 - 18 May 2012

Long Loyang 25 - 29 July 2012

Long Batan 24 July 2012

Long Sobeng 30 July - 1 Aug 2012

Long Nuwah 02 - 04 Aug 2012

Long Atun 04 Aug 2012

Long Selapun 06 Aug 2012

Long Buroi 05 Aug 2012

Long Sobeng 06 - 07 Aug 2012

Long Loyang 08 - 09 Aug 2012

Long San 16 - 17 Nov 2012

Map AII.1: Fieldwork

Marudi

Lg. Kiput

Sg. Tutoh

Sg. Apoh

Lg. Teru

Lapok

Lg. Lama

Sungai Dua /
Daleh Long Pelutan

Lg. Jegan

Lg. Miri

Baram

Sg. Patah

Lg. Batan
Lg. Loyang

Tinjar

Lg. Sobeng
Lepo Leju

Lg. Akah
Lg. San

Lg. Selapun

Lg. Aton

Lg. Nuwah

Lg. Apau

Lg. Selatong

Sg. Dapui

Sg. Paong

Sg. Lobang

Lg. Buroi

Kapit district
Third Division

Btg. Belaga

Sg. Nibong

Baram district
Fourth Division

Adat, also **adat lama**: Adat is often translated as 'native customary law', but the word also refers to traditional moral codes and ethics (Mjöberg 1929; Galvin 1975; Porritt 1997; Winzeler 1997, 2004). As part of Sarawak Law, the adat of many of Sarawak's Indigenous groups has been transcribed by the Majlis Adat Istiadat in Kuching. For other groups, oral interpretations of adat are also legally binding (Langub 1996). However, in the case of land rights, adat is only partially applicable. In the past, this has led to clashes between Indigenous people and the Government over land rights (Dimbab 2005; Bulan 2006, 2011; Bissonnette 2011).

Alo Malau: The world people enter after they have died; afterlife in Kenyah mythology. Among participants from Long Loyang the Alo Malau was described as a shallow river with many fish and longhouses inhabited by friends and relatives.

Beran: A Beran is a ritual wooden pole placed in front of the apartments of the dayung (see 'Dayung') next to the longhouse, resembling the Keju Aren (see 'Keju Aren').

Berawan: A Kenyah subgroup living along the Tinjar.

Bumiputera: Translated from Malay, the word literally means 'sons of the soil', or 'princes of the soil'.

Bungan: A religion that spread among Orang Ulu communities in the late 1940s; it originated in Kalimantan.

Chawan: Loincloth in Malay.

Daun sirih: The leaf consumed together with lime and betel nut. A small piece of betel nut is wrapped in a leaf smeared with lime.

Dayak: The term refers to Sarawak's Indigenous ethnic groups. The Iban were traditionally called 'Sea Dayak' because they lived near the river mouths of Sarawak's big rivers, while the Bidayuh were referred to as 'Land Dayak' because they lived in the hilly interior in the south of Sarawak. The term 'Indigenous' is not commonly used because Sarawak's ethnic Malay groups are also considered Indigenous, or Bumiputera (see 'Bumiputera'). Indigenous groups in Kalimantan, Indonesia, are also known as Dayak.

Dayung: Among Kenyah, the dayung were women who could communicate with spirits and conduct healing rituals through dances and songs.

Engkolorai: Local instrument constructed from a gourd and several sticks of bamboo. A similar instrument is also popular in Sabah. See also: **Keledi** or **Kelunaye**.

Gawai: Among Sarawak's Indigenous people, Gawai is a generic term for a celebration. There are numerous different types of Gawai, but the term has come to stand more generally for the harvest festival celebrated after the annual rice harvest. The Sarawak Government has instituted a public holiday on the 1st of June.

Gawai Nulang: The celebration that accompanies a secondary burial among Berawan.

Gunung: The word means 'mountain' in Malay, for instance in Gunung Murud, or Gunung Murud, which are two peaks in the Baram region.

Kalimantan: The Indonesian provinces of Borneo are called Kalimantan Utara, Selatan, Barat, Timur and Tengah (North, South, West, East and Central Kalimantan).

Kechai: Among Berwaran, a Kechai was a wooden, hut-like structure on the longhouse verandah in which the body of a deceased person was kept until secondary burial.

Keledi: Local instrument constructed from a gourd and several sticks of bamboo. A similar instrument is also popular in Sabah. See also: **Kelunaye** or **Engkolorai**.

Kelunaye: Local instrument constructed from a gourd and several sticks of bamboo. A similar instrument is also popular in Sabah. See also: 'Keledi' or 'Engkolorai'.

Long, as in Long Loyang, Long Sobeng: The **Long** in the name of a longhouse stands for the local word for a confluence of a smaller river with a larger river. Many longhouses were named after the tributary near which they were located, for instance Long Semadoh was built on the banks of Sungai Semadoh, and Long Teru near Sungai Teru etc.

Kampung / kampong: Malay word for village.

Kebaya: Malay-style female garment that is a tightly cut jacket, often made from fine or transparent material and used on formal occasions, usually together with a sarong or long skirt.

Kayan: Ethnic group among the Orang Ulu.

Keju Aren: Berawan ceremonial pole made from the wood of the Jingin Tela'o tree.

Kenyah: Term for a large number of disparate smaller ethnic subgroups among the Orang Ulu. Among different Kenyah subgroups are the Sebup, Berawan, Kenyah Lepo' Tau etc.

Lepo' Tau: Kenyah subgroup.

Lepo' Anan: Kenyah subgroup.

Majlis Adat Istiadat: A Kuching-based government organisation charged with transcribing the native customary law of Indigenous communities. The Majlis Adat Istiadat also transcribes oral history and other narratives, songs, stories and legends in the communities.

Orang Ulu: The word translates from Malay as 'people from upriver' and encompasses numerous groups such as the Kenyah, Kayan, Penan, Punan, Kelabit, Saban, Lun Bawang and others.

Padi: in Malay the word denominates the rice plant, as opposed to **nasi**, cooked rice, or **beras**, uncooked rice

Parang: A broad, cleaver-like knife with a wooden handle and sheath. Parangs come in a number of specialised shapes and were used in Sarawak for different purposes ranging from headhunting to agriculture.

Pemancha: Local political position, between Penghulu and Headman.

Penan: A group of nomadic, semi-nomadic or formerly nomadic people in the interior of Sarawak; part of the larger group referred to as Orang Ulu.

Penghulu: Political position above Pemancha and below Temenggong.

Ringgit: Malaysian currency. One ringgit is worth around 0,33 $AU or 0,3 $US at the time of writing.

Salong: Burial pole, at times painted or carved, usually with a small hut on top containing the bones of the deceased.

Sarong: Multifunctional item of clothing used by both women and men. A sarong consists of a loop of printed or woven fabric. It is wrapped around the body but can also be worn as a headdress, used as a blanket etc.

Sape: String instrument similar to a guitar. Most sapes have two, three, or four strings.

Sebup, Sebop, Chebup: Kenyah subgroup.

Suen: Traditional harvest festival in Sebup communities.

Sungai: Malay word for river.

Temenggong: Political position above Penghulu, usually translated as 'Paramount Chief' of a region.

Tegulun: Statue used to ward off evil and sickness in Kenyah longhouses. These statues were placed between the longhouse and the river.

Tua kampong: Headman of a longhouse or village.

Tuak: Rice wine, usually produced for home consumption and celebrations.

Usun Apau: Mythical homeland of many Orang Ulu groups. The Usun Apau is a highland plateau between the catchment area of the Baram and the Rejang Rivers, the two biggest rivers in Sarawak. Many Orang Ulu groups in Sarawak and Kalimantan, such as the Kenyah, trace their origins here.

APPENDIX IV

Horn, C 2012, *Orang Ulu of Borneo: Photographs From the Archives of the Sarawak Museum*, Opus Publications, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. ISBN: 978-983-3987-46-7 (see attached CD).

Horn, C 2013, 'Of Colonial Photographs and Cultural Resources: the Photographic Archive of the Sarawak Museum', *The Trans-Asia Photography Review*, vol. 4, no. 1 (see attached CD).

CD also contains a digital copy of this thesis.

Appendix V

Newspaper coverage of the exhibition at the Pustaka Miri in April 2011 and at the Sarawak Museum in November 2012

'Sarawak a research centre for natural sciences, humanity'

KUCHING: Sarawak has much to offer researchers in terms of its rich natural environment and diverse cultures.

And for that, Minister of Social Development Tan Sri William Mawan Ikom was proud to note that since its establishment in 1888 the Sarawak Museum had been the centre for research in the state until today.

"Whether botany, zoology, anthropology, archaeology or any other related sciences, the museum has been the repository of knowledge and the point of contact for international, regional and local researchers for over a century.

"Over the years many researchers from the natural sciences and humanities have worked here, first among them was Alfred Russell Wallace, who formulated his theory of the evolution of species around the same time as Charles Darwin," he said.

Mawan, who is also Senior Minister, said this in his text of speech read by Assistant Culture and Heritage Minister Liwan Lagang at the launch of a photography exhibition at the Sarawak Museum here yesterday.

"Today, Sarawak Museum is not the only research institution since a number of other national and international institutions such as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), Swinburne University of Technology and others have been established in this region.

"On the micro level, we have agencies such as the Majlis Adat Istiadat, Sarawak Cultural Foundation, Tun Jugah Foundation and not forgetting Pustaka Negeri that also become alternative resource or reference centres," he added.

However, he said, the Sarawak Museum as the oldest and most established centre of learning had a distinctive role to play and its archives contained many treasures important for the understanding of Sarawak's history that remained to be discovered.

He said the photography exhibition organised by Sarawak Museum Department from yesterday until May 27 was just one of the various means to create public awareness on the cultural treasures of the communities along the Baram and Tinjar.

He added that the exhibition would also show the rich cultural aspects of the people living in the area to visitors from within Malaysia and abroad, which should be preserved for the next generations.

Earlier, Sarawak Museum Department director Ipoi Datan said the exhibition entitled 'The Ulu and the Museum' would showcase photographs taken in the Baram and Tinjar rivers between 1950 and 1980 kept in the museum's archives.

HISTORICAL: A photo in the exhibition.

Interactive photo exhibition at Pustaka Miri

MIRI: Members of the community, especially those of Kenyah, Kayan and Berawan heritage, are invited to participate in the interactive photograph exhibition 'Memories of Baram' currently exhibited at Pustaka Miri until Nov 15.

The exhibition, which began on Tuesday, features photographs archived by The Sarawak Museum which were taken between 1950 and 1978 in the upper Baram and Tinjar areas and had never been exhibited before.

They include images from the communities of Long San, Long Atun, Long Buroi, Long Jegan, Long Kiput, Long Loyang, Long Teru, Long Makabar, Long Selatong, Long Sobeng, Long Miri, Long Laput, Long Liam, Long Moh and other villages and longhouses.

Little is known about the images, so members of the public are invited to participate by giving comments and feedback to help document the history and culture of the communities featured.

This exhibition is part of a research project carried out by Swinburne University of Technology.

For more information, please contact the organiser and curator of the exhibition Christine Horm at chorn@swin.edu.au or at 019-8847769.

IN LOVING MEMORY: Sebastian Kajan Gau, 72, a Kenyah from Long Ikang in Baram (right) draws Liwan's (right) attention to the picture of his late father Penghulu Gau, his late mother A'an Kuleh and his aunt in a photo which was taken in Sept 1956.

Most rituals and ceremonies have long been abandoned

The images mainly depict the Kenyah, Kayan, Sebop and Berawan communities as they went about doing their everyday activities as well as events related to rituals and ceremonies, most of which had long been abandoned.

Among the longhouses covered were Long San, Long Loyang, Long Sobeng, Long Makabar, Long Selatong, Long Buroi and others.

Also present at the launch of the exhibition were Social Development Ministry permanent secretary Affendi Keli, Kuching Resident Abdul Rahman Sebli and exhibition director Christine Horn from Swinburne University.

App V.1 The Borneo Post, 3 April 2012

App V.2 The Borneo Post, 10 November 2011

297

4 | **SARAWAK** | Selasa 3 April 2012 | **BERITA HARIAN**

Terharu lihat gambar bapa

Usaha Muzium Sarawak bantu generasi muda fahami sejarah Orang Ulu

Oleh Mohd Hamizar Hamid
bhnews@bharian.com.my

● MOHD HAMIZAR HAMID | BERITA HARIAN

KUCHING: "Terkejut dan terharu melihat gambar bapa diabadikan pada pameran ini kerana saya sendiri tidak tahu kewujudan gambar ini," kata Sebastian Kajan Gau, 72, yang tidak menyangka gambar bapa dan ibu tirinya dipamerkan pada Pameran Orang Ulu, di sini semalam.

Lelaki Kenyah berasal dari Long Ikang, Marudi itu, berkata usaha Muzium Sarawak tidak akan dipersia-siakannya dan beliau akan meminta semua empat anak dan cucunya hadir menyaksikan sendiri gambar datuk mereka dipamerkan.

"Ini peluang tidak boleh dilepaskan kerana selain berbangga menyaksikan gambar datuk mereka dipamerkan, anak dan cucu juga boleh mendapatkan maklumat tambahan mengenai kaum kami yang mungkin tidak diketahui.

"Saya berharap pameran seperti ini akan terus diadakan dari semasa ke semasa kerana terlalu banyak warisan etnik masyarakat Orang Ulu yang tidak diketahui umum boleh dikongsi bersama," katanya ketika ditemui pada majlis perasmian pameran itu oleh Menteri Muda Kebudayaan dan Warisan, Liwan Lagang.

Bapa Sebastian, Gau Jau adalah bekas Temenggong Orang Ulu di kawasan Long Ikang yang meninggal dunia pada 1974 ketika berusia 72 tahun. Gambar yang dipamerkan

SEBASTIAN menunjukkan gambar bapanya, Ga... Sarawak semalam.

itu dipercayai diambil ketika Gau melawat Kuching sekitar 1972.

Sebastian berkata, beliau berpindah ke Kuching sekitar 1960-an selepas berkahwin, namun ketika itu kerap berulang-alik menziarahi keluarganya di Long Ikang.

Sementara itu, Liwan dalam ucapannya, berkata beliau yakin pameran itu akan menjadi tarikan kepada pelawat bagi mendapatkan maklumat mengenai persekitaran, budaya dan corak kehidupan masyarakat lampau khususnya masya...

MENARIK ... Liwan Lagang melihat salah satu gambar Orang Ulu yang dipamerkan sambil ditemani Ipoi Datan (kiri), Affendi Keli dan Abdul Rahman Sebli (kanan) dalam Majlis Pelancaran "Ulu dan Muzium" Pameran di Muzium Sarawak semalam.
● RAMIDI SUBARI

Budaya, seni etnik unik

NORLIZA TINGGAL

KUCHING, Isnin – Keunikan serta kepelbagaian budaya dan seni masyarakat negeri ini sememangnya diakui istimewa oleh masyarakat luar kerana setiap etniknya mempunyai identiti serta budaya tersendiri, kata Menteri Kanan Pembangunan Sosial dan Urbanisasi Tan Sri William Mawan.

Keunikan tersebut pula tidak hanya bersandarkan kepada pakaian, tarian, muzik dan gaya hidup, malah meliputi permainan dan makanan, tambahnya.

"Di Sarawak sahaja terdapat lebih 34 etnik pribumi mendiami negeri ini dan semestinya pelbagai bentuk budaya dan seni ditonjolkan oleh kumpulan tersebut.

"Bagi memastikan keunikan itu tidak terus hilang ditelan zaman, pelbagai aktiviti yang dianjurkan untuk mempromosikan kebudayaan di negeri ini," katanya dalam teks ucapan yang dibacakan oleh Menteri Muda Kebudayaan dan Warisan Liwan Lagang semasa Majlis Pelancaran "Ulu dan Muzium" Pameran di Muzium Sarawak hari ini.

kemajmukan masyarakat yang terdiri daripada kira-kira 27 suku kaum pribuminya.

Malah katanya, kesan daripada kepesatan pembangunan turut menggalakkan lagi 'pengumpulan budaya' dari sembilan bahagian negeri itu ke bandar-bandar utama.

"Ini sekali gus memaparkan lebih banyak keunikan masyarakat etniknya. Bagi yang berkunjung untuk kali pertama, bandar raya Kuching mungkin destinasi yang sesuai untuk diutamakan, bak kata orang Sarawak, jika tidak berkesempatan melawat ke Miri dan Sibu, kunjungan di Kuching sahaja sudah cukup memadai," katanya.

Tambah beliau, selain acara yang banyak dianjurkan sepanjang tahun, kunjungan pelancong di Kuching disambut dengan pelbagai tempat dan monumen bersejarah seperti muzium, bangunan Astana dan patung Kuching yang menjadi simbol bandar raya berkenaan. Selain itu, hasil kraftangan seperti barang ukiran hinggalah hasil tenunan sendiri, semuanya boleh didapati pada harga yang murah.

"Selain itu, Tebingan Kuching atau lebih popular dipanggil water-

pengunjung boleh menikmati pemandangan bandar dari seberang sungai dengan menaiki bot tambang yang pernah menjadi pengangkutan terpenting suatu ketika dulu," katanya.

Oleh itu, katanya, kebudayaan negeri ini merupakan sumber warisan masyarakat yang penting dan harus dipeliharan supaya Sarawak kekal dan terkenal dengan keunikannya yang tersendiri. Tambahnya, semua pihak harus memainkan peranan yang penting bagi memastikan Sarawak terus maju dan berkembang dalam sektor pelancongan dan terkenal hingga ke persada dunia.

Terdahulu beliau turut mengucapkan tahniah kepada pihak Muzium Sarawak dengan kerjasama Universiti Swinburne kerana berjaya menganjurkan pameran kesenian dengan mengetengahkan gambar komuniti Orang Ulu iaitu Kenyah, Kayan dan Barawan yang diambil di Baram dan Sungai Tinjar sekitar awal tahun 50-an dan 80-an.

Katanya, muzium Sarawak telah dibuka sejak tahun 1888 dan sering menjadi rujukan utama bagi ramai penyelidik dan pengkaji sejarah tempatan dan antarabangsa.

Turut hadir Setiausaha Tetap

Muzium di negeri ini jadi antara pusat penyelidikan

KUCHING: Muzium di negeri ini telah menjadi antara pusat penyelidikan para penyelidik sejak penubuhannya pada 1888.

Menteri Pembangunan Sosial Tan Sri William Mawan Ikom berkata, sama ada botani, zoologi, antropologi atau mana-mana bidang berkaitan sains, muzium telah menjadi lubuk titik hubungan penyelidik antarabangsa, serantau dan tempatan sehingga hari ini.

"Sejak dulu ramai pengkaji daripada bidang sains semula jadi dan kemanusiaan telah bekerja di sini.

"Antaranya Alfred Russell Wallace, yang merumuskan teori evolusi spesies di sekitar masa yang sama seperti Charles Darwin," katanya.

Beliau berkata demi-

KENANGAN BERNILAI: Liwan (kiri) melihat foto milik bapa dan ibu Sebastian Kajan Gau, 72, berbangsa Kenyah dari Long Ikang (kanan). — Gambar Rais

kian menerusi teks ucapan yang dibacakan oleh Menteri Muda Kebudayaan

dan Warisan Liwan Lagang pada majlis perasmian Pameran *The Ulu and the Museum* di Muzium Seni, di sini semalam.

Menurut Mawan yang juga Menteri Kanan, hari ini Muzium Sarawak bukan lagi satu-satunya institusi penyelidikan sejak penubuhan beberapa institusi kebangsaan dan antarabangsa seperti Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Swinburne University of Technology dan banyak lagi.

Manakala di peringkat mikro, beliau berkata ia melibatkan agensi seperti Majlis Adat Resam, Yayasan Budaya Sarawak, Yayasan Tun Jugah dan Pustaka Negeri yang menjadi sumber alternatif dan pusat rujukan.

Bagaimanapun Mawan berkata, Muzium Sarawak se-

bagai pusat tertua dan paling mantap dari segi pembelajarannya mempunyai peranan tersendiri yang harus dimainkan dan arkib yang mengandungi khazanah penting Sarawak.

Pameran 'The Ulu and the Museum' akan mempamerkan gambar-gambar yang diambil di Baram dan Sungai Tinjar antara tahun 1950 dan 1980.

Imej menunjukkan komuniti Kenyah, Kayan, Sebop dan Berawan mengenai aktiviti harian mereka.

Hadir sama ialah Pengarah Jabatan Muzium Ipoi Datan, Setiausaha Tetap Kementerian Pembangunan Sosial Affendi Keli, Penyelidik pameran foto selaku pensyarah di Swinburne Christine Horn dan Residen Kuching Abdul Rahman Sebli.

APPENDIX VI

SUHREC ethics clearance

From: AGAETH@groupwise.swin.edu.au
Subject: SUHREC Project 2010/208 Ethical review
Date: 27. September 2010 17:00:30 GMT+10:00
To: DMeredyth@groupwise.swin.edu.au
Cc: Resethics@groupwise.swin.edu.au, RLWATSON@groupwise.swin.edu.au

To: Dr Denise Meredyth FLSS; Ms Christine Horn (bc)
CC: Ms Robyn Watson, Research Administration Coordinator FLSS

Dear Dr Meredyth and Ms Horn,

SUHREC Project 2010/208 Memories of Sarawak: archival photography and social memory in the upriver communities of Malaysian Borneo
Dr Denise Meredyth FLSS; Ms Christine Horn; Dr Ian Mc Shane
Proposed duration from 01/11/2010 To 01/04/2013

Ethical review of the above project protocol was undertaken by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) at its Meeting 07/2010 held 17 September 2010, the outcome of which as follows.

The project has been approved subject to the following being addressed/noted* to the Chair's or delegate(s) satisfaction:

1. A5: For the record, as a supervisor of the student researcher, Prof Helmut Lueckenhausen will need to be listed an associate investigator on the project.
2. Section B/Consent Info Statement: Rationale needed as to why the interviews are being recorded.
3. Involvement of minors: Clarify/justify the involvement of children and provide additional appropriate consent instruments, consent form for adults re minors also needs some stylistic revision ("I/my child").
4. D2(b): Clarify the location of the locked filing cabinet.
5. Consent Info Statement: Include Chief (and Co-?) Investigator details.
6. Please provide confirmation that Dr Clem Kuek is aware of being listed as a local contact and that Swinburne Research will be apprised of any concerns/complaints put to Dr Kuek.

In arriving at its decision, the Committee members noted having been sent a copy of the missing page covering C1-14. The Committee also considered this otherwise to be a good and well-designed project.
To enable further ethical review/finalise clearance, please would you respond to the above item by direct email reply. Re your responses:

- please DO NOT submit a full revised ethics clearance application unless specifically required
- queried missing, additional or revised text from the ethics application can be incorporated into your responses (within the body of the email if appropriate and to save disk space)
- attach proposed or revised consent/publicity/other documentation in light of the above (if available, converting these documents to pdf before submission will save on disk space)

If accepted by the SUHREC delegate(s), your responses/attachments will be added to previous documentation submitted for review, superseding or supplementing as applicable the existing material/protocol on record. Please also note that human research activity (including active participant recruitment) cannot commence before proper ethics clearance is given in writing.

Please contact me if you have any queries about the ethical review process undertaken, citing the SUHREC project number.

Yours sincerely

Ann Gaeth for
Keith Wilkins
Secretary, SUHREC

****
Ann Gaeth, PhD
Administrative Officer (Research Ethics)
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