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CONTENTS

THE DAYAK 'KINGDOM' AND INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY IN KETAPANG REGENCY, WEST KALIMANTAN

KAORU NISHIJIMA[1]

Abstract

This paper examines how the Dayak people's construction of an 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai' in Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan province, Indonesia, has undergirded their development of ethnic solidarity and their claims to indigenous sovereignty. The Ulu Ai', a Dayak priest-king, appeared shortly after the fall of the Suharto authoritarian regime in 1998. Since his emergence, he has become a prominent figure in local society. First, the paper considers the background to the emergence of his 'as if' kingdom in the context of the rise of indigenous movements and ethnic politics during Indonesia's period of democratic reform. In this context, the 'as if' kingdom expresses the primordial sentiments of solidarity among the Dayak. Second, the paper describes the hybridity of the Ulu Ai' polity, which has incorporated various fragments of practices and ideas from outside sources. Third, it explores how the Dayak articulate the hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai' in accordance with their particular circumstances. The adaptability of the 'as if' kingdom has served to provide a common language for the Dayak people to communicate their claims during the period of democratic reform.

Keywords; Kalimantan, Dayak, kingdom, Indonesia, indigenous sovereignty

1. Introduction

This paper examines why the Dayak 'kingdom', called the kingdom of the Ulu Ai' (*Kerajaan Ulu Ai'*), has emerged in southwest Kalimantan since the introduction of democratic governance in Indonesia in 1998. The fall of Suharto's authoritarian 'New Order' regime, which had ruled the country since 1966, led to a process of reform and democratization (Reformasi). During a ritual held shortly after Suharto's ouster, the Ulu Ai', a Dayak priest-king, suddenly appeared in front of thousands of local Dayaks. Since then, the Ulu Ai' has become the Dayaks' main customary authority, and some followers of the Ulu Ai' have claimed that the Ulu Ai' kingdom exists. This paper explains how the Dayak have sought to reclaim their collective ethnic identity and to negotiate a degree

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of sovereignty within Indonesia by claiming the existence of a kingdom of their own.

During the Reformasi period, many local kingdoms that had reigned over local societies until colonization by the Dutch have been 'revived' (Cribb 2006; Bräuchler 2011; van Klinken 2008; Kurniadi 2020; Song and Mustafa 2021). Although most kingdoms were abolished when Indonesia gained its independence, some former kings and aristocrats survived as local politicians or government officials (cf. Magenda 1991). Even those who maintained their nominal status, with a few exceptions, such as the Yogyakarta sultan, lost almost all their privileges (Cribb 2006; van Klinken 2008; Kurniadi 2020). In contrast, under Reformasi, the descendants of the former kings and aristocrats have renovated their old royal palaces, and new 'kings' have been enthroned with elaborate ceremonies.

The reasons for these kings being restored vary from case to case. Some kings have run for political office in local elections, while others have sought to raise their stature as customary authorities. These reinstatements of the kings can be connected with the revival of *adat* (Song and Mustafa 2021; van Klinken 2008), the Indonesian term that encompasses customs, tradition, customary law and social order (Abdullah 1966; Henley and Davidson 2007). *Adat* also organizes the political and economic lives of the people, such as their use of customary lands and natural resources or customary leadership. Under the Suharto regime, *adat* was suppressed and confined to the realm of culture and tradition because it was seen as threatening the unity of the state. However, in the Reformasi period, *adat* has supplied a foundation on the basis of which the marginalized have claimed their own identities and customary rights to their land and natural resources, of which the state and private corporations had deprived them under the Suharto regime's development policy. The revived kings and their followers act as if they are still upholding an actual kingdom in the realm of *adat*. Some of them hold royal rituals to demonstrate their roles as custodians of *adat*, while others have protested against companies or state institutions, claiming their customary rights to the land and the natural resources based on *adat*.

This paper focuses on the emergence of one such kingdom, the Ulu Ai' in Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan province. The Ulu Ai' appeared as the king of the Dayak during a shared ritual of the Dayak people called *Tolak Balak* (a ritual for warding off evil), conducted in 1998 at Ketapang (Bamba 2002). The Dayak people participating in the ritual, who had come from all over the hinterlands of Ketapang regency, expressed their rejection of marginalization by the socioeconomically dominant Malays and the former authoritarian Suharto regime. The revival of the Ulu Ai' was staged as the revival of the Dayak people in Ketapang. Even though literature from the colonial period

mentioned the existence of the Ulu Ai' in the nineteenth century (von Dewall 1862: 2), many local people, especially those living in urban areas, had already forgotten about its existence by the time of its emergence. Therefore, the appearance of the Ulu Ai' surprised not only the local people but also Western researchers specializing in Kalimantan (Bamba 2002; see also Sellato 1999; Smith and Wadley 2002; Wadley and Smith 2001). The Dayak customary chiefs, who attended the *Tolak Balak*, showed their reverence to the Ulu Ai' and treated him as if he were the actual 'king' of the Dayak (Bamba 2002; *Kalimantan Review* 1998 [Aug.]).

Rallying under the banner of an imaginary kingdom has been regarded as a traditional means which the hill people have drawn on whether to evade from the state or aspire for their own state (Kataoka 2014; Scott 2009). Scott points out that the hill people rallied under the 'as if' states to evade the rule of the lowland states. The idea of the 'as if' state comes from 'as if' structure, which Leach coined to analyze the ritual in highland Burma. Leach (1954: 279-80) cited a colonial document reporting a ritual in the Hukawng Valley in the early nineteenth century held by a Burmese official in which the local Shan and Kachin chiefs participated. The Burmese official held the ritual to obtain the loyalty of the Shan and Kachin chiefs to the Burmese state. The participating chiefs conducted the ritual as if an imaginary Shan state, imagined as subordinate to the Burmese state, existed to express their collective subjugation. By assuming the existence of the imaginary state, the Kachin and Shan chiefs, some of whom were feuding with each other, were able to express temporary solidarity and collective submission to the Burmese state (Leach 1954: 280). Leach also pointed out that the 'as if' structure of the imaginary state, which served as the common language, lay behind the ritual at Hukawng Valley. Whereas Leach does not place much importance on the 'as if' structure, Scott (2009: 115) argues that hill people in mainland Southeast Asia strategically incorporated the 'as if' structure to attempt to ward off and reject the sovereignty of the lowland states. Scott describes a variety of millennial movements in upland Southeast Asia, arguing that the hill people rallied behind kings and prophets in seeking to oppose oppression, realize their ideals and achieve justice.

On the other hand, Kataoka (2014) points out, with reference to the case of the Lahu in upland northern Thailand and southwest China, that treating the 'as if' state purely as a strategy of state evasion disregards its aspirations for actual state formation. Some of the Lahu's 'as if' states became close to being actual states. Kataoka (2014: 47) argues that the Lahu's 'as if' states oscillated between the imaginary and the real and that the transition from the former to the latter reflects their aspirations for their own state. However, the Dayak have not attempted either to evade the state or to realize their

own state. This article argues that instead they have attempted to negotiate their own indigenous sovereignty by claiming the existence of their kingdom. This concept of indigenous sovereignty is not ideological, that is, it is not used to assert absolute independence or the supreme and indivisible power of the state. Rather, it entails a practice of negotiation and of claims to certain rights, as well as self-determination within the state (Clifford 2013: 87-8; Maaka and Fleras 2000: 93). Since the fall of the Suharto regime, matters of sovereignty (*kedaulatan*) have become the subject of negotiation between indigenous peoples and the state (cf. Li 2007: 115-6, 159). In particular, *adat* has become the arena for claiming and negotiating indigenous sovereignty. Marginalized people in Indonesia, such as the Dayak, have pursued their political goals by claiming the sovereignty of *adat* communities (*kedaulatan masyarakat adat*). This article argues that the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai' has served as a framework not only to strengthen Dayak solidarity but also to claim indigenous sovereignty.

This paper draws on the concept of articulation to explore the emergence of the Dayak kingdom. Articulation can be defined as the connecting or linking of fragments of different origins that do not necessarily have a determined or inevitable correspondence (Grossberg 1986: 53; Hall 1996). Drawing on the theory of articulation, Song and Mustafa argue that the Loloda in North Maluku called on their origin myths, cosmology and concept of sovereignty and articulated them in the form of a 'kingdom slot' to claim their centrality and 'secure better position' in the local society (Song and Mustafa 2021: 340). This article follows Song and Mustafa's view that the phenomenon of the revived kingdoms can best be approached from the perspective of articulation, but it also considers the adaptability of the 'as if' kingdom. The constellation of the Ulu Ai', its regalia and its worshippers constitute an ornament-worshipping community, a community based on the worship of ritual ornaments such as heirlooms or regalia. This constellation is articulated as ornament-worshipping community centred on the sacredness of the regalia in some contexts, but in other contexts, this constellation is reconfigured as an 'as if' kingdom centred on the sovereignty of the king. Furthermore, the ornament-worshipping community of the Ulu Ai' has incorporated various fragments of practices and ideas from surrounding sovereign states and international discourses in articulating itself as a kingdom. In particular, the Dayaks' imagination of their kingdom is modelled on the neighbouring Malay sultanates or *kerajaan*. The oscillation between an ornament-worshipping community and a *kerajaan* reflects how flexibly the Dayak can articulate their 'as if' kingdom to achieve their purposes in different contexts.

This article also focuses on the background underlying the articulation of the

kingdom, especially how the aspirations for solidarity and indigenous sovereignty has led to its emergence. The revival of kingdoms has been discussed in relation to the revival of *adat* during the Reformasi period (van Klinken 2008; Song and Mustafa 2021). Scott (2009: 323) notes that current indigenous movements play the same role as millennial movements in 'framing identities and claims'. However, resistance to marginalization is not the only factor leading to the articulation of kingdoms. Rather, these restorations are related to the variety of circumstances that their peoples have faced since Reformasi. For example, the reinstatement of the kingdom in North Maluku has contributed to religious reconciliation between the Christian and Muslim populations, whose relations had previously deteriorated (Song and Mustafa 2021: 334-5, 340). In West Kalimantan, the integration of the various Dayak groups and their claims to indigenous sovereignty have been the most important issues in their efforts to liberate themselves from their marginal position.

The Ulu Ai' resides at Sengkuang, Banua Krio village, Hulu Sungai subdistrict, Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan (Map 1). Sengkuang is a Dayak hamlet of about five hundred people. The Ulu Ai' is the custodian of sacred regalia called *Bosi Koling Tongkat Raya'at* ('yellow iron and staff supporting the people'). The regalia are said to consist of a small dagger and a staff that support the 'world' (*dunia*) or the 'people' (*raya'at*). After the discovery of the staff in a nearby village during the author's fieldwork, the combination of the dagger and staff came to constitute *Bosi Koling Tongkat Raya'at*. The dagger, which is the principal item, is believed to shrink gradually, and its eventual vanishing is believed to bring about the end of the world. The dagger is stored in a wooden box in a special room in the house of the Ulu Ai'. No one is permitted to see it, and only the Ulu Ai' can touch it by putting his hands into the wooden box during the annual ritual. The vice-king (*wakil raja*) and the ritual experts (*sutragi*) support also help in keeping custody of the regalia.

The geographical range of the worshippers of these regalia extends from the southern part of Sanggau regency to Ketapang regency. The ornament-worshipping community of the Ulu Ai is called the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*. The usual interpretation of the meaning of this term is that there are nine villages (*Desa Sembilan*) with nine local leaders and one absolute leader (*Domong Sepuluh*), even though there is no distinct political institution as such. From independence to the Reformasi period, which is the focus of this paper, there have been three generations of the Ulu Ai': Bebek (?–1973), Poncing (1973–1997) and the current Ulu Ai', Singa Bansa (1997–).

The remainder of this paper consists of three parts. First, I describe the history of the marginalization of the Dayak people in West Kalimantan up to the New Order

period and the rise of Dayak ethnic politics under Reformasi. Second, I examine the hybridity of the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai'. The ritual authority of the Ulu Ai' can be contrasted with the sovereign authority of the surrounding Malay sultanates: the polity of the Ulu Ai' has transformed itself by adopting the practices of the surrounding sovereign states. Third, I explore how the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai' has been articulated in each relevant context. How the Dayak articulate their 'as if' kingdom is related to what the Dayak people are attempting to express by claiming a collective ethnic identity.

The data for this paper are derived from my long-term fieldwork, conducted mainly in West Kalimantan from 2014 to 2016, along with successive short-term follow-up visits. I also draw on online media sources and telephone interviews regarding more recent developments.
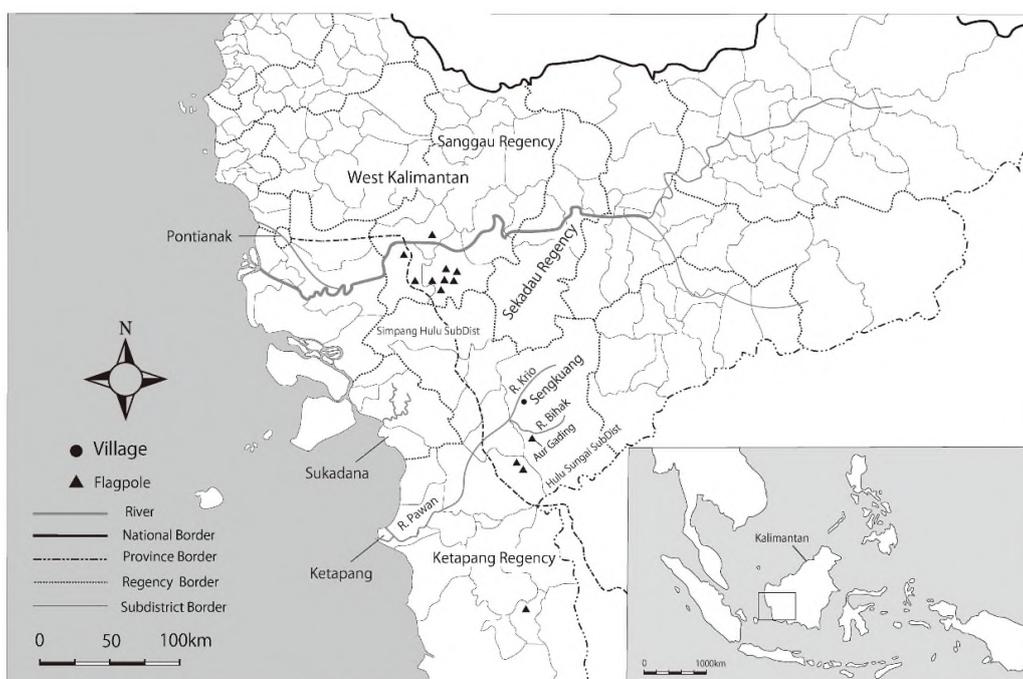
created by the author based on Geoportal Pemerintah Provinsi Kalimantan Barat_Batas_Kecamatan_Jan 2019

Map1. West Kalimantan (modified from [Nishijima 2021])

2.Marginalization and indigenous movements

2.1. The marginalization of the Dayak people

The ethnic group called the Dayak today consists of various small groups of non-Muslim indigenous people living in the hinterlands of Kalimantan. The ethnic identities of these indigenous people have been fluid, and Dayak have drawn on their geography, dialects, livelihoods, ritual practices and origin myths to distinguish themselves from other groups (Rousseau 1990: 52-72). How each Dayak group articulates their own identity depends on how they understand their identity in a given context (ibid.: 52-62).

Dutch colonial rule played a significant role in integrating the separate indigenous groups into a collective entity known as the Dayak. The Dutch colonial government applied the ethnic label 'Dayak' widely to differentiate non-Muslim indigenous peoples living in the hinterlands from the Muslim Malays living on the coasts (ibid.: 74). Over time, the Dayak have gradually adopted a shared ethnic identity. Since the end of the colonial period, this Dayak ethnicity has assumed political importance in their seeking to resist marginalization.

In pre-colonial times, the Malay sultanates exercised sovereignty over the Dayak population in western Kalimantan. From the early nineteenth century, the Dutch colonial government established a system of indirect rule by concluding contracts with the Malay sultanates (Barth 1896). However, the Malay sultanates retained some autonomy under the Dutch at least up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Their relative autonomy meant that they were able to maintain their sovereignty in practice over the Dayak population within certain limits. In the case of Malay sultanate in Ketapang, called Matan, the sultan allocated to their royal families, as appanages, ruling authority over the areas where the Dayak resided. In each appanage, the lower-level Malay aristocrats, called *katoendoek*, played an intermediate role in managing the administration and collecting taxes (von Dewall 1862: 7-8). The *katoendoek* had the authority to legitimize the customary chiefs (*Demoeng kapala*) of Dayak villages, who were selected by the villagers (ibid.: 8). The Dayak were required not only to pay tribute to the Matan sultans and aristocrats in the form of rice, resin, bird's nests and iron but also to provide labour for them (Barth 1896; von Dewall 1862). The Dayak engaged in trade with Muslim traders, obtaining foreign products such as Chinese ceramics, textiles and salt in exchange for their rice and forest products. However, the exchange rate for the items favoured the Malays, so the Dayak had to trade with them under unfavourable conditions (von Dewall 1862: 13-4).

During the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945, the Japanese military government inherited the Dutch administrative system. At the end of this period, the military government massacred thousands of members of local elites, claiming that they had been planning a coup. In the so-called Mandor Affair, a number of Malay sultans and aristocrats were executed, thereby significantly reducing this group's local dominance (Davidson 2008: 37). After the end of the Second World War, Australian forces accompanied by officers of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (Nederlandsch-Indische Civiele Administratie, or NICA) landed in western Kalimantan. The NICA subsequently attempted to reconstruct colonial rule. Among the Dayak intellectuals who had received their education with the support of the Catholic Church,

expectations of improvements to their status under the new regime grew rapidly. Dayak intellectuals formed a political organization called Dayak in Action in 1945, which a year later was reorganized as a Dayak political party, Partai Persatuan Dayak (PD). The NICA incorporated the Dayak intellectuals into its new administration to obtain Dayak support (Tanasaldy 2012: 81-3). The inclusion of Dayak political elites in the regime led to the rise of Dayak ethnic politics.

This Dayak ascendancy continued to gain momentum even after the Dutch reorganized the independence of Indonesia in 1949.[2] The introduction of parliamentary democracy under Soekarno's presidency led to the elevation of the Dayak political elites, many of whom occupied seats in local both provincial and regency parliaments. The PD, the leading party in the provincial parliament at that time, appointed Oevang Oeray, a local Dayak from the upper Kapuas area, as the first governor of West Kalimantan in 1959 (Tanasaldy 2012: 103). However, the introduction of parliamentary democracy also led to fierce competition between political parties and paralysed the Soekarno administration. In late 1959, Soekarno proclaimed the concept of Guided Democracy and centralized the regime to reconsolidate his power (ibid.: 109). Because presidential decree No. 7/1959 banned the activities of regional political parties in order to suppress regionalism, the PD was forced to disband,[3] and former PD members had to join the national parties instead (ibid.: 111-2). Because of the Soekarno regime's centralizing activities, the momentum of Dayak ethnic nationalism greatly declined.

The New Order period under Suharto's presidency not only continued to suppress Dayak ethnic politics, it also marginalized the Dayak further. Suharto attempted to increase the state's revenues by exporting commercial timber to the international market, intensifying the local crisis in doing so. Suharto placed the greater part of Indonesia's forested areas under the full control of the central government and centralized the system of issuing timber permits with the introduction of the Basic Forestry Law of 1967 (Barr 2006: 22-3).[4] The boom in the international demand for timber facilitated the entry of logging companies into the hinterlands of Kalimantan. Because of the priority Suharto placed on national economic development, the Dayak were excluded from the forests, where they had made their living through swidden agriculture, the gathering of forest products and hunting. Furthermore, the government's

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[2] The NICA transferred western Kalimantan to the United States of Indonesia, which was thereafter dissolved and became the Republic of Indonesia in 1950 (Davidson 2008: 39).
[3] Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 1959 Tentang Syarat-syarat dan Penyederhanaan Kepartaian.
[4] Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 1967 Tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Kehutanan.

transmigration policy frustrated the Dayak, creating fears that immigrants from Java and Madura were taking away their employment (Tanasaldy 2012: 189-90). The Dayak could not mobilize around their ethnic identity to resist marginalization because political activities based on ethnicity were banned under the Suharto regime.

However, towards the end of the New Order period, the Dayak began protesting against oppression by the state and private corporations. Violent demonstrations against the latter became frequent across West Kalimantan. The dissatisfaction among the Dayak exploded in the form of ethnic conflict, mainly against the Madura immigrants. Furthermore, the Malays, who were threatened by the Dayak uprising, also joined in the conflict against the Madura (Davidson 2008). Major battles broke out in various places in West Kalimantan. The ethnic conflicts, which originated in the coastal area, spread to various locations in the hinterlands and continued until 2001 (ibid.). More than a thousand people were killed, and thousands of Madurese had to flee from Kalimantan (De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006).

2.2. Claiming sovereignty as Masyarakat Adat

The fall of the Suharto regime brought about a rejuvenation of ethnic politics throughout Indonesia. As part of their resistance to marginalization, the Dayak have reclaimed their ethnic identity and their customary rights to the land and natural resources. The most urgent issues facing the Dayak were to regain their land and resource rights and to take the initiative in local politics.

The formation of Dayak identity since the end of the Suharto regime has been strongly inspired by the international indigenous movements that arose in the 1970s (Henley and Davidson 2007: 5-9). International groups such as the International Labour Organisation promoted the concept of indigenous and tribal societies to preserve the rights of marginalized people against corporations and national government. This international advocacy constructed an image of indigenous people as living ecologically harmonious lives on the land inherited from their ancestors, in accordance with their own customs (Li 2001: 653). The domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that participated in international conferences have played an important role in importing the concept of indigenous people into the Indonesian term Masyarakat Adat (customary societies) (Li 2001; Moniaga 2007). The Aliansi Masyarkat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), an Indonesian umbrella organization of NGOs, has promoted the concept of Masyarakat Adat as a means whereby marginalized people can reassert their customary rights to land and resources. AMAN defined Masyarakat Adat as the community that has 'sovereignty over land and natural resources' (*kedaulatan atas tanah dan kekayaan*

alam) and that lives in a manner consistent with their adat (Accilioli 2007: 229). [5] The political slogan 'not independent yet' (*belum meredeka*), often used by the Dayak, reflects their aspirations towards sovereignty. However, the type of sovereignty understood in the definition of Masyarakat Adat does not mean absolute independence from the Indonesian state. Rather, it denotes a relative and negotiated indigenous sovereignty. The national Masyarakat Adat movements also contributed to the formation of the Masyarakat Adat Dayak; the integration of the various Dayak groups into this local advocacy organization has enhanced their sense of solidarity and made fighting marginalization a common concern for Dayak living in different areas. The Dayak residing in urban areas founded NGOs and have been involved in the protests against the corporations and local governments. They have been joined by the Dayak in the hinterlands in collectively claiming indigenous sovereignty.

Ethnic rivalries in local politics have also accelerated the formation of the Masyarakat Adat Dayak. The government appointed regional governors and regents until the New Order period, Javanese and Malays, who were Muslims, being selected for these posts. However, the implementation of Law No. 32/2004, replacing the preceding Law No. 22/1999 (which had stipulated indirect elections), now requires that regional governors must be directly elected by their local populations.[6] Because the ethnic and religious affiliations of political elites have become important factors in local elections, the Dayak gained political strength, and reinforcing Dayak solidarity became a common interest among both urban Dayak political elites and the general population in the hinterlands. The political elites invest effort in campaigning in the hinterlands because of their need to consolidate wide support from the general Dayak population. The belief that Dayaks, not Malays or Javanese, should be the political leaders in the Dayak's native land is widely shared and leads locals to vote for Dayak candidates (Nishijima 2021: 60). Dayak political elites commonly appeal to this shared Dayak identity by constructing cultural monuments, attending the rituals of rural Dayak and holding cultural events in the name of *adat* Dayak.

Against the background of the rise of the Masyarakat Adat movements, the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai' has contributed to the integration of the Dayak people. The Dayak understand that they are actually composed of various indigenous groups, so they have relied on primordial ties to enhance their integration. Geertz (1963: 111-3)

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[5] See Profil Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), https://www.aman.or.id/profil-aliansi-masyarakat-adat-nusantara (accessed 21 August 2021).
[6] Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 32 Tahun 2004 Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah, and Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 1999 Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah.

enumerates assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion and customs as factors that can evoke primordial sentiments. The imaginary traditional kingdom could be added to Geertz's list. Postulating the past existence of the Dayak kingdom can arouse deeply rooted sentiments of ethnic solidarity. Furthermore, the assumed kingdom is also related to the Dayak's aspirations to indigenous sovereignty. The indigenous imagination of the kingdoms, which in the past exercised sovereignty over the land, forests and other natural resources, provided the Dayak with a frame whereby to assert their indigenous sovereignty today. The assumption that the Dayak used to have a sovereign kingdom into which they should have been integrated in the past communicates a sense that their solidarity and sovereignty do not need to be created anew but simply restored, regardless of whether any integrated political institution equivalent to the supposed kingdom actually existed in the past.

3. The hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai'

3.1. The Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh and the kerajaan

The ornament-worshipping community of the Ulu Ai', the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*, has incorporated various fragments of practices and ideas from the surrounding sovereign states in articulating its 'as if' kingdom. In particular, the indigenous concept of the Malay sultanates, the *kerajaan*, has provided the primary model for the Dayaks' articulation of their own kingdom.

The Ulu Ai' and the Malay sultans are placed at opposite ends of the spectrum of indigenous polities. The Ulu Ai' is generally contrasted with the Matan sultans, direct successors of the Sukadana sultanate. According to the local origin myth, the Sukadana sultanate, the oldest kingdom in southwest Kalimantan, was founded through the marriage of a Dayak princess and an immigrant prince from the Majapahit Kingdom in Java. Thereafter, the Sukadana sultanate gave birth to the other surrounding Malay sultanates in southwest Kalimantan. Some Dayak claim that the Ulu Ai' predated the surrounding Malay sultans. Some versions of the origin myths narrate that the Ulu Ai' was a descendant of the elder brother of the primordial Dayak princess (von Dewall 1862: 2; Djuweng 1999). While the Malay sultans exercised sovereignty, the Ulu Ai' as the 'senior brother' legitimized the indigeneity of the Malay sultanates (Nishijima 2021: 45). The Ulu Ai' is commonly called the *raja keramat* (sacred king) in the Krio region. Meanwhile, the counterpart concept of the *keramat* is the *daulat*, which legitimizes the Malay kingdoms (Gullik 1958: 45). Each indigenous polity is centred on these contrasting ritual concepts.

The *keramat* of the Ulu Ai' and the regalia represent the ritual authority among the

hinterland Dayak, their worship constituting the ornament-worshipping community of the Ulu Ai'. The word *keramat* is derived from the Arabic *karāma*, which means 'nobility', 'honour', 'miracle' or 'miracle worker' (Wehr 1966: 822). In western Indonesia, the *keramat* designates sacred natural objects and places such as old trees, huge stones, the tombs of kings or sources of water (Sellato 2002: 12; Wilkinson 1901: 509; Winstedt 1924). The Dayak offer dishes of rice and eggs to these *keramat* when praying for blessings. The regalia of the Ulu Ai' are believed to be the most important *keramat* and constitute the centre of the ornament-worshipping community. The *keramat* also designates those who are believed to be sacred, such as religious teachers, saints, hermits or pious Muslims (Winstedt 1924). The Dayak regard the Ulu Ai' as the *keramat* because of his proximity to the regalia. The Ulu Ai' is supposed to devote himself to caring for the regalia and is barred from seeking economic wealth or political power. Taboos derived from the regalia prohibit the Ulu Ai' from seeking secular power (Nishijima 2021: 48). For example, taboos on collecting forest products or working as a labourer prohibit the Ulu Ai' from accumulating economic wealth. The obligation of the Ulu Ai' to take care of the fire at the side of the wooden box, in which the sacred dagger is stored, also limits his activities and prevents him from seeking political power (Nishijima 2020, 2021). As a result, the life of the Ulu Ai' becomes similar to that of hermits, and he becomes a sacred but effectively powerless figure (Nishijima 2021: 48). The regalia and the Ulu Ai', both powerless and secluded as the *keramat*, are thus not directly related to the exercise of politico-economic sovereignty over the land and natural resources.

Meanwhile, it is the majesty of the Malay kings who constitute the centre of the *kerajaan*. The Malay word *kerajaan* means the 'condition of having a *raja*' (Milner 1982: 147). The Malay sultans as the 'organizing principle' were the integrative core of the *kerajaan* (ibid.: 149, 154-6). It is the *daulat* that makes the Malay sultans legitimate rulers of the *kerajaan* (Milner 2012: 195). The word *daulat* is derived from the Arabic *daula*, which means 'dynasty', 'state' or 'empire' (Wehr 1966: 302). In the Malay language, *daulat* designates the sovereignty of the Malay sultans, who could legitimize the political status of their subjects and assure the prosperity the land. On the other hand, the absence of the *raja* is believed to cause catastrophe to the *kerajaan* (Milner 1982: 147-8). The complementary concept to the *daulat* is the *derhaka*, which means disobedience, disloyalty or treason by subjects towards their sultans (Wilkinson 1901: 293). If subjects commit *derhaka* against the sultans, it is believed that they will be 'struck by the force of sovereignty' (*timpa daulat*) (Andaya 2008: 63). Furthermore, as the 'lords of land', the Malay sultans could exercise ritual ownership over the land and

claim a share of the harvest from the Dayak. For example, the origin myths of the Sukadana sultanate tell how the elder sisters of the primordial siblings, who are the ancestors of the Dayak people, surrendered ritual ownership of the land to their youngest sister, the founder of the Sukadana sultanate. After this surrender of ownership, the Dayak had to pay tribute in the form of harvests and forest products to the Matan sultans and aristocrats (Nishijima 2020: 122). Hence, for the Dayak, the Matan sultans were both the politico-economic sovereign ruler and the 'lords of land'.

The sovereignty of the Malay sultan is manifested in ceremonial acts. The descriptions of the Matan sultan in the early nineteenth century indicate how the Matan sultan expressed his sovereignty. The Matan sultan at that time was Mohammad Jamaluddin, known for wearing luxurious clothes, such as trousers and a hat embroidered with gold, and carrying a diamond-studded dagger (Veth 1856II: 155).[7] When the local Dutch colonial officer met the sultan, he appeared with entourages, some of whom preceded the sultan holding the sword and sheath, while others followed him with equipment such as a betel box or an opium pipe. Indigenous music was also played (Veth 1856II: 158). Elsewhere the Dutch officer describes how his subjects could only approach the sultan by crawling along the floor. When they faced the sultan, they had to sit with their legs folded under their bodies. Whenever they talked or listened to the sultan, they had to place their hands on the ground with their heads lowered (Müller 1843: 309). As Geertz points out in the case of Balinese kingdom, the pomp of the king was the measure of his divinity and the prosperity of his realm (Geertz 1980: 127). These ceremonial manifestations of the supremacy and splendour of the sultan can thus be seen as a demonstration of its sovereignty.

The *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* and the *kerajaan* illustrate two contrasting indigenous ideas of the kingships. The worship of the secluded and inaccessible sacredness of the *keramat*, which they believe supports the world and its people, constitutes the community of worship of the Ulu Ai'. On the other hand, the majestic authority of the sultans vested with the *daulat*, as sovereigns of the people and the land, constitutes the *kerajaan*. The image of the *kerajaan* has provided the Dayak with a basis for imagining a sovereign king and kingdom. By drawing on this imagination, the Dayak have been able to consolidate their unity as a people and claim indigenous sovereignty over their land and natural resources by presupposing the existence of a Dayak kingdom.

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[7] Amongst the regalia, a spear in the shape of a sceptre, which the sultan carried when he appeared in public, symbolized the sovereignty of the sultanate (Müller 1843: 309).

3.2. Asserting sovereignty

The Ulu Ai' has sought to maintain his ritual authority through frequent visits to Dayak villages in the hinterlands since the surrounding Malay sultanate was abolished in the independence period. The Dayak used to believe that the visits of the Ulu Ai' bring fertility of the crops, childbirth and peace to the villages. Upon his arrival, the villagers would gather in the house where he was staying. There they would perform the ritual of washing his feet and then drinking the water for their health or sprinkling it in their fields to ensure good harvests (Nishijima 2021: 53).[8] The Ulu Ai' has also planted thirteen flagpoles called *Tiang Bendera Pusaka* (flagpoles of the regalia) at Dayak villages in the hinterlands since 1957 (Nishijima 2021; map 1, photo 1). The flagpoles are a substitute for the regalia and are also believed to be the *keramat*.

Hill people in Southeast Asia have strategically adopted various fragments of practices and ideas, such as language, architecture, titles and rituals, from the lowland states (e.g., Leach 1954; Milner 1982: 139; Scott 2009). The flagpoles of the Ulu Ai' can be seen as just such a strategic importation from the lowland states. As far as I know, the Dayak in southwest Kalimantan have no known practice of planting flagpoles as their *keramat*. Rather, the raising of flags has been the practice of sovereign states located in the coastal area. It was an especially common practice of the Malay sultanates in West Kalimantan to raise flags in front of their palaces, houses and ships (Barth 1896: 77, 104, 107). The yellow flags, which are the same as the flag of the Ulu Ai', were the most common flag of the Malay sultans in West Kalimantan. In Ketapang, not only the sultan but also the aristocratic families that ruled the hinterland raised their own flags, which were black or yellow with red edges (Barth 1896: 77, 104, 107).

Subsequently, the practices of other rulers would also strengthen the image of the flags as a symbol of Dayak sovereignty. When the Dutch landed in western Kalimantan in the early nineteenth century, they forced the Malay sultanate to recognize Dutch sovereignty and ran flags up at the royal palaces (Barth 1896: 11). Under the Japanese occupation, the Dutch flags were replaced by Japanese flags. After independence, the Indonesian government raised its flags to express its sovereignty as an independent state.[9] All these flags symbolized the sovereignty of these various regimes over the territory. Some Dayak may have worshipped the flags that represented this sovereignty.

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[8] Many old Dayak people living in the hinterland remembered these practices, although the author has not witnessed these rituals in person.

[9] Japanese military government acknowledged the raise of the Indonesian flag besides the Japanese flags.

For example, the Dayak in southern Kalimantan believed that the flag represented the power of the Dutch; therefore, they raised the flags to ward off evil from the rice fields (Mallinckrodt 1925: 196). Given that the Ulu Ai' started planting the flagpoles only after the 1950s, it can be deduced that the Ulu Ai' adapted the practice of raising the flags from the surrounding state to consolidate his ritual authority.

The relationship between the regalia and the flagpole constitutes the foundation for the 'as if' kingdom. The Ulu Ai' planted most of the flagpoles in response to the rise of Dayak ethnicity during the independence period of the 1950s and the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in the late 1990s and 2000s (Nishijima 2021). The Ulu Ai' might not have been aiming to construct a ritual community by planting the flagpoles, at least not in the early stage. However, with the rise of the indigenous Dayak movement during the Reformasi period, the relationship between the regalia and the flagpoles has been re-imagined to constitute a 'kingdom'. The flagpoles establish not only the centrality of the regalia, but also the order of precedence between the centre and the periphery. Sengkuang is said to be the centre (*pusat*) of the kingdom, and the villages where the Ulu Ai' has planted flagpoles are said to be the branches (*cabang*). The Dayak in the branches must hold rituals to commemorate the construction of the flagpoles by raising the yellow flag. People can pray to the regalia through the flagpoles for blessings, a good harvest or their village's prosperity. The rituals are also arranged in accordance with the order of precedence. Each village must hold the rituals from January to May. The Ulu Ai' presiding over the central rituals, called the *Maruba*, at Sengkuang as the 'apex' (*puncak*) or 'closing' (*punutup*) of the rituals in June in order to purify the regalia. This order of precedence highlights the centrality of the regalia and the existence of the kingdom of the Ulu Ai'.

The planting of the flagpoles by the Ulu Ai' can be seen as an adaptation of the practices of the sovereign states to consolidate his ritual authority. The Ulu Ai' polity can be seen as a hybrid polity in that the ornament-worshipping community centred on *keramat* has installed the elements of the sovereign states. Whereas sovereign states raise their flags to demand obedience and loyalty from their subjects, the flagpoles of the Ulu Ai' represent the ritual alliance and the order of precedence of the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai'. Not only do the regalia and flagpoles inspire a sense of inclusion and belonging to the 'as if' kingdom in those worshipping the regalia, but also the 'as if' kingdom has provided the Dayak with a frame whereby to assert their indigenous sovereignty in the Reformasi period.

Photo 1. Flagpole planted by the Ulu Ai'

4. The multiple articulations of the hybrid polity

4.1. The Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh

This section examines how the relations between the regalia, the Ulu Ai' and the worshippers are articulated in accordance with the particular context. The *Maruba*, over which the Ulu Ai' presides to purify the regalia, articulates the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*. The *Maruba* is the most important ritual of the Ulu Ai' and marks the transition to the following agricultural cycle. In the *Maruba*, the Ulu Ai', in yellow dress, predicts the length of the dry season for the following farming year by confirming the condition inside the box. The participants in the *Maruba* come together at the house of the Ulu Ai' from southern Sanggau and Ketapang, there being several hundred participants.

During the *Maruba*, the house of the Ulu Ai' is decorated with yellow cloth. Yellow cloth is hung from the ceiling of the front room, stretched out from the entrance to the back of the room, and other yellow cloth is hung from the ceiling crosswise. A rattan mat is laid out in the corner of the front room, and yellow cloth is hung on the back and above to designate the place where the Ulu Ai' would sit.

The process of the *Maruba* articulates the organization of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* as the ornament-worshipping community (Nishijima 2020: 129-32).[10] The main components of the *Maruba* are dances with gamelan music. The primary section of the *Maruba* is divided into three parts, each consisting of a fixed number of

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[10] The author describes the main part of the *Maruba* in this paper. For more details of the *Maruba*, see Nishijima (2020).

dances. Two groups make up one unit, and each group has two pairs of couples. In a unit of dances, the two groups alternately perform the dance twice each, for a total of four times. The number of units in the dance depends on the scale of the *Maruba*, which can range from three to seven units (Nishijima 2020: 130). The two couples who dance first in a unit are a pair of customary leaders, such as the Ulu Ai', the *wakil raja*, the *sutragi* or the other customary chiefs. The other pairs of couples who dance later are ordinary participants (ibid.: 130.). Between the dances in the group, the customary leaders and other old men sing recited poems called *Baha Sempori*, which will be examined in detail below.

The first part of the dance is performed in the front room. Then several women go to the forest to collect pieces of bamboo, which are used as offerings to the regalia (ibid.: 130-1). After the women come back from the forest, the participants start preparing the offerings for the regalia. When they have finished their preparations, the second part of the dance begins. During this part, each group of the unit performs the dance in different rooms. The former group (composed of the Ulu Ai', the *wakil raja*, the *sutragi* and the other customary chiefs) enters the room adjacent to the room containing the regalia. The other groups of couples perform the dances in the front room (ibid.: 131). When they have completed the fixed number of dances in both rooms, the Ulu Ai' and the others in the adjacent room enter the room with the regalia (ibid.: 131). After the Ulu Ai' has purified the regalia in the box, the Ulu Ai' and other participants go to the river to discharge the offerings and then dive into the river themselves, to get rid of the evils of the past agricultural cycle. Then, all the participants again perform the last part of the dances in the front room. The *Maruba* reorganizes the participants in order of precedence based on their closeness to the sacred dagger (ibid.: 132).

The *Maruba* demonstrates the subordination of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* to the regalia. The *Maruba* consists of the cooperative 'works' of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*.[11] Each ritual act in the *Maruba,* such as dances, playing the gamelan, reciting *Baha Sempori* and preparing the offerings, can be seen as ritual works (cf. Firth 1967). The Ulu Ai' must also offer his own works, such as performing the dances, preparing the offerings and purifying the regalia. The Ulu Ai' himself has described the *Maruba* as 'works' (*gaé*). The works of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* aim at the culmination of the *Maruba*, when the Ulu Ai' opens the wooden box to purify the regalia. The devotion of these ritual actions to the regalia is a prerequisite

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[11] Maruyama (1988) argues that the bidirectional relationship between the offering of services by subjects to the emperor and the granting of legitimacy by the emperor to his subjects has underlined Japanese politics. The argument in this section is partly inspired by Maruyama's arguments.

for the Ulu Ai' to open the wooden box. It is believed that the wooden box will not open if the participants do not perform the sets of ritual acts in the proper way.

The subordination of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* to the regalia is recited in the *Baha Sempori*. The *Baha Sempori* consists of a combination of ritual phrases and improvised expressions. In the *Baha Sempori*, lines such as the following are recited: 'the reason we summoned the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* is to purify the regalia' and 'we purify the regalia so that all people can live well and sit in peace as we used to be'. The message recited in the *Baha Sempori* is that they need the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* to purify the regalia and that 'we', namely the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*, are collectively purifying the regalia to obtain a blessing from it. These lyrics of the *Baha Sempori* reflect the idea of ownership of the regalia. The worshippers of the regalia often describe the object of worship as 'our regalia' (*pusaka kita*) or 'my regalia' (*pusaka bonda aku*). This means that the regalia do not belong to the Ulu Ai' but to the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*, who collectively devote their work to the regalia. Only by devoting the works to the regalia can the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* have access to them in order to get rid of evil and make a successful transition to the next farming year.

The collective and spontaneous worship of the *keramat* constitutes the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*. Its organization is made manifest when the participants collectively and spontaneously dedicate their works to the regalia with specific procedures contained in the *Maruba*. The participants can gain access to the regalia, which support the world and its people, only by collaboratively conducting the *Maruba*. The *Maruba* evokes a sense of cooperation and community among the worshippers of the *keramat*. However, the *Maruba* does not demonstrate the solidarity and sovereignty that the Dayak have sought during the Reformasi period, since the *keramat* is sacred and hidden from the public. Instead, the Dayak have had to import ideas and practices from the outside to articulate their kingdom.

4.2. Rituals at the flagpoles

With the rise of Dayak identity in the Reformasi period, the flagpoles have led the Dayak to imagine the existence of the Ulu Ai' kingdom. The rituals conducted at the flagpoles reveal how the Dayak people imagine the kingdom and why they need to articulate the kingdom. This section describes the ritual of the flagpole performed at Aur Gading, a Dayak hamlet along the Bihak River, which I attended in January 2015. The Bihak River is one of the main tributaries of the Pawan River, and the people living along the Bihak River are also called Bihak.

The flagpole at the Aur Gading was erected in 2001 following a request the villagers made to the Ulu Ai'. The villager who negotiated with the Ulu Ai' at that time explained that they had asked the Ulu Ai' to plant the flagpole because 'no one would notice the Aur Gading was part of the kingdom without the flagpole'. The ritual at the flagpole reveals the construction of the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai'. Before the ritual, the villagers from Aur Gading visit Sengkuang to escort the participants. The Ulu Ai' himself participates in the ritual in some cases, and the *wakil raja* or *sutragi* participate on his behalf in other instances. In 2015, the Ulu Ai', the *wakil raja*, the *sutragi* and other villagers from Sengkuang all attended the ritual. In general, there are custodians of the flagpole in each village, the flagpoles themselves being located in front of the custodians' houses. When the participants from Sengkuang village arrived, a yellow flag was hoisted on a staff about one metre high in front of the custodian's house to announce the coming of the Ulu Ai'. The room of the custodian's house was decorated as the room of the Ulu Ai' at the time of the *Maruba*, but in a more modest manner. Yellow cloth was hung from the ceiling of the front room, stretched out from the entrance to the back of the room. A rattan mat was also laid out in the corner of the front room, and a yellow cloth was hung on the back.

The ritual of the flagpole started the day after the entourage arrived. The ritual was divided into two parts, of which the first occurred outdoors and the second indoors. Before the start of the ritual, the participants removed weeds from the area around the flagpole. The flagpole is surrounded by a wooden fence, and its base is cemented into the ground. The fact that the weeds grow year after year inside the fence, despite the cemented base, is believed to be a sign of the flagpole's life-giving power. After the weeding, the ritual at the flagpole began. The people hoisted the yellow flag on the flagpole. Inside the fence, the Ulu Ai', the *wakil raja*, the *sutragi*, the custodian and some Sengkuang and Aur Gading villagers sat down around the flagpole. The other participants watched the progress of the ritual from outside the fence. The *wakil raja*, the *sutragi* and the custodian stood in turn to pray to the flagpole for a blessing. The custodian of the flagpole, dressed in yellow like the Ulu Ai' in the *Maruba*, prayed for prosperity and good harvests. The Ulu Ai', meanwhile, remained seated and immobile, silently watching the ritual. When the custodian had finished his prayer, the participants gathered around the flagpole and took a sip of rice wine, and the outdoor ceremony was over.

Before the latter part of the ritual began, the village head and the Ulu Ai' delivered speeches in the front room, stressing the need to integrate as a 'kingdom' to fight against marginalization. In his speech, the village head mentioned the anniversary of

Ketapang city, which the local government had fixed based on the date when the sultanate of Matan was thought to have moved to Ketapang. Pointing out that the local government overlooks the Dayak people's history in the Hulu Sungai subdistrict, the village head emphasized, 'Don't let the kingdom remain unknown… we were the branch of the kingdom centred on *Bosi Koling Tongkat Raya'at* at Sengkuang. We had to uphold it'. The Ulu Ai' explained that the construction of the flagpole was a 'project of the kingdom' (*proyek-proyek kerajaan*) and that he had planted the flagpole in Aur Gading as a 'foundation for the unity and integration of the Dayak' (*tonggak persatuan kesatuan kita Orang Dayak*). After these speeches, the indoor ritual began. The villagers from Sengkuang and Aur Gading danced to gamelan music as in the *Maruba*. During the ritual, the participants from both villages ate communally.

The ritual at the flagpole, historically more recent than the *Maruba*, reveals the transition from the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* to the *kerajaan*. The ritual itself can be seen as a subordinate version of the *Maruba*. The decoration of the custodian's house at the time of the ritual is a more concise version of the decoration of the Ulu Ai''s house at the time of the *Maruba*. Furthermore, as the Ulu Ai' in yellow dress purifies the regalia in the *Maruba*, the custodian of the flagpole in yellow dress purifies the flagpole as the substitute for the regalia. The subordination of this 'branch' ritual to the *Maruba* at the 'centre' evokes the existence of the *kerajaan*, with its hierarchical structure of centre and periphery. The flagpole's subordination also means that the ritual at the periphery is legitimized by the superior centre, the regalia and the Ulu Ai'. Here, the presence of the Ulu Ai' is important in providing legitimacy to the ritual. The Ulu Ai' functions as the source of legitimacy, like the Malay sultans, and sits immobile and silent while the custodian prays to the flagpole. In the background of the transition to the *kerajaan* lies the aspiration for Dayak solidarity, sovereignty and resistance against their marginality, as the Ulu Ai' and the village head emphasized. By holding the ritual at the 'branch', the participants were able to confirm the existence of this solidarity.

4.3. Articulating the 'sovereign' kingdom

How the 'as if' kingdom is articulated depends on what the Dayak people are attempting to express or achieve in a given context. When the need for solidarity and the claim to indigenous sovereignty become crucially important to them, the hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai' comes closer to the *kerajaan*. Pressing local political issues such as land conflicts and local elections require solidarity as the Masyarakat Adat Dayak and lead to the kingdom of the Ulu Ai' being articulated.

A major conflict took place over customary land in the Hulu Sungai subdistrict. A

Malay villager with the initials K.M. from the neighbouring subdistrict, who was a descendant of the aristocrats of the Sekadau sultanate, surveyed the land to claim his customary rights over the part of the forest in the Hulu Sungai subdistrict.[12] The conflicts over customary land rights led to the incorporation of the concept of Masyarakat Adat into the 'as if' kingdom. A Dayak organization called the Pasukan Merah (Red Army) declared its support for the Ulu Ai'. This organization is led by a customary Dayak chief called Panglima Jilah ('*panglima* of the tongue') from Mempawah regency of West Kalimantan. The Pasukan Merah, which was founded in 2005 with the purpose of protecting *adat* Dayak and preserving the forests of Kalimantan, has been growing rapidly, mainly among Dayak youth, since the 2010s and reportedly has 50,000 members throughout Kalimantan (*Tempo* 2020 [18 Oct.] a, 2020 [18 Oct.] b). The Pasukan Merah has brought the tribal image of the Dayak to the forefront. When its members demonstrate against private companies or state institutions, its members put on red bandanas and red loincloths and carry machetes.

The Ketapang branch of the Pasukan Merah declared its support for the Ulu Ai' in protesting against K.M.'s claim. The Ulu Ai' appeared on a YouTube video with members of the Pasukan Merah and read a statement claiming that there have been no land transactions between the kingdoms and asking the Dayak customary chiefs to impose sanctions on K.M. The Ulu Ai' also asked the government to designate the forest as a customary forest (*hutan adat*) for the prosperity of the Masyarakat Adat Dayak.[13] In response to this statement by the Ulu Ai', the Ketapang branch of the Pasukan Merah released its own video on YouTube. The Pasukan Merah also criticized the attempt by K.M. to claim a customary right to the forest within 'the territory' of the kingdom of the Ulu Ai'.[14] In both statements, the claim of a customary right to the forest was based on the indigenous sovereignty of the kingdom of the Ulu Ai'. The Ulu Ai' acted as the representative of the Masyarakat Adat Dayak by behaving as if there was a Dayak kingdom. In asking the government to designate the forest as a customary forest, the Dayak were in effect negotiating for their own indigenous sovereignty over it.

After the dispute over the customary land had ended with the intervention of the local governments, the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai' developed in a manner closer to

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[12] Raja Dayak Hulu Aik Minta Presiden RI Tetapkan Kawasan Hutan Adat di Kecamatan Hulu Sungai Ketapang, *Pontianak Tribun.co.id*, 28 June 2020. https://pontianak.tribunnews.com/2020/06/28/raja-dayak-hulu-aik-minta-presiden-ri-tetapkan-kawasan-hutan-adat-di-kecamatan-hulu-sungai-ketapang (accessed 15 August 2021).

[13] Maklumat Raja Ulu Aik ke 51 terhadap B.A Pengukuran Hutan Ulayat Kerajaan Sekadau, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlo-rWzRqRc (accessed 15 August 2021).

[14] Pernyataan dukungan Tariu Borneo kab Ketapang terhadap Raja Ulu Aik, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8BuELR_0hA (accessed 15 August 2021).

the *kerajaan*. In the regency elections in 2021, a Dayak candidate called on the 'as if' kingdom to consolidate its support in the hinterland. The Dayak candidate and the Ulu Ai' held a ceremony to confirm the authority of the customary chiefs of the Simpang Hulu subdistrict, one of the largest sources of Dayak votes in Ketapang.[15] The political purpose of the ritual was to consolidate support for the Dayak candidate from the Dayak population in the subdistrict. In the ceremony, the articulation of the hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai' came close to the *kerajaan*. The Ulu Ai' and the Dayak candidate appeared in the ritual, attended by the Pasukan Merah. The Ulu Ai' was dressed in a gold-embroidered black jacket, which the Malay sultans often wore at their royal ceremonies. A member of the Pasukan Merah walked alongside the Ulu Ai', holding up yellow umbrellas as if he were a loyal servant. Legitimizing the status of the customary chiefs of the subdistrict, the Ulu Ai' sat on a floor seat holding a staff, while the Dayak chief who was to receive the confirmation sat on the floor in front of him.[16] The stage props deployed in the ceremony, such as the black jacket embroidered with gold, the yellow umbrella, the floor seat on which the king sits, the royal escorts, the display of the regalia and legitimizing the status of the Ulu Ai''s 'subjects', are adaptations of the *kerajaan*. Behaving as if they have the *kerajaan*, the participating Dayak were able not only to express primordial sentiments of solidarity as a Dayak kingdom, but also to demonstrate their collective support for the Dayak elites.

The progress of the events described above illustrates how the Dayak claims to solidarity and sovereignty articulate the 'as if' kingdom. The kingdom has adopted the concept of Masyarakat Adat to resist the claims of customary rights by outsiders and claim their own sovereignty over the forest. This means that the kingdom too has claimed indigenous sovereignty over the forest in the subdistrict. Moreover, the dispute over customary land led to the incorporation of the Pasukan Merah into the 'as if' kingdom. The local elections, a culminating moment in Dayak identity politics, articulated the 'as if' kingdom as the *kerajaan*. Supporting the Dayak candidate can be seen as a way for the Dayak to engage in local politics and achieve indigenous sovereignty over their land. The strong aspiration for solidarity as Dayak and for indigenous sovereignty led to the articulation of the 'as if' kingdom of the Ulu Ai'. The articulations of the 'as if' kingdom have clearly been related to the aspirations of the Dayak. However, Ulu Ai' needs to dedicate the 'work' to the regalia in the yellow dress

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[15] The ceremony was conducted during the inauguration of the traditional house in the Simpang Hulu subdistrict.

[16] Domong Adat Banua Simpang Dikukuhkan, *Pontianak Post.co.id*, 1 December 2020, https://pontianakpost.co.id/domong-adat-banua-simpang-dikukuhkan/(accessed 15 August 2021).

with the other worshippers of the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh* in the *Maruba*. Therefore, the bricolage of the 'as if' kingdom is disarticulated, and the hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai' swings back to the *Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh*. This oscillation also contributes to inhibiting the internalization of the hierarchy of the *kerajaan* among the Dayak. In this regard, the articulation of the 'as if' kingdom is an ad hoc yet strategic assemblage for the purpose of claiming the integration and negotiating the sovereignty of the Dayak people in a particular situation without incorporating the hierarchical relationships.

5. Conclusion

The fall of Suharto's authoritarian regime and the subsequent period of democratic reform have triggered the rise of a number of 'kingdoms' throughout Indonesia. This article has shown how the aspiration of the Dayak people for solidarity and indigenous sovereignty led to the articulation of an 'as if' kingdom. Previous studies have understood the emergence of the 'as if' kingdoms in the context of avoidance of the state and aspiration for a state.

   On the other hand, the article illustrates how the Dayak have incorporated the elements of the *kerajaan* such as yellow flags, royal attire, entourages and the display of the regalia and articulated their own kingdom to express the indigenous sovereignty of the Masyarakat Adat Dayak. Furthermore, as the hybridity of the polity of the Ulu Ai' suggests, this common language has provided the Dayak with various means of expressing their solidarity and claims of indigenous sovereignty depending on the context. The Dayak have rallied behind the Ulu Ai' for various purposes, such as declaring their rejection of marginalization, confirming their collective identity, claiming sovereignty over the land and engaging in local politics. In other words, the Dayak articulate the kingdom depending on the context.

    The common thread in all these practices is that the Dayak are attempting to negotiate their indigenous sovereignty (cf. Clifford 2013). Articulation of the Dayak kingdom serves as the foundation for the integration of the Dayak into a single collective for the purpose of this negotiation. This case study shows that the revival of the kingdom under Reformasi is part of a process of generating a common language for the Dayak so that they can be integrated as one people and pursue indigenous sovereignty together.

    In Indonesia, the concept of indigenous sovereignty has been incorporated into Masyarakat Adat, which was oppressed under the Suharto authoritarian regime. Each Masyarakat Adat has negotiated a degree of indigenous sovereignty, rather than seeking

to achieve independence or full autonomy from the Indonesian state, but has negotiated its own degree of sovereignty within the state. The traditional forms of expressing sovereignty, the royal rituals, have provided the means for Masyarakat Adat to express and confirm their indigenous sovereignty. Articulations of these 'as if' kingdoms in ritual contexts have become a strategy of negotiating indigenous sovereignty without being in clear conflict with national sovereignty.

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THE ENIGMATIC CLANS OF THE PALAUNG:

KINSHIP CLUSTERS AND CONTINUITY IN UPPER BURMA

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Abstract

This essay tries to bring some clarity to the notion of 'clan' as employed by early British ethnographers and administrators of Upper Burma, especially with regard to the Palaung population of the Shan States. Several aspects of the ethnographic records of a hundred years ago are examined and discussed. It is suggested that in terms of positivist sociological morphology the actual inconsistent social formations existing at that time remain very elusive. It is suggested that they may be better understood as being formed in processes in which a common, 'inward-looking', cultural template as to social continuity was, when socially realized, influenced pragmatically by varying discourses and changing realities. The social clusters that resulted showed significant diversity, while still modally honouring the template.

Key words: Palaung, Upper Burma, clanship, symbology, modal analysis

Introduction

In this study in the genre of historical anthropology, I wish to draw attention to some features of social morphology that characterized the Palaung people in the ethnically pluralistic tracts known as Upper Burma. The study offers a close reading of existing ethmography assembled about a hundred years ago. It will be argued that in order to understand Palaung social clusters as they appeared in the terrain at that time, we have to get the drift of how cultural templates were affected by conventional social discourses that handled the real and social worlds, and also by factually changing circumstances. I will suggest that pragmatic complexities and complications distorted their cultural meanings as the templates were translated into social reality.

Cultural imperative templates can be seen as cognitive strategies that are intuited as exhortations as to what should be done in conventionalized phases of social life. Such impulses contribute to a continuing relative conformity in social life over time and result in recognized morals and 'traditions'. However, in a realist world circumstances change, and so

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the stream of life will seek adjustments. Traditions are adjusted in local situations of stress and change and come out differently. This broad base-line will provide analytical possibilities helpful in gaining some understandings of the character of Palaung ways of forming their society.

The focus in this essay is thus on a constellation of people known as the Palaung, who were, and still are, widely distributed over Upper Burma. Around 1900 they were scattered over all of this vast expanse, but with concentrations in the areas of Tawngpeng, Hsipaw, Hsenwi (in the Northern Shan States) and Kodaung (in the Ruby Mines District). In the contemporary political situation many Palaung have moved into Thailand. The Palaungs have long been regarded as great wanderers, and small settlements were also scattered over all parts of the Southern Shan States, where they were found on the higher ranges in the landscape (Scott 1900: 439). For instance, it was reported that in the late nineteenth century there were also a few Palaung villages in Kengtung State, and these were then known to have been there for many years. These settlers believed their forefathers came from Tawngpeng (Scott 1900: 493, citing notes taken by G.C.B. Stirling). There is also a Palaung minority in Yunnan, China, where they are known as De'ang.

'Palaung' is a classification of Burmese origin, their own ethnic designation formerly being Rumai, and today Ta-ang. In this text I shall use the first label, Palaung, thus following an old anthropological tradition.[2] The term 'Rumai' has an uncertain status, as we also learn that those so designated constituted a large and important 'clan' scattered through the various Shan States (Milne 1924: 2). In the enumeration of the *Census Report* of 1901, the total number of Palaung at that time was returned as 56,866 (Lowis 1906: 126). The 1921 census gave the corresponding population of the Northern Shan States as 105,325 (Bennison 1933: 182), indicating mass immigration from China in these years.

As already indicated, they have been known for their tradition of situating their villages at a considerable elevation, and this remoteness in location is certainly a reason why the early ethnography of these settlements is somewhat less rich than those referring to many of their neighbours. In their research endeavours, the earliest ethnographers, British administrators of remarkable anthropological and linguistic leanings, were much engaged in tracing the history of the movements of peoples from southern China into Burmese territory. Much of this historical reconstruction work was informed by comparative study of the various languages spoken by the peoples of the area and their possible connections, which formed hypothetical

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[2] For a detailed tracing of the shifting names and labels of the various ethnic groups that are subsumed under the designation 'Palaung', see Deepadung 2011.

families whose members were more similar. This early involvement with ethnic history and the search for language connections will not be addressed further in the present essay.

As to appearance, we learn from the early accounts that Palaung men invariably wore the dress used by the dominant lowland male Shan population. The women, however, were said to have had picturesque costumes consisting of a hood and coat, together with a skirt and leggings of cloth (Lowis 1906: 126). The patterns of female dress varied with location and may have served the polyethnic scene as an index to tell whence they and their wearers originated. The ethnography provides detailed descriptions.

Divisions and Palaung Identity

Among the majority Burmese population, the Palaung 'tribes' were commonly divided into two classes, the 'true' Palaung and the Palè. This line of demarcation, however, was not always admitted as socially accurate by the locals of some areas, and we learn that in Kodaung District people actually stated that any such distinction would be fanciful and incorrect. In other areas the difference seems to have actually existed, being recognized and seemingly going deep. Broadly speaking, it has been argued that the Palaung proper lived on the higher hills and cultivated little but tea, while the Palè settled lower down and often grew more rice than tea (Scott 1900: 486). We also learn that the Palaung affected to look down upon the Palè. However, we are also told that, apart from monetary considerations, there seems to have been no real ground for this assumption of Palaung superiority. It was thought almost certain that the 'proper' Palaung, though possibly descendants of what once was a ruling class, were 'by no means such pure-blooded [descendants]… as the poorer and more backward clans who they profess to despise' (Lowis 1906: 17).

We are informed that in the Kingdom of Tawngpeng there was a constellation of people known as Pato Ru, who claimed to be the Palaung proper, and that their village of Tawngma, south of Namhsan, the capital of this traditional Shan-type realm, claimed to be the oldest in the State. It was asserted that this 'clan' originally consisted entirely of relatives of the ruling house, who kept up a jealous exclusiveness and did not marry out of their own clan. It could be added that the King (or Chief) of Tawnpeng belonged to the Tawngma kinship cluster (Milne 1924: 20).

Apparently this Pato Ru community claimed at one time a variety of privileges and distinctions. They alone of the Palaung men wore colours in their dress, all men of the other clans were being restricted to plain black and white. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, an ethnographer noted that these differences had vanished (Scott 1900: 486). What

we seem to encounter in this backward-looking description is a projection and thus a reflection of a dominant Shan-type social order with a sprawling 'aristocratic' class, as contrasted to the commoners of the realm. Mary Milne (1924: 24) mentions a 'royal family', people descended from the seven sons of an 'early chief' (K'un Mao), who considered themselves of better birth and higher standing than the rest of the people, that is, those clans that could claim no royal ancestors. Milne certainly refers to Namhsan, the capital of Tawnpeng, where her fieldwork was based. It seems certain that her observations here refer to the group known to others as Pato Ru.

In the capital of Namhsan there were also other constellations of people with similar claims to high rank, for instance, the Hpawng-myo, who were a branch of the Sam-long kinship cluster and mostly of the ruling class (Scott 1900: 484). Furthermore, the ethnographer stresses that of, the various Palaung kinship clusters, the Katurr was the most conspicuous. It was probably the wealthiest in the State of Tawngpeng, and the family of the *Sawbwa* or 'King' of Tawngpeng belonged to it. This information thus contrasts with Milne's note that the royal family were from a place called Tawngma, dominated by the constellation Patu Ru. Perhaps these latter clansmen formed a subdivision of the Katurr, maybe an inner core group. Again, it was perhaps just a matter of double naming.[3]

Ther township of Namhsan, the *Sawbwa's* capital, above which towered its wooden whitewashed *haw* or palace, was a Katurr centre, as was also Saram (or Zeyan), a flourishing village a few miles to the north-west of Namhsan and, on the same central mountain ridge, across the deep wooded valley to the west, Kyaukpyu. The Katurr cluster numbered probably about three thousand members, who were all collected into a very compact area in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. It was quite exceptional to find a Katurr living in a non-Katurr village (Lowis 1906: 22).

What is of importance here is that, among the Palaung in general, the main social distinctions observed and applied seem to have given rise to clusters known in the anthropological jargon of a hundred years ago as 'clans'. Clan belonging was also reflected in village settlements. In many areas, each locality and the main clan residing there were, in turn, associated with one or other of the basic categories Palaung or Palè. The differences and relationships between these two broad classes of the population are not obvious. In an

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[3] Here there is a confusion in the sources that cannot be sorted out. Tawngma is both a name of an old village with two important pagodas and a clan — that is, with reference to those residents who lived there (Lowis 1906: 26-7). The very same clan also appeared under the names of Katurr and Patu Ru.

unknown early history, one of them may have been pristine settlers, the other being late-comers in the ongoing migration from southern China into Burma.

Kinship Clusters known as Clans

The early ethnography, written by observant scholarly inclined British administrators, describes Palaung settlements in terms of clans. However, may we ask what was actually meant by a 'clan' — and this is not so evident. It is said that

> The unit to which analysis carries us back is the originally endogamous clan, known by a distinctive name, wearing a distinctive dress and confined in the first instance to a particular locality. … Each clan is distributed over several villages, sometimes adjoining one another, sometimes, in the case of the Palés [sic!] far apart, but even where the separation is wide … there seems to be an unmistakeable feeling of clannishness which will prompt the residents of a village which has little or no intercourse with a neighbouring village of another clan to go a two or three days' journey over the hills to attend a function of some distant clan village. Beyond this point, however the spirit of cohesion does not appear to extend. Even in Tawnpeng, here the conditions are especially favourable to union, the clans are separate unions with hardly anything in common and the administration is carried out largely on their own account by the minor village officials who are chosen by their own villagers and are to a great extent independent of, and have comparatively little recourse to, the central authority at Namhsan. (Lowis 1906: 20-1)

The first proposition found in this text is thus that Palaung social clusters of relatives were clans. What made these communities distinctive? Apparently the presence of clans characterized a society which was rather different from that of the Shan population that dominated the area. In general, the latter were not particularly keen on linear ancestry as a principle of social organization, apart from the lines of descent pertaining to aristocratic and royal families. To the Shan, rice land and rice cultivation were essential to notions of basic belonging. In Shan local organization, it was the land-holding itself that formed the element of structural continuity. The land-owning group was conceived as all the descendants of the first owner, who usually acquired his tenancy either by squatting or by being granted it by the ruling king in return for services rendered. The Shan had an open bilateral kinship system. There were many ways of being related. In practice, the ownership and control of land were confined to those descendants of the original owner who continued to reside that land on and draw a livelihood from it. Strictly speaking, rights in land could not be sold. The residents in a rural settlement were related to each other through their similar relationships to the land they cultivated (Bird 1897: 22; Woodthorpe 1897: 13-28; Leach 1954: 1, 30, 32, 213).

On the other hand, we know that the neighbouring hill-dwellers, the Kachin, gave much thought to linear kin relationships stretching back in time when defining their social

belonging. In his famous research among the Kachin in Upper Burma, Edmund Leach found that a Kachin clan was a patrilineage which was not thought of as being a segment of any other patrilineage of greater depth or span (Leach 1954: 128). Leach uses the word 'clan' to denote a lineage of maximal scale. The Kachins considered their total society to be composed of some seven or eight groupings of this type. Was Palaung social organization, described by the early British ethnographers as a conglomerate of clans, something reminiscent of the organization of Kachin society?

The sources are not very explicit concerning the structure of the Palaung kinship clusters. We can glean, though, that the patriline was a carrying principle in consociation. We learn that at birth children of either sex were welcomed, but 'males are preferred, as they are said to continue the family'. When a child was born the father was always near by, but no other men were present. The presence of the father seems to have expressed the agnatic[4] link, the father being in the process of taking possession of his new child. Again, we learn that in the village of Manton in Kedaung District only male children inherit (Cameron 1912: xxi; Milne 1924: 25). In general, in Palaung marriages, future residence for the newly wed was patrilocal for the husband and virilocal for the wife (Cameron 1912: xx, xiii, xvi, xxi; Lowis 1906: 11; Milne 1924: 25). Such observations certainly indicate a customary inclination among the members of a kinship cluster to reckon their belonging in terms of chains of fatherhood. It seems certain that in Palaung 'aristocratic' circles agnatic kinship was used as a mark of distinction, but then an agnatic leaning in the reckoning of kinship was also shared with commoners and their own organization of social continuity. So, from what little we know, the Palaung seem in certain respects to have favoured a superficially Kachin-like kinship system, but perhaps with a strong influence of Shan aristocratic thinking in certain circles. The kingdom of Tawngpeng seems to have been organized along Shan political lines, while the *saopaw* king was recognized as being of the prominent Palaung Katurr/Tawngma clan.[5]

Agnatic kinship does not seem to have been articulated in terms of ancestral veneration. The Palaung had been Buddhists for a considerable time, and their eschatology considered death in an entirely different mode of thinking. Perhaps, at a distant period in time, they had a more pronounced idea of lineal kinship ties leading into the past, embracing the dead. Be that

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[4] We learn that Palaung myth has it that 'a long time ago' the men and not the women bore the children (Milne 1924: 284). This myth may be indexical in this context, but the point seems too vague to be further elborated on here.

[5] There is no occasion here for a discussion of political organization within the space of this article. In Tawnpeng it was much the same as that of a Shan state, but the administration at village level differed in important respects from that of the Shan model (Leach 1954: 56-57).

as it may, at the time of the ethnographic records we learn that ancestor worship, as practised by the Chinese, for instance, was unknown among the Palaungs.

However, it is said that sometimes prayers were directed to the spirits of dead parents in case they had not eaten of the fruit of forgetfulness, a reference to an idea which was one of their Buddhist beliefs in reincarnation (Milne 1924: 356). The circumstance that Palaung residential houses had a shrine on their front verandas that not only displayed a small image of the Buddha, but was also regarded as a place for the worship of the 'house-spirits' (Milne 1924: 183), suggests the possibility that these house spirits were deceased earlier inhabitants of the house. Here we must pre-empt what will follow below. It will be argued that basic Palaung belonging was focused on residences. Being a house-based society, their notions of ancestry would are likely to have been directed towards former residents of their own houses, rather than being explicitly defined by ascending kinship. There is no direct evidence for this, however.

Endogamy and Clans

In his account, Lowis suggests that Palaung clans were 'originally endogamous'. The evidence for this statement seems somewhat elusive.

We have already mentioned the important Pato Ru kin cluster dominating the capital township of Namhsan in Tawngpeng, whose inhabitants claimed to be the most genuine Palaung. The Pato Ru were also the masters of their own village of Tawngma, south of the state capital. They seem to have conformed with Lowis' general proposition on endogamy. However, there was a political aspect to this. It was asserted that this kinship cluster originally consisted entirely of relatives of the ruling house, who kept up a jealous exclusiveness and did not marry out of their own circle (Scott 1900: 486).

Some other notes are of interest here. In the village of Manpun (in the Kodaung Hill Tracts), wives were obtained from the village of Yabon, but not from any other clans (Cameron 1912: xviii). Obviously, Manpun was inhabited by a single clan, as was Yabon. They were not endogamous.

In the Palaung village of Manlon (in the Shan State of Momeik) we do find a sort of endogamy. It is reported that here marriage with women from other clans was not countenanced. If a young man persisted, he was told to go and live with his wife, as the *nat* spirits of Manlon did not look with favour on such unions. Men from other clans might take women from Manlon as wives, but in that case they had to come and live in Manlon and live properly with their wives, otherwise the Hso mong *nat* (or Sö-mong, the local guardian spirit,

worshipped in villages in the District of Kodaung) would soon drive them away. It appears that actual residence, in combination with a notion of 'continuous inside female generative power', were the driving forces here.

It must be understood that, as has already been mentioned above, the prevailing custom was that that brides took up a virilocal residence after marriage in all Palaung settlements (Cameron 1912: xvi, xviii; Lowis 1906: 10-11, Milne 1924: 349). In Manlon it therefore seems that if need be agnatic descent, should that be of importance, could also be traced through daughters.

Yet another early ethnographer claims that the evidence seems to indicate that at one time endogamy prevailed. In the late nineteenth century, survivals of an endogamous tendency were still to be seen in villages like Saram in Tawngpeng, where as a rule the young men declined to look outside the limits of the village for their spouses. However, this 'as a rule' was a statement that must be modified immediately. We learn of the pragmatic fact that following the rule was the exception and that, generally speaking, all restrictions with regard to marriage appeared to have broken down already around the turn of the century. This was supposed to be the result of the levelling influences of Buddhism. In these days of early reporting, members of different clans were found living together in the same village in conditions which showed that there had been intermarriage. Palaung men, from the Tawngpeng *Sawbua* downwards, frequently took not only females from other clans but also Shan women as consorts (Lowis 1906: 10-11). However, the latter circumstance seems to be referring to court circles, as generally marriages were monogamous and not transethnic.

There is yet another note on endogamy saying that there were no such restrictions, and members of all clans intermarried so freely that the old (assumed) distinctions had seemingly vanished (Scott 1900: 486). A further, much later source says about the Palaung that, 'unlike other groups, endogamy is not practised.' The latter observation refers, it seems, to the township of Namhsan, where we may expect great changes to have occurred in the last hundred years (Simms 2017: 177).

Some Further Observations Regarding Marriage

Palaung historical ethnography offers annotations on marriage conventions that might throw some light on the nature of this people's evasive clans. As noted earlier, the agnatic line mattered in both the reckoning of kinship and the arrangement of marriages. Paternal affiliation was a dominant structural principle in society, and this norm came to influence certain rules as to who could marry whom. While a man could wed a MoBroDa, he could not

marry a FaSiDa. This normative avoidance of possible incest indicates the intimate unity between brothers and sisters, that is, the children of a common father, each of them being equally regarded as part of an integrated siblingship unit. If you as a man married a FaSiDa, you would in effect be marrying your own sister. Your mother, conversely, came from a different kinship background and formed a unit with her own outsider brothers and sisters. Accordingly their daughters would be available on the marriage market, despite their being cousins. It is not said whether this last arrangement — marriage with MoBroDa — was actually preferred more systematically.

It seems to follow that FaBroDa was not available, although this is not explicitly stated in the ethnography.

The two principles of agnation and sibling unity would also inform other marriage propositions. First cousins could then marry if they were not related on the father's side. Second and third cousins seems to have been able to marry freely, but different clans may have had somewhat divergent rules in this regard. The ethnography on consanguinity is somewhat difficult to read, but the general impression is that incest regulations were limited to a narrow circle (ouside the immediate family) and that people from the same clan were fully eligible for marriage unless they were paternal first cousins. In some groups this limitation was projected on to the generation to follow, and in one case on to the two following generations (Cameron 1912: xviii-xix).

The records provide some exceptions. In the village of Manpat a man was actually allowed to marry FaSiDa — a note that is then somewhat mystifying. Here people apparently did not find too close a relationship between the children, or grandchilden, of a father and those of his sisters, and so marriage between them was permitted. This local convention could have been a device to intensify endogamy in a situation where Manpat people sought to improve their social rank by way of isolation. This bifurcating notion of availability could have emerged under Shan influence. In contrast, in the village of Yahon it was not possible to marry a third cousin, but fourth cousins would have been available in the search for a partner (Cameron 1912: xvi).

There are further ethnographic notes on marriage procedures taken by an early administrator, W.G. Wooster, and particularly by the linguist and ethnographer Mary Milne, both of which provide rich detail. Here is a very brief summary of some of the many features of the ceremonies. We learn that once a year a meeting of all the youths who were old enough to be married was held. They formed a group and went round to the houses of all the girls who were marriageable to 'pull them about with due regard to decency'. These romps were

carried on after the parents had gone to bed, but the group had to ensure that everything was strictly proper. After this the girls were said to be prepared for wooing, and three days later a meeting of the young men was held at which lots were drawn. The names of the youths and the maids were written on slips of paper, and they were drawn together in pairs. On the third day the youth sent a silk handkerchief and a betel-box with a looking glass on the cover to the girl whose name had been drawn with his. Three days later she sent him a tasselled cloth and a belt worked by herself. After this the young man was at liberty to press his suit in person, and he went to the girl's house at night. The pair sat on either sides of the fireplace and spoke to each other in pre-learnt, totally conventional phrases.[6]

The young man thus allocated to the girl had no exclusive right to these nightly meetings. In fact, the fireplace was soon surrounded by many aspiring suitors. The girl was by no means bound to have the young man who had drawn her in the lottery. She might bond with whom she pleased and make her selection from among all those who came courting. In fact, the girls seem to have made their own (nearly) free selections from among the young men (Scott 1900: 489-90, Milne 1924: 60-95).

The lottery arrangement that brought individual boys and girls together in pairs certainly reflects a general cultural grammar prescribing endogamy. The names written on the tickets (in Shan writing) must have been the names of the available village youths. It seems that in this lottery we can see an exposition of the cultural notion and also the ritual achievement of endogamous marriage, and thereby inward social continuity. The lottery marriage took place in one of two available cultural modalities, parallel but different. One was centred on the notion of a localized agnatic kinship cluster as an endogamous and self-reproducing unit. The content of this modality was expressively acted out by bringing together the marriage couples by lottery into symbolic thought-of weddings, which then, in the real world, seeped out into nothingness.

The other modality was based on a pragmatic, discursive view in which young men exhibited themselves in front of the available young women and the latter made a choice. It seems that some of these suitors may have come from other villages and so from other clans. There may also have been several clans in the locality. This pragmatic marriage sphere was accomplished ritually by the girl eloping from her natal home. There were some possible restrictions — including parents' stong objections and economic considerations — but these

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[6] Lowis (1906: 10) suggests that the lottery was mainly carried out in the Namhsan area, so how widespread this ritual coupling of young people actually was remains somewhat uncertain. This possible limitation will not contradict my argument on this.

were generally negotiable, mostly to the young couple's advantage. Some money was also given to the bride's father. Whereas the former modality implied some sort of transcendental ordinance being made manifest in the ticket lottery, the latter modality sprang from personal preferences. It seems, though, that the latter discursive way of arranging social continuity for practical reasons often turned out to remain within an endogamous kinship community in the real world, although its borders were not so rigid. Some notes in our ethnographic corpus suggest that in some places clans intermarried rather frequently and, as mentioned earlier, even inter-ethnic marriages occurred occasionally, although apparently very rarely. The capital of Namhsan is mentioned in this context.

The Formation of Clans

The ethnographic fragments on marriage that are found in our early sources indicate that Palaung clans were loosely structured agnatic clusters and that the emerging constellations of agnatic relatives were each localized to one or a few places. They tended to be endogamous, at least in principle, but generally not rigorously so. Exceptions could be made, but here Manpun stands out as an interesting case, Manpun people only taking wives from one other specified localized clan, the residents of Yabon. How this 'oddity' affected their ritual marriage conventions remains a mystery. What we do know is that Manpun and Yabon marriage ceremonials were somewhat different (Cameron 1912: xviii), but how this worked out under the circumstances of mandatory inter-village marriage seems beyond reconstruction. Nor do we know whether Manpun girls were married off exclusively to Yabon in a reciprocal way, or whether the former village delivered wives to yet another clan, or to several different such groupings. Still, it is clear that the Manpun clan was exogamous. A possible reading is that those in the Yabon cluster were the sole bride-givers, the *mayu ni* Kachin-style. Nor do we know whether, if so, there was a circulating system of at least three distinct clusters, A marrying B, B marrying C, and C marrying A. This would have corresponded to the Kachin *mayu-dama* system, which occurred only rarely among the Kachin, but was mostly a thought-of order implying socially and politically egalitarian relationships.[7]

 The little we know about Palaung kinship organization points to a spread of clans in the landscape, clans being entities that among themselves were of equal status. Upper-class people were only to be found in the capital, surrounding the court of the *saopaw*. Clansmen of

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[7] See further, La Raw 2007, for a wider picture of the *mayu-dama* system among the Kachin.

different backgrounds were basically of similar rank. Genealogies tended to be shallow, but clans apparently sought support in fictitious narrations about common descent.

Divisons within a settlement

As it appears, subgroups were not connected by any precise hierarchy. The ethnography tells us, however, that the roofs of some village houses had V-shaped projections above them, formed by extending the two outer rafters 'some feet' above the roof ridge or fixing boards to the rafters. These protusions were a mark of the authority of those who lived there. They were for the most part confined to the houses of the '*kin* stock' — *kin* here meaning 'clan chieftain' (Cameron 1912: xxxiii) — but with the *kin's* permission, village elders and headmen might have them too. However, they had to be neither so long, nor so ornamentally carved, as those of the original *kin* group, which were usually close to two metres in length. In some cases the original *kin* cluster's house was also distinguished by having two arms on one side and only one on the other. The origin of this custom was not remembered (Cameron 1912: xi). What seems to be said in this note is that in principle only those belonging to the chiefly kernel lineage of a somewhat pluralistic village were allowed these decorations on their houses. It seems probable that the kernal lineage of the chief existed alongside other collateral lines in the same village. The decorations may have had some iconic associations, but more straightforwardly they also signalled superiority.[8] How such distinctions affected ordinary everyday social life is not known.

It could also be that a multi-clan village ranked its inhabitants according to their respective clan belonging, depending on their settlement history, though it seems that, if this was the case, such discriminations were only valid within particular settlements. There is, however, no real evidence for this.

Kinship Cluster and Settlement

As mentioned earlier, the early ethnography reports an unmistakeable feeling of clannishness that would prompt the residents of a village which had little or no intercourse with the neighbouring villages of other clans to go on a two or three days' journey over the hills to attend a function at some distant village belonging to the same clan as themselves (Lowis 1906: 5, 21).

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[8] The iconic meanings of these protuding projections on houses may have understood as part of a bovine symbolism. I leave this aside in this article.

We have thus seen that in general clans were localized in particular villages, but it was also reported that some settlements were inhabited by several clans. In such cases it also seems that, among these blends of residents, one particular clan — the settlement's '*kin* [chief] stock' – was dominant, perhaps as a result of their being the first settlers. Another example of discrimination is that the King of Tawngpeng always belonged to the clan of Tawngma, with headquarters in a village not too far from the capital Namhsan. We learn that 'any Palaung belonging to this old royal family is considered of better birth, and has a higher standing than the rest of the people, who can claim no royal ancestors' (Milne 1924: 24).

Conventional names were given to localized clans. However, these names were not surnames used by indivual members of the clan (Miller 1924: 30). Nine different clans and their names were listed in the hill-tracts of Momeik State (Cameron 1912: v), and for Tawngpeng State we find a list of five different clans, each inhabiting one or two places (Scott 1900: 486). It seems that, at the time these reports were written, there was an ongoing change, to formerly single-clan villages being now less exclusive in their residents. In former times, it is said, two places called Vhautaung and Manyawn were peopled by separate clans under their own *kin*s or clan chieftains, this note implying a later period in which both villages harboured more than one clan (Cameron 1912: v).

Some Further Notes on Palaung Social Order

We should pay some attention to a few other features of the more general social order in which the Palaung clans were embedded. A very brief survey[9] will suggests the following picture.

As mentioned earlier, the Palaung were mainly tea planters, and, as they were highlanders, the cultivation of the tea trees covered the mountain slopes where they lived. In some areas some Palaung pursued rice-farming, mainly of dry rice on swidden plantations. Rice-growing peasants were regarded as somewhat backward, and they often seem to have been classified as Palè. The tea-growers were said to be better off, even prosperous. Their production would not give them food directly, for which they were dependent on local markets. The tea-farming production groups, those who carried out the necessary work together among the trees, were basically family-oriented, men, women, girls and boys all participating in the seasonal leaf-picking. Hired hands were also used for this task, mainly

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[9] This survey of Palaung historical ethnography is a very preliminary synthesis and is given here only to provide a general sense of the organization of the social landscape. In the future closer examinations may well change this picture. The account here draws on Scott 1900, Lowis 1906 and Milne 1924.

seasonal male migrants of Chinese extraction. Buyers of tea were mostly Chinese entrepreneurs. When the tea reached the market, it came in two main categories — dry leaves and pickled leaves, the latter mainly for local and Burmese consumption.

Palaung houses were of the same general pattern as those of the Shan, being built of bamboo wattle, raised on posts about two metres off the ground and roofed with thatch. Very often several related families lived in the same house, which were therefore much longer than those of the Shan, sometimes as much as thirty metres long.[10] The houses were always divided transversely, and many of the rooms were of a very fair size. The space between the floor and the ground was sometimes used for storing paddy and tools, but more often perhaps as a stable or byre (Scott 1900: 487). It may be repeated here that, to the extent endogamy was practised within the clan settlement, resident men and women would both be members of the same clan and so to some extent share belonging through common descent.

In some areas houses could thus be quite extensive, but there were also single family houses. It seems that the residential group of people, those who slept together in an apartment in a longhouse, formed an 'expanding' family, a unit in the process of adding further additional segments to an original core couple. Each such residential group lived apart, but still within the walls of a shared building. There was a double belonging involved in this. It is reported that four primary families living in one longhouse was common. However, when younger sons married, situations might often have arisen that called for an entirely new building to be constructed, implying the start of a new residential cycle.[11] As a caution, one ethnographer mentions that it could not been ascertained whether the various families living under the same roof were relations or had connections, or whether the conjunction was merely one of convenience (Scott 1900: 487). However, the former seems the more likely in the light of later observations.

Longhouses were also significant for the neighbouring Kachin, where the length of a building seems to have expressed social prestige (Hanson 2012: 180, 133-6). There is nothing to suggest similar distinctions among the Palaung.

The 'stove group' consisted entirely of women who produced meals in a 'cook room' for their own meal-sharing 'eating group'. Each segment of the house had its own stove. The inhabitants of the several house divisions ate separately in their own front rooms, by

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[10] On longhouses and their social correlations in Southeast Asia, see Loeb and Broek 1947.

[11] House plans from Kedaung are given by Cameron (1912: ix-xi), who maps and describes two-household, four-household and one-household buildings.

themselves, sitting on particular places around a fire. The head of the family always sat on the same seat, thus expressing his authority.

What Have We Learnt? Looking in Two Directions

The early British ethnography provides us with accounts of Palaung clans that are full of observed variation and inconsistencies, and yet the population are all uniformly described as being organized in clans. The term 'clan' here echoes the *Notes and Queries* period in social anthropology. We may ask whether there is a reasonable way to understand this old and sprawling ethnographic narrative, a line of thought that will make us discern some hint of a cultural pattern and, if so, what would have been the nature of such a pattern? Or, perhaps we are only dealing with a definitional problem?

It seems clear that Palaung society was a house-based society in that residential houses were continuously expanded by family additions, forming longhouses. These buildings were continously inclusive, and more interior space was generally added to a dwelling to correspond to the predicted growth of the family group by way of marriage. New separate houses were constructed when practical circumstances limited the possibilities for further extensions. The physically inclusive longhouse harboured inside its outer walls independent groups who cooked, ate and slept separately from one another.

Palaung society was thus basically organized within and around a house, which tended to expand stage by stage by increases in its length, and ultimately this house proliferated, giving rise to new buildings in the close vicinity of the old one. Longhouses containing up to eight families were reported, but they were relatively rare (Lowis 1906: 5). The 'descent line' of residences in a neighbourhood led back to one main original building, sometimes, as we have seen, marked by gable decorations. The original house gave rise to a cluster of later secondary and tertiary houses, the result of the circumstance that longhouses could not be stretched out endlessly in the mountainous terrain or had to be kept within limits for some other practical reason. It seems, though on grounds that are not so clear, that this assembly of houses in one particular location exchanged their women in marriage among themselves. In this way clusters of endogamous communities will have emerged in the social landscape, clusters that recognized agnatic ascent and that, through repeated internarriage, would have become tightly knit into 'endogamous clans'. Although endogamy may have emerged from isolation, this suggestion is less convincing. What seems clear is that this notion of the endogamous clan would have formed the basic Palaung idea of social belonging, referred to by Lowis (1906: 20).

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To what extent clans, referred to as Palè, practiced endogamy is not clear. What we know is that they required a brideprice, as also among the regular Palaung, but that among the former these were more significant, highly negotiable and steep (Scott 1900: 490).

The Palaung population had emigrated from southern China into the Shan States at some early point in history, together with a host of other peoples. The Palaung have been classified as speakers of a Mon-Khmer language. According to Milne (1924: 14-15) they were the first settlers in the wider Tawngpeng area. This is not necessarily true, the evidence for it being rather weak. Who was actually the first in the area is not easy to decide, but certainly there was a series of powerful movements from the north into the Burmese uplands, a response to the aggression of the expanding Chinese empire, and the Palaung were among the first to settle in areas where they were still found living a hundred years ago. It is claimed that these settlements happened at 'an extremely remote period' and that the Palaung then occupied the lower valleys. Later, with the arrival of the Shan from China, the Palaung might have been pushed away from the low-lying country to resettle in the highlands, where with time they became a hill people well adjusted to mountainous conditions (Lowis 1906: 2). This is, however, uncertain. The main ethnographer of the Palaung, Mary Milne (1924: 18-19), notes that 'I found it quite impossible to arrive at any idea of the dates of the different events before those of the eighteenth century'. We still need a better chronology of the various ethnic movements throughout history in continental Southeast Asia, but that may well be a project going beyond what can actually be achieved.

We could ask questions as to what correspondence Palaung endogamy may have had to some other forms of endogamy found in the area, for instance, to the endogamy of the Kachin's circular asymmetric marriage arrangements between lineages (*gumlao*) that combined three or four lineages into an endogamous unit (Leach 1954; La Raw 2007: 41). One thought would be that endogamous lineage combinations have collapsed into unified clan-like endogamous groups, but it remains difficult to see what sort of situation might have provoked such a transformation. And, if there was a connection, it could also have worked in the other direction: that is, the existence of internal clan incest rules will have demarcated different sublines of ascent.

It is not clear how distant this social field of endogamy reached in the geographical terrain in practice, as, at the time of these ethnographic records, clans could actually encompass several different settlements claiming a common belonging. The locations of many of such villages were often quite remote from one another. There was, as mentioned, an observed and described sort of clanishness which made people visit other distant same-clan

villages on certain ritual occasions. It could possibly be argued, then, that there were at this time wider clan spans, networks of local clusters, but that the accompanying clan endogamy was relatively local. The courting practices young people engaged in could hardly have extended to faraway villages.

Somewhat contradicting this picture are the many reports of settlements where people actually behaved differently. What factors might have influenced Palaung settlers to transform their basic cultural prototype, while still maintaining their ethnicity and so defining social boundaries in a highly pluralistic environment? There might have been influences from neighbouring peoples, like the Kachin, who have well-defined lineages and who basically marry exogamously. There was very little inter-ethnic connubiality in Palaung society (Scott 1900: 463; Leach 1954: 57; Cameron 1912: xviii)), with one apparent exception: the capital of Namhsan in Tawngpeng, where inter-ethnic marriages were said to be common (Cameron 1912: xviii).

In the sphere of production, it remains more uncertain if wider forms of co-operation were employed, tea leaves being picked in the first place by basic family groups, but also, especially in the wet season, with help of hired hands. The picking was done in periods between March/April and late October, in the heavy rains of the monsoon season (Milne 1924: 226-38). We may wonder what effects the introduction of tea-tree cultivation once had on the social organization of Palaung society. It is said that the Palaung recognized the fact that the introduction of tea to their country was comparatively modern (Milne 1924: 224). When and how this happened, however, seems to be beyond recovery. Before this change occurred, rice cultivation seems to have dominated the economy. There is nothing in the data surrounding the tea trade that suggests that its introduction caused a general upheaval in social organization, apart then from increasing differences in prosperity between those who remained rice farmers and the new tea planters. Even so, the new economy certainly meant a dramatic departure from many old conventions. For those who still cultivated rice we have but little information.

The neighbouring and politically dominant Shan population of the valleys had obviously influenced the Palaung in certain ways. All Palaung men sported Shan dress, while the women maintained their ethnically styled outfit in combination with local indexical clan patterns in the accompanying embroidery work. Again, could Shan marriages have influenced Palaung wedding practices? There are certain features, like the place of ritual elopment (Milne 1924: 75-85), that were shared, but looking at this in a broader light, there is little reason to assume that possible changes in marriage customs have occurred because of direct

foreign ethnic influences. Such alterations of habits should mainly have been in the form of additions.

We may also consider the impact of Buddhism on Palaung life. Buddhism has been present in the hill tracts of northern Burma since around 1700 AD, one tradition being that the first monks sent out to Tawngpeng by the King of Burma arrived in 1782 (Milne 1924: 312). Archaelogical and textual evidence suggests, however, that Theravada Buddhism was known in the trans-Salween area and had spread into the Shan States and into China by the early to mid-first millennium AD (Skilling 1997; Moore 2007). Although relatively new to the Palaung, the Buddhist creed struck deep roots in their social life. Nonetheless, as a religion, Theravada Buddhism is highly focused on death and transmigration, and its influence on Palaung marriage patterns would probably have been minimal. Possible early ancestral cults, as part of the construction of agnatic belonging in times past, would have been lost, or transformed, and individual graves were largely forgotten.[12] Through Buddhism changing early notions about the nature of death and forms of conventional interaction with the dead, it could be that the realization of possible cultural templates into social morphology weakened, but that Buddhism could hardly have promoted, nor abolished, endogamy, for instance.

All this probing into a fragmentary ethnography of the past has led us to some perhaps provisional suggestions. The in many ways rich data that actually exist on the Palaung population from about a hundred years ago are not very transparent when it comes to the organization of kinship and marriage. All ethnographers of the time talk 'about clans' as something self-evident, but the texts imply some important variations in social clustering. What seems safe to say is that Palaung social organzation was based on houses and agglomerations of related houses in the form of villages. Sometimes this included longhouses embracing 'sub-houses'. These agglomerations of residences were apparently framed by some discursive notion of conjunction in terms of shared descent.

The ethnographers insist that the ground pattern leading to the social construction of clan continuity was the celebration of endogamous marriages, while at the same time they list a number of contradictory findings. Here it is my belief that, to understand this historical ethnography, we need an approach which allows us to see morphological variations as 'distorted' implentations of the same basic cultural template. The intuitions provided by this

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[12] In certain kinds of magic, individual graves and their contents were searched to create *materia magica*. Thus it seems that some 'wise men' kept track of where certain known persons had been buried (Milne 1924: 110, 237). Otherwise cemetaries were largely neglected (Milne 1924: 294), being ritually uninteresting.

template would have been subject to the more superficial influences of varying social discourses and pragmatic and realist conditions.

In the Palaung case, the work of historical circumstances down the centuries has induced change, and yet endogamous marriage within a bounded kinship cluster has been kept alive as a dominant cultural template, as a collective intuition concerning the correct way to build social continuity. This endogamy, maintained within a community of inter-related house residents, was dressed up and articulated in terms of kinship — a process that would make each settlement to appear as a 'clan' all of whose members were somehow related ambilineally. This self-reproducing unit seems to have introduced a principle of agnatic preference, probably a strict lineality to sort out the possibility of relations of near incest. These endogamous agnatic clans, derived from residential agglomerations, did not live in a uniformly shaped world. When practical circumstances in the stream of life made different marriage arrangments more attractive, the notion of endogamy was still realized, but then only in the form of a ritual enactment.

Above we have pointed to the marriage lottery, conducted on a local and clan-orientated basis. In a game of drawing written lottery tickets, young boys and girls were paired off with one another, after which there was ceremonial courting at night. However, the latter gradually gave way to more serious courtship on a broader footing once the candidates had become somewhat older. It seems that it was the girls who had the most considerable power to choose.

The result was therefore that within the same cultural modality, largely articulated in iconic expressions, the young of a village/clan were paired together into a sort of courtship and a modal endogamous marriage, while in another, more realist-influenced modality the search for marriage partners had wider horizons. Still it seems that there was some tendency for girls to chose from within the clan, though certainly the outcome was often left open to wider inclusion. In hopeless cases of love, surprise elopement was a solution, this resmbling a Shan practice (Milne 1924: 75-85).

As clans were agnatic in orientation, because of preferred endogamy, all resident members of a clan community, men and women, were (ideally) agnatic relatives. Agnatic ascent gave structure to an otherwise ambilineal cluster. This is a circumstance that poses one further consideration. Inside the clan there were a number of (locally differing) incest rules, which allowed the marriage of a man to his cousins and other relatives on his mother's side, while the corresponding relatives on his father's side were forbidden. This points to the possibility that with a clan there were sub-lines of agnatic descent and ascent, otherwise masked by a common clan discourse.

How clearly ascent lines were recognized in terms of the overarching clan ideology is not known, nor can we determine the genealogical depth to which the individual dead were traced. It may well be that the notion of a clan as a continous structure was clearer before the introduction of Buddhism. Possibly what the early British ethnographers experienced were the remaining elements of a once more rigorous clan society, the participating elements of which having become disconnected and come adrift, to be handled circumstantially and so forming varying customs locally. Nor can we exclude the possibility that within the clan, the sublines of ascent actually intermarried in some more systematic fashion, perhaps in circles of continuous endogamous sub-alliances.

Finally, there is some reason to think again about the introduction of tea-planting as a major occupation, even though many villages in lower regions in the landscape continued to plant mainly dry rice. At some point the economy of Palaung society must have changed drastically to have become clearly market-oriented, and some prosperity was to follow. However, tea, and the planting of tea, was very little ritualized, mostly being seen as technical agricultural production.[13] But rice remained strongly endowed with special cultural meanings in all communities (Milne 1924: 224, 226). I cannot go into detail about this here, but in pristine times the Palaung and their endogamous clan order, when seen in a longer time perspective, was part of a rice-growing economic order. Their social and ritual arrangements will have emerged through history in agreement with the cultivation of rice, whether irrigated or on dry hill swiddens.

What is striking is that a sort of 'incestuous' self-reproducing clan endogamy was also found among other rice cultivators in Southeast Asia. An example of this was the Angami Naga from the past in Assam, who, in their discursively construed world, strongly favoured exogamous clans. Here exogamy — the avoidance of local incest — was absolutely necessary in the building of social continuity with reference to the begetting and birth of children. However, Angami rituals, in the realm of promoting the growth of rice, brought to the fore an entirely different cultural modality that was realized and made inspectable in grand ceremonies in which otherwise impossible clan endogamy was stressed. Clan endogamy, although temporary and passing, was beneficial for plant growth in the irrigated fields. On these ritual occasions, promoting a future in terms of crops of rice, the dead of the clan, seen then as remote forerunners to the (temporarily) incestuous endogamous unit of the present, were mobilized out of their passive existence in the grave to canalize the blessings of 'inside

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[13] However, there were some rituals for the benefit of the tea plantations, like the bringing of rain ceremonies, which involved the force of a grave. Milne 1924: 237-8.

proliferation' to the rice fields. An otherwise forbidden world, in terms of a discursively construed cultural modality, generated an 'inside force' of agricultural blessings and fertility (Aijmer 2017).

The continous birth of Angami children seems to have been secured in quite another way. Rice was connected with ancestral 'inside death', but — and this is presently only a hypothesis[14] — the emergence into the world of new members of the clan called for the appropriation of 'outside death', a generative deadly force that was realized and claimed by way of head-hunting. 'Inside' (local death, endogamy, rice) was contrasted with 'outside' (dead outsider's heads, exogamy, children) — both being essential to the building of the future.

This is somewhat similar to the symbolism of some slash-and-burn rice peasants of Central Borneo, the Kayan Dyaks. The Kayan formed localized ambilineal kinship clusters that lived together in longhouses situated on the banks of a river. With the exception of the chiefs they married endogamously. To ensure the growth of rice, they enlisted the help of the dead of their kinship community, and so they sought to appropriate the force of 'inside death' (Aijmer 2010). They too were head-hunters, and this way of appropriating 'outside death' suggests that here too this was part of the construction of a social future in terms of human progeny.

However, it is also obvious that these contrasting elements are part of a quintessential symbolic idiom that is found in Southeast Asia more widely. These elements float around in rice-producing societies and reappear in each, often in new combinations.[15] Outside/inside, exogamy/endogamy, ancestors/foreign heads and rice/children are symbolic contrasts that appear and reappear in the most complex amalgams, as, for instance, among the To Pamona of Sulawesi. Despite their drastic reversal of the imagery and cultural meanings contained in this cultural idiom, they seem in their own way to intuit the same deeper cultural grammar (Jacobsson 1991, 2005). In southern, rice-growing China, the appropriation of inside and outside deaths has taken on the form of splitting dead persons into two, into ancestors who are in their graves located in nature, and those who are associated with and have a place in the

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[14] At this time I cannot present a systematic demonstration of this hypothesis regarding Angami head-hunting. It is certainly a complex phenomenon. But the argument fits with a systemic understanding of Angami traditional society. The same applies to the similar suggestion regarding the Kayan in central Borneo. I hope to return to this at some future point in time, or to stimulate someone else's curiosity in the matter.

[15] I leave aside certain other symbolic idioms that are widespread in Southeast Asia, such as those focused on buffaloes and boats, but see Josselin de Jong 1977, Aijmer 2016 and Bishop 1938.

domestic ancestral tablets. Also here, and like the To Pamona, the Angami model is reversed in that, while outside death connects with and propels new crops of rice, inside death promotes new children (e.g. Aijmer 1968).

Head-hunting is also known from Upper Burma; for example, it occurred among the Wa (Scott 1900: 493-503, 512), where it was thought to bring blessings to the crops, including rice, but the neighbouring Palaung have always (up to now) been regarded as peaceful and harmless in their surroundings. Thus the Palaung may be understood as having practised a sort of reversal of the 'Angami case' in that in principle they denied 'outside' forces influencing their begetting of children. Instead they wished for 'inside' endogamy, the blessings of which ought, according to the paradigm, to have been reserved for rice.

Projecting from the Angami case, experimentally we could suggest that 'originally' Palaung endogamy truly had something to do with the cultivation of rice. However, in the course of history the cultural presupposition requiring vital blessings emerging from isolation was drastically widened to benefit not only rice, but also, and ungrammatically, the birth of children. Losing the cultivation of rice, it seems that the flow of blessings was transferred to embrace instead the birth of future children. If so, the ethnographic diversity may have been reflected in the fact that the cultivation of rice had become increasingly obsolete and, at the time of the different ethnographic accounts, had lost much of its former importance. This change was a result of the innovative and successful introduction of tea as a crop. Rice symbolism was, I suggest, transformed to become relevant instead as a source of social proliferation. Tea did not create its own ritual dramas.

It is also possible that the introduction and embracing of Buddhism was a force overwhelmingly stronger than any possible previous cultural inclination that included an active search for an 'outside death force' of some sort.

In our future endeavours, we must remember that endogamy, a process of exchange that is internal to society, of necessity must be a preferred contrast to a possible exchange with the outside, that is, exogamy. Endogamy achieves its force through a denial of the outside world (cf. Sprenger 2007: 163).

To conclude, it may be said that, in their 'pure' ideal form, the endogamous clans of the Palaung could be seen as the results of an iconic strategy implying 'incestuous' marriage: a self-reproducing union of people, including their dead forerunners, promotes the cultivation of rice. Their less endogamous derivative versions of clans were also an outcome of this basic iconic imagery. In these unorthodox cases the normative imagery lingered, but in various surpressed forms, being countered, or even denied, by pragmatic circumstances. Practical

considerations required attention to, and the inclusion of, more weighty environmental and discursive strategies that pursued other seemingly more important motives and benefits in the perceived social world.

Palaung clans defy definition in a positivist mode. They were the outcomes of a realization in the social world of an iconic template, itself possibly under slow transformation in the stream of pragmatic life, that generated considerable variation in social morphology under the insistent pressures of other forces in that world. The cultural template and its possible modifications were translated into living societies by passing through 'layers' of varying social discourses, including the idiom of kinship.

These remarks are, of course, very tentative and preliminary and may give rise to many scholarly misgivings. The aim here is only to point to some possible directions for future research into the cultural formation of the wider Southeast Asian scene, from southern China to beyond the hazy borders of Melanesia. This will be a long journey along winding paths, but the insights we may gain into the formative processes of these superficially very varying, yet similar societies will be very rewarding, including for the generalist.

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TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF SPIES

AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

FELIX PADEL[1]

The place of spies in the structure of power

In many ways, intelligence agencies are at the apex of the modern power structure of every nation state, and how they work has major impacts on many aspects of modern life. The history and methods of intelligence agencies (IAs) therefore call out for proper anthropological or sociological analysis.

There is a vast library on the secret services of the USA and Russia, UK, Israel, and other countries, but little of this has been informed by the critical lens of anthropology. In this article, I shall start by surveying the field, asking how to bring it into view in a manner that is as 'objective' as possible, while at the same time giving a holistic overview of a complex, fascinating and very significant subject. Throughout, I shall focus particularly on Britain or 'our side'. I find the place of intelligence agencies in Britain to be the hardest to unravel, not so much because understanding one's own culture is often the hardest, but also because secrecy seems to have a special place in British culture, especially in respect of how power is exercised. Anthony Sampson's 'Anatomy of Britain' is helpful for understanding the UK power structure.[2]

After this introductory section, this article will highlight some key episodes in the Second World War before proceeding to the Cold War and the 'War on Terror', with a particular focus on the role of intelligence agencies in relation to Middle Eastern, especially Kurdish issues.

There is an obvious tension in intelligence agencies between the claim to be producing intel that is objective and politically neutral, and a strong hidden national (and sometimes political) bias. At times this is obvious, as in the infamously false intel concerning 'weapons of mass destruction' that facilitated Tony Blair's decision for war on Iraq and (less known but well documented) the involvement of supposedly 'apolitical' secret services in campaigns to discredit 'left-leaning' Labour leaders.

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[1] Research Associate, Centre for World Environmental History, University of Sussex.
[2] Sampson 1993, 2004. *The Anatomy of Britain*, first published in 1962, is available online at https://archive.org/details/anatomyofbritain00samp

For these and related reasons, it is hard to be neutral about the role of intelligence agencies. On the one hand, their purpose is to carry out a vital function for the nation states they serve; on the other hand, whistle-blowers and investigative journalists have exposed a long list of cases of violence and disinformation. This article will highlight the voices of whistle-blowers and dissidents at critical points, giving a sense of how much in public affairs is kept secret or distorted. In this sense, this article is an anthropological critique of IAs, asking fundamental questions about their place in society, and how we use key concepts such as 'intelligence', 'disinformation' and 'conspiracy'.

The role of the anthropologist has some affinity with the role of the spy, in terms of 'eliciting information from natives'. The often close connection between the roles of spy and anthropologist has been explored for colonial India by Bayly (1996). Colonial-era anthropologists abetted 'structural violence' through the 'scientific' but stereotyped analysis and categorization of tribal peoples, most notoriously in the concept of 'Criminal Tribes' (Manjana et al. 2022). Since the Second World War, many anthropologists have been employed as spies (Price 2016).

Spying was recognized as crucial in ancient times. In the Old Testament, Moses sends spies to spy out the land of Canaan before his people move into it. Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars* is understood as showing an anthropological interest in 'the enemy' that was crucial to Caesar's rapid conquest of what is now France. The 'knowledge' Caesar published about the Gauls and other peoples he conquered, like 19th-20th century colonial ethnography, is top-down and stereotyped 'conquerors' knowledge', of huge yet constantly questionable value to those of us wishing to understand the Gauls or Celts. Among ancient texts, the *Arthashastra* shows an Indian emphasis on spies; and advocacy of spy networks in Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, written in China about 2500 years ago, had a huge influence on Mao Tse-tung and the CIA (Andrew 2018: 2-3).

In Britain in the Tudor period the new dynasty used spies and intelligence-gathering in a more organized way than ever before to clamp down on dissent. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be read as a play about the new 'surveillance state', with honey traps and assassination, as well as rival 'intelligencers'. This aspect is beautifully brought out in Tom Stoppard's 1966 play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.*[3] During the reign of Elizabeth I, spies were employed to counteract Catholic plots hatched by the Spanish crown and the pope involving Mary Queen of Scots (Alford 2013). Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, took over as

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[3] An excellent film version of Stoppard's play can be found at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YHHHEg3ioc

spymaster to the crown from his own father and Sir Francis Walsingham, becoming Secretary of State, ensuring the accession of Mary's son James VI of Scotland as James I and discovering Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot in 1605. How much he acted as an 'agent provocateur' towards these conspirators has been much debated, prefiguring modern debates about conspiracies and false-flag attacks.

As we shall see, IAs played a crucial role in the Allied victory in the Second World War. Since then, their scale and influence has increased vastly, not just in their conventional role of spying or gathering 'intel', but also in influencing events and steering the media narrative, employing the black arts of psy-ops and propaganda (Todd et al. 2009). Their extensive media control today evolved in relation to the CIA project of 'mind control', which many have understood in terms of extending Nazi medical experiments (Marks 1979/1991, Kinzer 2019, Gross 2019) and propaganda – 'Operation Mockingbird'.[4] The UK secret services' 'Integrity Initiative' is a recent manifestation of this (Elmaazi and Blumenthal 2018).

During the post 9/11 era of the 'war on terror', controlling the narrative starts with who we call terrorists. The UK Terrorism Act of 2000 (CAMPACC 2021), like anti-terrorist legislation in many countries, follows an intelligence agency definition of terror tactics that excludes government use of terror, even though much of what this discourse calls 'terrorism' can be understood as a reaction to state terror. This is the argument in Herman's book *The Real Terror Network* (1982) and in *Manufacturing Consent* (Herman and Chomsky 1998/2002). In Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and other countries, it seems painfully apparent that US-led attacks on 'terrorists' have increased conflicts and 'terrorist attacks' exponentially. As we shall see, the 'Jewish terrorism' leading up to the formation of the state of Israel is largely forgotten (Eveland 1980/2018, Giladi 1992/2003), and whether the Kurdish-led PKK[5] should be counted a terrorist organization is much debated.

The aircraft attacks in the USA on 11th September 2001 were widely seen as a huge failure of the US intelligence agencies (Kamarck 2021). As the War on Terror was conceived and acted out through US-led attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, this justified the IAs playing a rapidly expanding role in surveillance, as well as orchestrating operations and influencing media narratives. Expansion in the surveillance of citizens is what led Edward Snowden to become a whistle-blower (Snowden 2019).

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[4] A conventional summary is available on Wikipedia (on which more later) and at Spartacus Educational (n.d.), while Bernstein 1977 and Wilford 2008 are in-depth studies of media control.
[5] Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê or Kurdistan Workers Party.

If we fail to analyse the role of intelligence agencies, we therefore remain trapped in the narratives they construct, in which disinformation is entangled with truth. As we shall see, the experience of most Kurdish people in particular, among countless other communities, seems to be systematically marginalized out of the mainstream media.

In terms of understanding the place of spies in a social structure, this is often marginal in the sense that all spies become experts in secrecy and the tensions their work demands. Some key spies have combined this with living very flamboyant lives indeed (e.g. Richard Sorge and Donald Maclean; see respectively Matthews 2019, Philipps 2018). Spying is structured through complex diagrams of agents and assets. Many spies lead largely conventional lives, but always coloured by stringent secrecy restrictions. Motivation varies notoriously between patriotism or ideology, money, and sex or love (Smith 2010).

In terms of the power these agencies wield, analysing them is an apex example of 'studying up' (Nader 1969). So, if we combine this with 'reverse anthropology' by putting the critical focus on how power is exercised in our own society, this will help the collective effort to decolonize anthropology (Tuhiwai Smith 1999/2012). How can we reach objective understanding about other cultures without analysing the power structures that define our own lives?

The essence of modern power structures emerges particularly clearly in what is imposed on indigenous peoples (IPs). Among those IPs whom intelligence agencies have used and then 'betrayed', a particularly poignant case is that of the Hmong in Laos, recruited in large numbers by the CIA and US military during the Vietnam war, with a few thousand airlifted to the USA afterwards, but most abandoned to severe reprisals by a communist government who saw them as traitors (Hamilton-Merritt 1993/1998).

Every generation of anthropologists has attempted further levels of decolonizing our own roles. As we turn to analysing the role of intelligence agencies in the overall power structures imposed upon us, we shouldn't be afraid to analyse upwards. Perhaps we even have a duty to encourage similar self-awareness about their role among intelligence agents.

Formal and non-formal structures

Every country's IAs seem to go through deep divisions at times, which reflect personal, political, institutional, ideological or policy rivalries. Distinguishing formal or overt from non-formal structures is therefore a starting point for analysing IAs' social structures. My first book was an exercise in reverse anthropology, studying the power structure imposed on a

tribal people in India by analysing the roles of administrators, missionaries and anthropologists during and after colonial rule.[6] Distinguishing the administrators' formal from their non-formal structure was a starting point. Coming to IAs, their power is covert by definition, so their most violent actions, such as assassinations and political interference abroad, rarely form part of their official narrative. For example, if the CIA has sometimes collaborated with the mafia, this will hardly form part of its overt or formal structure, even though CIA practice has often involved 'wet assignments' (as assassinations are termed) much more than MI6, whose methods appear more indirect (Jacobsen 2019). Either way, covert structures are an essential aspect of how IAs work.

One aspect of the non-formal structure is the pattern of 'revolving doors'. It is interesting how many senior intelligence officials have become heads of state, from Bush senior, head of the CIA 1976-7, and Putin in the KGB/FSB 1975-1991, to several key Israeli heads of state (see below), and many examples in Britain, where No.10's close relationship with the secret services has been extensively documented (Aldrich and Cormac 2016).

The three best known British IAs are MI5 (Military Intelligence, Service 5), MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service or SIS, focused on foreign affairs) and GCHQ (Govt Communications HQ), which grew out of the codebreaking outfit at Bletchley Park during the Second World War. MI5 and MI6 are well known through many histories, as well as spy novels and films. John Le Carré's novels and James Bond films give conventionalized images of MI6 that are both cynical and glamorous, emphasizing the danger and violence. MI6 essentially started in 1909, its designation as SIS being articulated in 1920, but its existence was not officially admitted until 1994 (Jones 2014), while the super-secret designation of SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) at GCHQ has been surrounded by far greater secrecy still (Aldrich 2010, MacAskill et al. 2013).

During the Second World War, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was formed (1940) to carry out 'covert action' and 'set Europe ablaze'. It employed about 13,000 men and women, and merged with SIS at the end of the war. The SAS (Special Air Service) and SBS (Special Boat Service) were also formed for 'special ops' during the war and disbanded thereafter, though the SAS was revived in 1947. SOE, SAS and SBS were subject to military command rather than being placed under the Foreign Office (Cormac 2018: 1-13). 'Spy' is a vague word, and often refers to special agents devoted to sabotage and insurrection, such as British agents in France in WWII, and 'special forces' since.

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[6] Padel 1995/2010, based on my Oxford D.Phil in social anthropology, and co-supervised from the Delhi School of Economics sociology department by J.P.S. Uberoi.

Obviously, MI6 and GCHQ are instruments of the British government's foreign policy. Mark Curtis's books are excellent for understanding the highly manipulative covert roles they have played in Iran, Malaysia, Aden/Yemen, Egypt, Indonesia (Bevins 2020) and the Vietnam war (Curtis 2003, 2004, 2010) – 'the secret pursuit of Britain's foreign policy' (Cormac 2018). Official histories give important detail, but omit or distort much, as in the official history of MI6 (Jeffery 2010), which conveniently stops before the agency's controversial role in ousting Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mosaddeq in 1952-4 by supporting Muslim extremists to bring in the Shah dynasty (Kinzer 2006, 2008; Cobain 2020).

Other British intelligence units have been equally secretive, such as the 'spy cops' (Woodman 2018; Evans and Lewis 2013) who infiltrated environmental and anti-war movements by forming sexual relationships and steering movements as agents provocateurs towards extreme actions to discredit them; and the Information Research Department (IRD), a Foreign Office propaganda unit (1948-1977). Eric Blair (George Orwell) drew up a list of 'crypto-communists' for the IRD just after its formation (Open Culture 2015) – no small matter when one understands the momentous, hidden role this organization played in ousting Mossadeq in Iran and Sukarno in Indonesia (Lashmar and Oliver 1998, Bevins 2020). In the latter, the IRD's black propaganda and lists of communists supplied to Suharto's forces led to the slaughter of tens of thousands of Indonesians (Lashmer, Gilby and Oliver 2021). In Northern Ireland, the IRD's dangerous psy-ops role (1975-7) was exposed by one of its key agents, Colin Wallace, 'the man who knew too much'.[7] Each of these operations, among many more in other countries, witnessed a wide range of extreme activities, including the violent use of agents provocateurs to stimulate unrest. Recent British government initiatives aimed at 'countering fake news' seem to replicate these campaigns, amplifying them through surveillance technology (Conversation 2018).

The FBI and CIA are better known than the British secret services for the role they have played in internal and external US affairs. The CIA, formed in 1947 to replace the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, which was formed and played a key role in the Second World War) is known to have aided and abetted at least seventy regime changes in different countries since the Second World War (O'Rourke 2018). The FBI and CIA figure prominently in histories of the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X,

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[7] A 2020 documentary about Colin Wallace under this title, written and directed by Michael Oswald, has been reviewed by Nasser (2021) and is available to watch at https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/the-man-who-knew-too-much/

journalist Dorothy Kilgallen and others associated with the Kennedy murders.[8] Among other US spy agencies, DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), formed under Eisenhower in 1958 for military intelligence, is particularly influential and secretive (Jacobsen 2015).

The separation between MI5-MI6 and GCHQ is mirrored in the USA in the separation between internal-external affairs and sigint, also that between the FBI-CIA and the NSA (National Security Agency, Bamford 2008). Like GCHQ, the NSA retained its secrecy until recently, and only became widely known to the public through a leak at the end of 2005 about its surveillance program (CNN 2005). Vastly expanded after 9/11, public knowledge was much amplified by Snowden's escape to Russia in 2013, after revealing the extent of electronic surveillance on Americans and foreigners alike, including by parallel agencies in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – 'the Five Eyes'.

The NSA was founded under US President Truman and remained extremely secretive, though even larger than the CIA. As Aldrich's book on GCHQ emphasizes, Bletchley Park's decoding of the enigma code was glamorized after the war, but its transformation from 'Govt Code & Cypher School' to GCHQ at a base in Cheltenham in 1946 was long kept shrouded in secrecy, as were the decipherment techniques which gave Churchill his 'ultra-secret (i.e. above top-secret) intel reports, until the importance of Cyprus as a sigint base was exposed through the 'ABC trial' of two journalists and a corporal in sigint, who outed GCHQ surveillance in the 1970s.[9] Prior to this, GCHQ had allowed the NSA/CIA to use its 'listening bases', from Cyprus to Diego Garcia.

The relationship between the US and UK intel agencies is interesting. The CIA is hardly shy about letting the world know its role in effecting regime change etc., in comparison with a far more secretive British role. On whistle-blowers, the first chapter in Greenberg (2012) compares Dan Ellsberg bringing out the Pentagon Papers in 1969 with Bradley (Chelsea) Manning exposing the torture and assassination of innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2006.

Philip Agee was a key early CIA whistle-blower (1975, 1978, 1987). Kiriakou (2009/2012), Lindauer (2010) and Gary Webb (Devereux 2014) followed this tradition in revealing some less savoury CIA exploits. FBI whistle-blowers on events surrounding 9/11

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[8] Smith 2013, Summers 1980/2013, Pease 2018, Shaw 2020.
[9] Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell ('ABC') were tried in November-December in the UK's Central Criminal Court under the Official Secrets Act 1911 over their article 'The Wiretappers', published in *Time Out* in 1976. The trial was counterproductive in the sense that it drew attention to the UK's use of bases in Cyprus for sigint spying just after the Watergate scandal in the USA. Key witness 'Colonel B' was ridiculed in the press, and the defendants were convicted without much penalty.

include Coleen Rowley and Sibel Edmonds (2012). Both agencies have at times worked closely with the mafia and other gangsters, for example, in attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro in Cuba, and FBI agents have colluded closely with gang leaders (Lehr and O'Neill 2012).

The CIA's close links with US arms companies emerges clearly in the history of 'Operation Cyclone', in which the CIA funded Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) to support Osama Bin Laden, among others with a view to bringing down the USSR through a proxy war in Afghanistan, even though research by certain CIA analysts showed that half the funds were going to develop Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, even adapting planes being bought from the US to carry nuclear missiles. Far from heeding this research, these CIA analysts' concerns and careers were blocked to facilitate this arms sale (Levy and Clark 2007). In the interests of UK's arms sales, Tony Blair infamously curtailed a Serious Fraud Office investigation into corruption at the heart of the UK's economy, and intel agencies' infiltrated the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (Thomas 2007).

CIA infiltration of left movements, student unions and academia has come under the spotlight recently (Paget 2015). Cambridge Analytica is relevant in understanding recent trends in IAs operating in a way that bridges government and private enterprise, orchestrating elections of polarising leaders in many countries.

Disinformation that won the Second World War

Britons grow up on heroic tales of brave and brilliant British spies and spy agencies fighting the Nazis, from SIS decoding Ultra/Enigma to SAS liaison with the French Resistance, and master deceptions such as 'the man who never was'.[10] Ben Macintyre outlines this history in his books on Operations Zigzag, Mincemeat and Double Cross (2007, 2010, 2012).

Operation Mincemeat involved dropping the corpse of a Welsh 'tramp' dressed as a special forces messenger into the sea just off the coast of Spain with vital letters for British commanders in Gibraltar and North Africa outlining fabricated plans for invading Sardinia and southern France, with Sicily to be attacked only as a decoy, when the real plan actually was to invade Sicily. This succeeded well: Hitler believed the deception and moved key forces out of Sicily.

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[10] The 1958 film so titled was the first public statement about Operation Mincemeat, recorded in much greater detail by MacIntyre much later (2010). A trailer for the 1950s film version can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXyFkINMcI8

Meanwhile, all Nazi spies in Britain had been either killed or turned into double agents, their identities maintained for running hundreds of non-existent assets, from Welsh miners to workers in munitions factories, whose reports were dutifully sent to German spymasters, producing a mountain of false intel. Some members of the Abwehr[11] were courageously anti-Hitler and were executed horribly after the assassination attempt on Hitler in July 1944, so may have been willingly deceived.

During the Second World War, the effectiveness of British intelligence agencies was extraordinary, both in deciphering enemy codes and in disseminating elaborate disinformation. The contrast between British and German spying operations was dramatic. The British, with crucial Polish help (War history online 2016), had deciphered the 'Enigma' code and read most German coded messages on a daily basis throughout the war. They maintained an extensive network of spies in continental Europe, while no Germany's spies in Britain remained at large (MacIntyre 2012). Messages from dozens of non-existent UK-based spies radioed to German intelligence were all fictitious constructs, carefully maintained through Bletchley Park's mass employment of several thousand workers deciphering foreign codes and constructing disinformation. All these workers had signed the Official Secrets Act. Demobbed at the end of the war, they were threatened that 'careless talk costs lives', and were forbidden to tell even their families about their secret wartime work. Britain had won the war in large part thanks to the brilliance of its intelligence network; but the extent of this expertise in decipherment and disinformation was not to be known too widely. It is only since the 1970s that researchers examining declassified archives have been able to piece together a broader history of British espionage.

Sicily was overwhelmed fairly fast in July 1943, thanks to Operation Mincemeat. As the Allies fought northwards, they captured Italy and then Germany, area by area. What remains little known is that they did this partly by secretly enlisting the help of key mafiosi, fascists and Nazis (Talbot 2015). As one strand in this secret network, Lucky Luciano, 'father' of the mafia in New York, was freed from jail (where he had been since 1932) through Operation Underworld (Dezenhall 2013), giving OSS an introduction to Don Calo – Calogero Vizzini, *Capo di tutti capi* of the Sicilian mafia (Tagliabue 1994, Williams 2018). Don Calo appears to have given indispensable help to the allied invasion after US tanks made straight for his home through German defences. He was made an honorary colonel in the US army and Mayor of Villalba. Many mafiosi jailed under Mussolini were released to help occupy Sicily, and this

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[11] German military intelligence, 1920-1944.

collaboration with the Allies seems to have re-established mafia power as never before. Evidently they were considered a necessary tool by Americans and Britons determined to prevent the communists coming to power, and many left-wingers were assassinated under Don Calo's regime in Sicily.

Transition into Cold War

In this way, the Cold War pattern emerged before the Second World War had ended, the infamous spy intrigues flourished in occupied Berlin, and the Berlin Wall went up. Fascinating spy thrillers focusing on the early years of the Cold War extended Britain's celebration of its wartime spies. Ex-spies and authors David Cornwell (John Le Carré) and Ian Fleming in *The spy who came in from the Cold* and the *James Bond* series respectively are among the most celebrated. One vital aspect they failed to highlight, for obvious reasons, was Operation Gladio, the 'stay-behind armies'.

Operation Gladio was a secret, virulently anti-communist organization, named after an ancient Roman sword. In Operation Sunrise (Halbrook 2006), Allen Dulles, Director of OSS in Switzerland (Talbot 2015), and James Angleton, in charge of OSS in Italy, made clandestine deals with key fascist and Nazi commanders, including Prince Junio Valerio Borghese, a top fascist naval commander, Karl Wolff, an SS General who had been posted to collaborate with Mussolini after months in charge of concentration camp transports, and Reinhard Gehlen, Lt-General in charge of intelligence on Germany's Eastern front. Each of these was helped by OSS agents to avoid prosecution for war crimes and was enlisted in the fight against communism.

Gehlen, working closely with the CIA, brought about 350 spies who had worked in Nazi intelligence into a spy network overseen by the OSS/CIA named the Gehlen organization, and oversaw its transformation into the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND, West German foreign intel service) in 1956 (Gehlen 1972). Similarly, it wasn't until after his death in 1973 that Paul Dickopf, who headed Germany's Federal Police for six years before heading Interpol (1968-71), was found to have been a senior Nazi in the SS who switched to working for OSS before the end of the war. This link between the CIA and ex-Nazis involved employing war criminals by hiding their past identities (Timeline 2021), orchestrating anti-communist operations of extreme violence for decades to come, including Operation Condor in Latin America (Dinges 2004), and terrorist attacks attributed to the Red Brigades in Italy such as the kidnapping and murder of Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978 (Forte 2019).

Gladio was first uncovered by Italian magistrate Felice Casson in 1972 while investigating the Peleano bombing, which was initially blamed on leftists. Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti admitted Gladio's existence in Parliament in October 1990; and Judge Guido Salvini, heading an inquiry, found evidence of CIA and NATO involvement, including training by the British SAS, to foment a 'strategy of tension'. P26, a similar organization in Switzerland, was also revealed in 1990, with similar evidence from other countries, including Turkey, as we shall see.[12]

The close relationship between the CIA and the mafia has persisted. Paying for Gladio involved raising money for black ops through the drugs trade, transporting heroin to New York with mafia help (Williams 2018), in a pattern replicated in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War (McCoy 1972/2003, Chouvy 2011) in the notorious Phoenix Program of assassinations that was funded through the CIA effectively taking over the drugs trade (Clair and Cockburn 2017). Under cover of Reagan's 'War on Drugs', the CIA similarly funded the Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua by taking control of the drugs trade they were supposedly suppressing (Ruppert 2004, Devereux 2014).

The US military also took an estimated 1,600 Nazi arms scientists to the USA, employing them with minimal questions about their past, to start the arms race against the USSR (which also took some). This was Operation Paperclip.[13]

While Britain's brilliant spy networks had fooled the Nazis and won the war, they were brilliantly penetrated by spies working for Stalin's USSR during and after the war, especially the 'Cambridge Five'. The first two to be discovered managed to defect and escape to Moscow – Donald Maclean (Philipps 2018) and Guy Burgess. The 'third man', Kim Philby (1968), managed to hang on and defected much later. Maclean, like Philby, was a top member of MI6 and had long stayed 'above suspicion', bringing out vital information for Stalin. The other two weren't discovered till later, and after debriefing were allowed to remain free, to save MI6 and the ruling elite they were part of from crippling embarrassment. John Cairncross's confession in the USA in 1964 led to the uncovering of Sir Anthony Blunt. Cairncross was allowed to live in Britain unmolested until his death in 1995 aged 82. Blunt had been Surveyor of the Queen's pictures and was also allowed to remain free, though Mrs Thatcher outed him and got him stripped of his 'Sir'.

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[12] BBC 1992, Ganser 2004, Edmonds 2013, Cottrell 2015, Kollerstrom 2018.
[13] A basic outline is available in Charles River Editors 2016. A much fuller study is by Jacobsen (2014), who has an excellent talk available with powerpoint on youtube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDZc-fO8pHc

George Blake joined this list of embarrassing double agents, reporting crucial intel to the KGB during 1956-1961. From a more working-class background than the Cambridge Five, he was sentenced to 42 years in prison in Wormwood Scrubs as an example – which failed spectacularly when he escaped and got to the USSR in 1966. He had headed SIS/MI6 in the British embassy in Seoul. Captured during the Korean War, he defected to the Soviet side out of horror at the indiscriminate allied bombing of Korea (Kuper 2021).

After the 1950s, the British turned the tables on the Soviets, and there was constant secret spy warfare involving hundreds of individuals – some stories and deaths known, others not. For example, Oleg Gordievsky was 'turned' by Danish intelligence in partnership with MI6 in 1974 and worked as a double agent when promoted as Resident in the Soviet embassy in London (1982-5), where he supervised all Soviet spies in the UK. Recalled to Moscow and in danger, as Stalin's spy agencies in the USSR tortured and executed such people, he was exfiltrated by the British, and survived to write books on the KGB (Gordievsky 2015). The Cold War history of double/triple agents is fascinating though brutal, and well worth anthropological analysis.

Vignettes of the complex Cold War history of spy defections and double agents emerge in books about the directors of US Central Intelligence (1973-6) William Colby (Woods 2013) and of MI6 (1973-8) Maurice Oldfield (by his nephew Martin Pearce, 2016). Colby's CIA service spanned OSS in Italy to Operation Phoenix in Vietnam. Aldrich and Cormac (2016) give a detailed account of UK's intel agencies' relations with every British PM, from Herbert Asquith to David Cameron (1908-2016).

Of course John Le Carré's novels, while revealing the heartless cynicism of MI6, show the Soviets in a much worse light. He and Fleming (like Graham Greene, Somerset Maughan and others) were spies, so their works reflect real power relations in the agencies but also contain distortions in order to avoid giving anything vital away that could endanger 'national security'. This reveals an interesting connection between novel/thriller-writing and spies, and the two main spy-creators of 'the man who never was' also wrote spy thrillers (MacIntyre 2010).

Cold war 'smoke and mirrors' – 'cloak and dagger stuff' – reached a climax with the publication of *Spycatcher* by Peter Wright (1987), which the UK government tried to ban, but which was published in the USA and Australia. Although its main thesis was discredited (that Roger Hollis, head of MI5, was a Soviet mole), it reveals much about how MI5 worked, while again carefully avoiding giving too much away.

From 1948, Sidney Gottlieb, working with Allen Dulles at the CIA, started projects Bluebird and Artichoke, which became MKUltra in 1953. This was a vast programme of psychological experiments on human guinea pigs, with 149 sub-projects (Melton and Wallace 2010: 13), which continued until the Church Committee judged it illegal in 1975 and it was officially closed down. Gottlieb drew on sadistic Nazi and Japanese research on prisoners, and MKUltra had far-reaching effects on thousands of individuals, as well as future patterns of mind control and propaganda.[14] Media penetration was considered the CIA's 'crown jewels', being deliberately underplayed in the Church Committee Report. Bernstein (1977) estimated that the CIA counted at least 400 journalists as 'assets' and worked closely with at least 25 key news outlets. Frank Wisner, as CIA Deputy Director in charge of 'black ops', spoke of media influence as his 'mighty Wurlitzer'. Since then, media control by IAs has become ever more extensive and normalized (Wilford 2008).

The CIA has been relatively open about its role in assisting often extremely violent removals of elected left-wing governments in at least seventy countries since WWII. The best known CIA regime changes, some involving or instigated by MI6, include:

- Malaysia 1948-54, by Britain, delaying independence in a way that prevented a takeover by the communists.

- Iran 1952-4, masterminded by MI6 in the interests of the Anglo-British oil company (precursor of BP), which brought in vital revenue (Kinzer 2008). The CIA were brought in under British pressure and played a crucial role in effecting the coup.

- Guatemala (1954) is vital for showing the key use made of Edward Bernays, 'Father of PR', Freud's nephew, who popularized his uncle's work, but was arguably a lot more influential, using Freudian psychology in public relations, not just for advertising, but in politics, and inaugurating psychological techniques by intel agencies from this time. This US-led regime change ousted the socialist elected leader Arbenz Guzman with extreme violence, falsely depicting him as a hardcore communist, in the interests of US United Fruit Company, which Bernays worked for. Bernays and the CIA portrayed the installed leader Carlos Castillo Armas as 'good' even as he institutionalized systematic oppression that would persist for decades (Schlesinger and Kinzer 2005).[15]

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[14] McCoy 2006, Todd et al 2009, Melton and Wallace 2010 [Mulholland 1950s], Talbot 2015, Kinzer 2019. The Wikipedia article on MKUltra gives a basic outline.

[15] This episode is well brought out in the documentary made by Adam Curtis (brother of Mark), *Century of the Self* (Part 1), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnPmg0R1M04. Bernays' books include *Propaganda* (1928) and *The Engineering of Consent* (1955).

- MI6 attempted to assassinate Nasser in Egypt in the 1950s, as the CIA tried to assassinate Castro in the 1960s – regime changes that failed.

- Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and other former British colonies had their independence delayed through often very violent campaigns full of IA tricks, including destabilizsation over bauxite politics and violent suppression of the Mau Mau movement. The indigenous population of Diegio Garcia was removed in 1968, their existence denied.[16]

- In Congo, Britain colluded in the killing of Patrice Lumumba (1960-61), inaugurating Mobutu's reign of terror – a pattern of extreme violence in African countries (also especially Ghana) exposed in Susan Williams' *White Malice* (2021).

- In 1967, Britain supported the newly independent Nigerian government in its violent Biafran war.

- Indonesia 1965 (Bevins 2020), Chile 1973, Argentina 1976… This list represents the briefest selection of the conspiracies hatched by US and UK intelligence agencies that have toppled governments considered uncongenial to 'our interests' (Curtis 2003, 2004, 2010; Kinzer 2006). It is fascinating how techniques of mass deception and propaganda, used so effectively during the Second World War, were steered post-war towards undermining socialism in Europe and worldwide during the Cold War.

Funding Bin Laden and other jihadists in Afghanistan played a key role in undermining the USSR and the transition into the 'War on Terror'. There is much evidence that essentially the same tactics are still being used, with far more elaborate propaganda campaigns. As we shall see, this is especially evident in Turkey and Syria.

If the CIA is relatively open about its role in effecting regime change, Israel has been even more open about its numerous targeted assassinations abroad, seen as necessary to protect the country's security. Israeli intelligence agents or 'operators' are widely regarded as national heroes. The Israeli case is significant for its influence over the US, UK's and other countries' foreign policy, not least through arms sales and counterinsurgency training for many national security forces. These make Mossad and the other Israeli 'special op' agencies a pervasive model (Bar-Zohar and Mishal 2016, Bergman 2008 and 2018).

It is interesting how many Israeli Prime Ministers were previously senior intelligence or special force commanders:

- Ben Gurion (1st PM 1948-54 and 1955-63, Israel's 'founding father') led Israel during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, uniting the secret Jewish militias into the Israel Defense

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[16] Curtis 2003, Kinzer 2006, Williams 2021, Padel and Das 2010: 229-236, 452-3, Das and Padel 2020: 285-292, 522.

Forces (IDF), and presiding over the formation of Mossad and Shin Bet ('Unseen Shield' – equivalents of MI6 and MI5 respectively).[17]

- Yitzhak Rabin (PM 1974-77 and 1992-5) served in the Palmach (elite fighting force of the Haganah) before 1948 and the IDF in 1948-67, and was the general credited with winning the Six Day War.

- Menachem Begin (6th PM 1977-83) headed Irgun, which broke with Haganah and led the terrorist revolt against the British from 1944 (Weir 2014). He formed the Likud Party, but became deeply depressed after the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon, when he was misled by Ariel Sharon (his defence minister) that Israeli forces would enter 'only 40km into Lebanon'.

- Yitzhak Shamir (PM 1983-4 and 1986-92) was a key member of Lehi, 'the Stern gang', which broke with Irgun to continue anti-British terrorist activities during the war, and then of Mossad (1955-65).

- Shimon Peres (PM 1984-6, 1995-6, 2007-14) held several diplomatic and military positions during and directly after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. His first high-level government position was as Deputy Director-General of Defense in 1952, which he attained at the age of 28, and Director-General 1953-59.

- Benjamin Natanyahu (PM 1996-99, 2009-2022) became a team leader in the elite Sayeret Matkal special forces unit and took part in many missions, including Operations Inferno and Gift (1968), and was wounded in Operation Isotope (1972). His elder brother Yoni (Yonaton) commanded Sayeret Matkal during Operation Entebbe, rescuing 102 out of 106 hostages held at Entebbe Airport in Uganda in 1976, at the cost of his own life.

- Ehud Barak (10th PM 1999-2001) was a Rav Aluf (Lieutenant general) in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), one of the most highly decorated soldiers in Israel's history, joining in 1959 and serving 35 years, including as a commando in Sayeret Matkal, leading several highly acclaimed operations, including Sabena Flight 571 at Lod Airport in 1972; the covert 1973 Israeli raid on Lebanon in Beirut, in which he disguised himself as a woman to kill members of the Palestine Liberation Organization; and a key architect of Operation Entebbe and Operation Bayonet, which led to the dismantling of the Palestinian terrorist cell Black September. Barak also masterminded the Tunis Raid on 16 April 1988, in which PLO leader Abu Jihad was killed.

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[17] '*The Gatekeepers* (2012) is an award-winning documentary directed by Dror Moreh that tells the story of Shin Bet ('Shabak' in Hebrew) through interviews with six of its former heads. A trailer can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdMjr8cuEy8

- Ariel Sharon (11th PM 2001-6) was a key military leader from 1948. He founded and commanded Unit 101 as a special ops unit within the IDF under Ben Gurion in 1953. As Minister of Defense, he directed the 1982 Lebanon War. An official enquiry found that he bore 'personal responsibility' for the Sabra and Shatila massacres as 'the butcher of Beirut'.

A key moment was when three whistle-blowers within Shin Bet spoke out and insisted on justice after Avraham Shalom had lied to conceal the extrajudicial killing of two Palestinians who had hijacked a bus. As a Shin Bet member said during the Inquiry Commission: 'The supreme rule after a failed op is the removal of the fingerprints of the State of Israel. Not telling the truth is an integral part of removing the problem.' Sharon was understood to have lied to conceal the systematic torture and extrajudicial killings of eighty Palestinian suspects, using a list of victims to blackmail ex-Prime Ministers (Bergman 2018: 287).

The emphasis on deception and disinformation by the Israeli secret services is also brought out in Palestinian histories (Kimmerling and Migdal 1994/2003, Pappé 2006, Khalidi 2010) and an intrinsic part of the proliferation of such patterns worldwide. Many aspects of Israel's history remain hidden or little known, including Mossad terror campaigns targeting Jews in Iraq and Egypt during 1950-54, aimed at accelerating Jewish emigration to Israel, and propaganda that concealed the violence of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and *Nakba* (Eveland 1980/2018, Giladi 1992/2003).

Narrative control in the War on Terror

Control of the media narrative by the FBI and CIA was already evident under J. Edgar Hoover, first Director of the FBI (1935-1972). When J.F. Kennedy was assassinated, and the Warren Commission advocated the 'lone gunman' theory, those around Hoover and President Johnson put great energy into dismissing 'conspiracy theories' that – far more than the idea the Warren Commission promoted of a Soviet or Cuban conspiracy – have consistently focused on a conspiracy between FBI and/or CIA officials working with mafiosi (Summers 1980/2013, Smith 2013, Shaw 2020).

Collating all the evidence, conspiracy actually seems the essence of how intelligence agencies have operated at crucial points, especially obvious in regime changes. 'Conspiracy theories', as a term used to undermine criticism, was first propagated through these agencies' influence over hundreds of prominent journalists and media consortia, essentially to discredit those alleging FBI/CIA involvement in the conspiracies that gave rise to these killings. Details are disputed (e.g. in Wikipedia), but what is not in question is that the 1967 CIA cable

that first used the term recommends counteracting conspiracy theories through 'propaganda assets' in the media.[18]

The start of black ops on a massive scale in the Vietnam war is covered (from very different perspectives!) in books on Colby (Woods 2013) and the drugs trade (McCoy 1972/2003, Chouvy 2011) and in how consent was 'manufactured' through media manipulation (Herman and Chomsky 1998/2002). The extension of black ops or covert operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries, including how these were concealed from Congress through funding by drugs, is analysed in books by journalists documenting the war on terror under the Bush administrations (Risen 2006, Scahill 2007, Hastings 2008, Mazetti 2013), continuing under Obama.[19] On Guantanamo, Hickman's *Murder at Camp Delta* (2015) documents systematic torture at a 'black site' in a secluded area in Guantanamo and the deaths of three prisoners there.

All these books reveal patterns far beyond what is usually understood as 'spying', including the use of torture (McCoy 2006), covert operations, disinformation and media control. Like the expertise in code-breaking and sowing disinformation, British and American expertise in covert operations 'behind enemy lines' during the Second World War, through the SAS, SIS, OSS and other services, has multiplied in the decades since. John Kiriakou's book *The reluctant spy: my secret life in the CIA's War on Terror* (2009/2012) is the work of a CIA whistle-blower who masterminded the abduction in Pakistan of Osama bin Laden's ally Abu Zubaydah in 2002. Kiriakou was led to believe Zubaydah had been waterboarded only once after his capture. After discovering this had happened over eighty times, he came out and testified that this amounted to torture in 2007, and pleaded guilty to passing classified information to a journalist about the case, serving thirty months in jail during 2013-15.

Craig Murray was Britain's ambassador to Uzbekistan at the time of Blair's declaration of war on Iraq in 2003. He was outspoken about appalling human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, including false-flag attacks, and outraged at US and UK silence about this systematic abuse – obviously because Uzbekistan was a key US/UK ally in the Afghan war – and about complicity in secret renditions. His book about this (Murray 2007) also describes the violent disinformation the Foreign Office spread to try and discredit him (2001-6).

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[18] Summary of arguments by Rev. Douglas at http://projectunspeakable.com/conspiracy-theory-invention-of-cia/ and 'CIA and critics of the Warren Report' at http://22november1963.org.uk/cia-warren-report-critics

[19] Woodward 2010, Scahill 2013 and 2016, Hastings 2012, Blumenthal 2019, Jacobsen 2020. On the suspicions surrounding Michael Hastings' death, see https://whowhatwhy.org/2013/08/07/connections-between-michael-hastings-edward-snowden-and-barrett-brown-the-war-with-the-security-state/

The *Guardian* newspaper in Britain was considered relatively independent, which is why it was selected by Assange and Snowden as an outlet for their Wikileaks material. The *Guardian* reportedly ignored 'DA notices' sent by the Defence & Security Media Advisory (DSMA) Committee.[20] These are supposedly 'voluntary' directives sent to media outlets 'to prevent inadvertent public disclosure of information that would compromise UK military & defence operations'. PM David Cameron said he didn't want to issue more DA notices, but on 20 July 2013, GCHQ sent a team to force the *Guardian* to destroy hard drives containing the Wikileaks material. Alan Rushbridger, the *Guardian*'s editor-in-chief (1995-2015), called this destruction a 'symbolic act', and brought out several more articles following a supposedly independent line. But after Catherine Viner succeeded him in 2015, the *Guardian* was given the first ever interviews by acting heads first of MI5 (Andrew Parker, November 2016) and then of MI6 (Alex Younger, March 2017). The latter came out just as the High Court was reviewing its earlier decision not to prosecute MI6's 2004 acting head, Sir Mark Allen, regarding–his organization's alleged complicity in the rendition of Abdel Hakim Belhaj, an opponent of Gaddafi, to Libya in 2004, where he was tortured. Keir Starmer was the Director of Public Prosecutions when this decision not to prosecute MI6 officials over secret renditions was taken (Kennard and Curtis 2019).

What motivated Snowden (2019) was the realization that the NSA was engaging in mass surveillance in the USA, and that Britain's spy agencies were doing the same. By 2018 it was apparent that the British courts could fine them for this, but not stop them doing it (Corfield 2018).

Evidence collected *Propaganda blitz: how the corporate media distort reality* (Edwards and Cromwell 2018) shows a pattern of systematic disinformation, with reference to the BBC and *Guardian* in particular (since these are often perceived as 'impartial' and 'left-wing' respectively), following the lines dictated by the IAs through DA notices and unstated consensus on key subjects, systematically distorting them. Topics covered in this book include Syria, Libya, Yemen, Israel and Palestine, Assange, Scottish Independence, and Jeremy Corbyn.

Media manipulation is nowhere more apparent than in Kurdish regions. The CIA and MI6 have a long history in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria (the four main countries comprising 'Kurdistan'), since these countries were created by dividing the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. Involvement in these countries intensified after the Second World War. The

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[20] These official requests were termed D-Notices until 1993, then DA (Defence Advisory) Notices, and presently are DSMA Notices.

role of the CIA has been very complex in relation to the Kurds, including supporting north Iraq's breakaway from the Iraqi government in 2002-3 in advance of destroying Saddam Hussein's Iraq (Andrew et al. 2021) and supporting the Rojava fighters intermittently, through the Syrian Democratic Forces (Goldman and Schmidt 2017). It seems highly significant that Wikipedia carries an informative article about a 'Timber Sycamore' CIA program to arm the Syrian rebels via Jordan, while keeping to the line on White Helmets that all criticism is 'conspiracy theory'. Serious researchers are well aware of extreme and systematic misinformation in Wikipedia articles on sensitive topics, implying narrative control by the CIA and other intelligence agencies.[21]

Turkey, Syria, Kurdistan

The term 'Kurdistan' was used freely, including by Ataturk, until he banned it during the extensive Kurdish rebellion of 1925.[22] This was partly instigated by the dividing up of Kurdistan between Turkey and Iran-Iraq-Syria by the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne. Part of the world's 'forgotten history' is how Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji set up the Kingdom of Kurdistan (1921-25) in Sulaymaniyah (north Iraq), after being appointed Governor of the Protectorate of South Kurdistan under the British Mandate of Mesopotamia; and how Barzanji's rebellion was brought to an end partly through bombing by the RAF.

In Turkey, a network of clandestine organizations was set up soon after the end of the Second World War through close collaboration with the CIA and NATO, which seem to have kept in close contact with Turkish security, paramilitary and intelligence forces ever since. The original purpose of this collaboration was to prevent communists coming to power in Turkey, and the CIA and NATO played crucial, covert roles in the 1971 and 1980 coups in the country (Kinzer 2002).

In Iran, Britain's MI6 is understood to have been the main instigator of the subversion leading to the overthrow of Mossadeq's socialist government in Iran in 1952-4, largely through agent provocateurs and aid to hard-line Islamic opponents of Mossadeq (Kinzer 2008). Similar aid to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during this period was aimed at removing Nasser from power.[23] The Shah dynasty, reinstated in Iran in 1953, lasted until the

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[21] See 'Wikipedia exposed as corrupt tool of the establishment', 21st Century Wire, 26 October 2018, at
https://21stcenturywire.com/2018/10/26/wikipedia-exposed-as-corrupt-tool-of-the-establishment/
[22] Olson 1989, Chaliand 1993, Öcalan 2007, Padel 2012, Padel, Sadik & Gupta 2018.
[23] 'Suez crisis 1956: Britain's three way plots with France and Israel. Anthony Eden wanted President
Nasser murdered as MI6 plotted regime changes in Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia',
https://www.nlpwessex.org/docs/BBCSuez.htm

Islamic revolution of 1979, and here too, despite appearances, MI6 played a hidden role in aiding Khomeini's passage to power, passing on the names of Tudeh party members (communists) to the new Iranian authorities, who killed over a thousand of them (Klarenburg 2019).

A much-contested aspect of Turkey's covert paramilitary organizations goes back to Gladio (Edmonds 2013), whose existence in Turkey was admitted by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in 1973 (the same time as in Italy) in the form of 'Counter-Guerrilla',[24] after people who had been tortured in Ziverbey villa (where left-wingers were interrogated after the 1971 coup) revealed that their interrogators had said they were members of this organization. Ecevit alleged Counter-Guerrilla involvement in the Taksim square massacre of 1977; and covert state-orchestrated violence is evident in countless bombings and atrocities in the country since then, especially after the war with the PKK started in 1984, and often involving false-flag attacks by the Grey Wolves terrorist outfit – and not just in Turkey.

As Sibel Edmonds points out (2013), the terrorist career of Abdullah Çatlı (1956-1996) raises many questions. A leader of the Grey Wolves in the 1970s and a contract killer for MIT[25] (especially of leftists and Kurds associated with the PKK), he was also reportedly linked with the attempted assassination of Pope John-Paul II in 1981; yet was granted UK citizenship (for no easily intelligible reason) and a US green card, making Chicago his base, despite being on Interpol's top 10 most wanted list. Arrested in France in 1984 and jailed in Switzerland for heroin dealing, he escaped from the Swiss jail in a helicopter apparently supplied by NATO and co-ordinated by the Grey Wolves in 1990. He was then involved in the failed (possibly on purpose) assassination attempt of Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev in 1995, an incident which caused Azerbaijan to switch from the Russian to the US/NATO sphere of influence. He died in a car crash in November 1996 in Susurluk, northwest Turkey.

This Susurluk road accident caused an uproar in Turkey and beyond, as the other people in the car included Turkey's chief of police, a leader of the Kurdish village guards (an anti-PKK state organisation), a famous beauty queen and MP Sedat Bucak (the only occupant to survive). Çatlı murdered countless people, and the Susurluk scandal proved state collaboration with terrorism, murder and drug-dealing. Çatlı's having been given the green light for worldwide travel was clear from the diplomatic-style passports from several countries he had with him in several names, indicating a NATO connection with Gladio, and corroborating extensive evidence that many Grey Wolves received training from NATO forces in Belgium,

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[24] 'Counter-Guerilla' wikipedia article, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-Guerrilla
[25] *Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı,* National Intelligence Organization. Wikipedia article on Abdullah Çatlı.

the UK and other countries. The repercussions of Susurluk affected the US ambassador to Turkey Marc Grossman, who left this posting soon afterwards, and Major Douglas Dickerson, military attaché to the embassy. These two (along with Dickerson's wife Melek Can Dickerson, Edmonds' colleague at the FBI) are understood to have been orchestrating Gladio operations in Turkey and far beyond.[26]

By contrast, Abdullah Öcalan, a key founder of the PKK, was captured early in 1999 through the cooperation of many countries' intelligence agencies. In 1998, from his base in north Syria, he was forced to leave by the Syrian government, which was under pressure from Turkey, which had threatened to stop the flow of water in the Tigris river after building the Ataturk dam. He travelled to Russia, Italy and Greece, none of whose governments allowed him to stay. Offered asylum in South Africa by Nelson Mandela, he was flown instead from Greece to Kenya, and was arrested from the Greek embassy in Nairobi through the combined forces of the CIA and MIT, and flown to Turkey with Israeli help, where he was condemned to death. This sentence was soon commuted to life imprisonment on İmralı island in the Sea of Marmora. Peace in Kurdistan and the Free Öcalan campaign have sent peace delegations to Turkey over several years.[27] Öcalan's books, written in jail and translated into Spanish, English and other languages, have had a major impact in terms of rethinking democracy to place the central focus on women's rights, as well as questioning capitalism and the nation state through 'democratic confederalism'.[28]

Collaboration between Turkey's MIT and ISIS has been well-documented, along with NATO allies' toleration of this.[29] The MIT has played a many-sided role in anti-Kurdish operations, from assassinating three Kurdish women activists in Paris in January 2013 to presenting plans for more incursions into Rojava.[30] The listing of the PKK as a 'terrorist' organization by most but not all governments acts as a major obstacle to peace,[31] and masks

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[26] 'An inconvenient Patriot', Wikispooks at
https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Document:An_Inconvenient_Patriot; Edmonds 2012.
[27] I was on the İmralı delegation that visited Turkey in February 2020. The Report on this visit, detailing numerous human rights abuses etc., can be found at
http://www.freeocalan.org/articles/english/2020-international-peace-delegation-to-imrali-report. I have written several reviews of Öcalan's books (Padel 2012, Padel et al. 2018).
[28] Öcalan 2007, 2020, Padel 2012, Padel et al. 2018, Miley et al. 2018.
[29] Ahmed 2019, Broomfield 2022. ISIS, 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria', or ISIL, 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant', has officially been just 'Islamic State' since 2014.
[30] Stockholm Center for Peace 2018, Turkish Minute 2021, Coskun 2021. Turkish invasions and occupation of northern Syria started with Afrin in 2018, and northern Iraq more systematically in 2109. Rojava's official name is presently the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.
[31] Diaz 2021. The first trials of PKK members in any European country took place in Germany, lasting from 1989 to 1995 in Düsseldorf. Many saw these as a 'show trial', and they promoted the view of the PKK as a terrorist organization. In the analysis of Duran Kalkan, a senior PKK official who was

continuous state terror by the Turkish security forces in Syria/Rojava and Iraq, as well as in Turkey, where many journalists, academics and others have been jailed on fabricated charges.[32]

As examples of Turkey's notorious false-flag attacks, Selahattin Demirtaş,[33] like many others in Turkey, blamed the MIT for the series of bombings during mid-2015 in Diyarbakır (5 June) and Suruç (20 July), where over thirty young volunteers were killed who were about to cross the border into Rojava bringing aid to Kobane, then under attack by ISIS, as well as in Ankara (10 October), where over 120 peace demonstrators were killed (Hurriyet 2015, Hafiza Merkezi 2015).

Among the world's worst unresolved military conflicts, we witness almost unbearable warfare over large areas of Kurdistan. In Turkey, a situation of huge repression (UK Home Office Report of Fact-Finding Mission 2019), with hundreds of HDP (People's Democratic Party) members in jail, despite electoral gains; somewhat similar repression in Iran, with frequent jailings and armed conflict (Glynn 2020); and in Kurdish areas in northern Syria and Iraq, huge violence from Turkish invasion and occupation.[34] 'Ethnic cleansing' here has involved settling jihadist fighters affiliated with ISIS and similar extremist organizations in areas where Kurdish communities have been violently displaced. How have Turkish forces been allowed to get away with this? Why has there been so little protest by foreign governments? Why so little media coverage, considering the gravity of attack on civilians and civil society (Sweeney 2021)? And what has been the role of intelligence agencies (Andrew et al. 2021), both in specific operations and in this marginalization from world coverage?

Disinformation by IAs seems nowhere clearer than on the vexed issue of the Syrian White Helmets, which takes us to the heart of the propaganda war on Syria. In December 2017 the *Guardian* published a defence against many critics of the organization (Solon 2017). This was immediately attacked for numerous factual errors by Eva Bartlett, Tim Hayward and several others, but the *Guardian* did not print these replies to Solon's article.[35] The White Helmets' funders include the British, US and other governments, and the pattern of entities involved in funding makes clear its links with vested interests that are trying to bring down

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imprisoned during these years, Germany has remained an intrinsic part of Turkey's war on the Kurds, with the Gladio network and numerous arms sales to Turkey obvious links (KCK 2018).

[32] Rojava Information Center 2021, *Kurdistan 24* 2021, Kurdish Washington Institute 2021.

[33] Selahattin Demirtaş was co-leader of the HDP 2014-18, when the HDP came 4th in Turkey's 2015 election with 13.1% of the vote. He has been in jail (like hundreds of other HDP members, including elected mayors and MPs) since 2016, but was the HDP's candidate in the 2018 presidential election.

[34] Defence Spot 2021, Glynn 2021.

[35] Bartlett 2018, Hayward 2018, Off-Guardian 2018.

the Syrian government (Politically Incorrect News 2019). The foreign-funded Free Syrian Army quickly dissolved into the various jihadist groups (Hersch 2014) fighting not only the Syrian government but also the Rojava Kurdish-led administration. By 2025 many reports were showing that Turkish intelligence (primarily MIT) was funding Islamic State and other jihadist groups, just as it is blamed for many 'false-flag attacks' within Turkey itself (Reuters 2013, Başaran 2017).

Tim Anderson (2016) makes a convincing case that from 2011 the 'Arab Spring' rebellion in Syria was orchestrated by foreign agents provocateurs, involving the CIA and other countries' intelligence agencies. In particular, all the intelligence that Assad's government has used chemical weapons appears to have been concocted through the White Helmets and associated outlets (Connelly 2018). In other words, the Syrian war is exceptionally dirty in its far-reaching use of propaganda by intelligence agencies, in collusion with the White Helmets (Norton 2020),[36] while well-documented use of chemical weapons by the Turkish military against Kurds in northern Iraq have been ignored by mainstream media (Sweeney 2021). Despite repeated calls to investigate this systematic use of chemical weapons by Turkish forces (Roustopoulos 2021), there is no mainstream media coverage, in extraordinary contrast to the alleged chemical weapons attacks by Syrian forces.

Many news reports have outlined the role of MI5 and MI6 in allowing jihadists to go and fight in Libya and Syria, ~~including the father of the Manchester bomber,~~ while getting Britons who fought with Kurds against jihadists jailed.[37] Other investigations claim that the BBC has invested heavily in promoting the White Helmets, in collusion with the British secret services, in line with the pattern of propaganda apparent in the Integrity Initiative (Klarenburg 2021, Elmaazi and Blumenthal 2018). A key role by Israeli intelligence is implied in news reports that wounded Al Nusrah or ISIS fighters have been treated in Israel, which has supplied arms to the jihadists to undermine the Syrian government.[38]

The PKK, though still counted as 'terrorists', were credited with saving the Yazidis in the Sinjar mountains when ISIS attacked them so brutally in 2014 and the Iraqi Peshmarga failed to protect them. Turkey's attack on thousands of Kurdish civilians and the PKK in the Qandil and Zagros mountains of north Iraq, which started in 2007 and escalated hugely from 2019,

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[36] Mazzetti et al. 2017, Beeley 2018, John Pilger's Foreword to Edwards and Cromwell 2018.
[37] Dearden 2015 and 2019, *Middle-East Eye* 2018.
[38] Foreign Policy 2014, Sengupta 2017, Haaretz 2019.

has met with near silence in mainstream media, in contrast with periods of constant, one-sided reports on Syrian government forces attacking civilians in East Ghouta and Idlib.[39]

Over 40,000 ISIS fighters with their wives and children remain stranded in prison camps in Rojava, which foreign governments refuse to take responsibility for (Human Rights Watch 2021). At least 200,000 Kurds displaced by the Turkish invasion of Afrin remain in refugee camps in other parts of Rojava, though Rojava's political structure encourages inter-ethnic solidarity with Arabs, Christians, Turkomans and other communities. [40] From these perspectives, it seems that the intelligence agencies of the UK and US, among other countries, bear considerable responsibility for the horrors of the Syrian war and refugee crisis.

Unravelling conspiracies

When Turkish forces have supported jihadists so openly, with so little criticism from their NATO allies, it is hard not to see a conspiracy of intelligence agencies in allowing this rise of ISIS, following the history of black operations back to Gladio and the overthrow of Mossadeq (Edmonds 2013).

Colin Wallace left the Information Research Department when he was ordered to become involved in MI5's secret campaign to smear Harold Wilson as a KGB agent while he was Labour Prime Minister. The role of intelligence agencies in discrediting Jeremy Corbyn, making him 'unelectable' as a perceived 'national security liability', seems equally apparent. [41] Corbyn made frequent astute and sensitive statements about the invasion of Kurdish areas when other world leaders and media were silent (Sykes 2019), just as he highlighted the Palestinian situation.

The age of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019) illustrates the way intelligence agency thinking has permeated many aspects of daily life. The ruthless manufacture of disinformation by US corporations is laid bare in John Perkins' *Confessions of an economic hit man*, promoting false economic forecasts that tempted 'developing countries' into committing themselves to destructive projects through unrepayable debt (Perkins 2004/2018). Similarly, we have seen how closely the CIA collaborated to serve the interests of US arms companies, and Chris Hedges asks how far arms companies have driven the expansion of NATO and fuel

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[39] *Washington Post* 2014, McKernan 2021.
[40] Medya TV daily broadcast 14 March 2022.
(https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGmvTrlTzGmgSgqfsWdJlJHvnWQ?projector=1);
interview with Elif Ronahi, female member of the KCK (Tukish Communities Union) General
Presidential Council, about the Turkish state`s Policy of Genocide, KCK-info, 15 March 2022, at
https://kck-info.com/interviews-mar22-elifronahi-video/
[41] Edwards and Cromwell 2018, Elmaazi and Blumenthal 2018, Curtis 2020.

the war in Ukraine (Hedges 2022). Certainly, the CIA has made devious use of Ukrainian war criminals, protecting them from prosecution and giving them false identities to promote anti-Russian militias from the 1940s to 2022.[42]

Whistle-blowers started to be targeted more assiduously under Obama and since. Soon after his appointment as CIA Director (2017-18), Mike Pompeo made a tirade against 'the Philip Agees of this world' and targeted Julian Assange. CIA operations against Assange have included plans to assassinate him (Blumenthal 2020, McEvoy 2021). This leads to vital questions: should journalists toe the lines dictated by intelligence agencies? Was Assange a traitor, as Pompeo and many think in the USA? Or was Wikileaks performing a vital service in bringing out the truth in an age of increasing disinformation?

Conclusion

In conclusion, an anthropology of intelligence agencies needs to elucidate many recurring patterns, starting perhaps with the consistent move from collecting 'intel' to giving out disinformation – clear since Bernays' involvement in the 1954 Guatemala regime change, and his aim of 'engineering consent' or propaganda.

Another pattern is the use of indigenous peoples in proxy wars, from the Hmong in the Vietnam war to 'off-on' CIA support for Kurds in Iraq, Syria and Iran. From the perspective of indigenous peoples, despite token acknowledgement that they are generally among those who live most sustainably, it is clear that there has been no concerted effort to end countless conflicts over the extraction of resources on indigenous lands. Nor has there been any attempt to confront the fuelling of armed conflicts by the arms trade, nor the systematic corruption in this trade (Feinstein 2011). The arms and mining industries are among the world's most polluting, yet neither received proper coverage in COP26, presided over by the UK government in Glasgow in November 2021 (Lakhani 2021).

A fundamental question involves the term 'intelligence'. 'Intel' as facts or 'data' is often biased, 'dumbed-down' and geared towards control. If one role of IAs is to 'gather intel', another involves putting out certain interpretations or narratives through the media. This puts a spotlight on the word 'intelligence': how intelligent are the policies promoted by these agencies? Is their main role collecting intel, or is it often to promote dubious, violent policies, especially in terms of foreign policy, that may be in their own country's interests (or the

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[42] Much of this hidden history is revealed in Oliver Stone's 2016 documentary *Ukraine on Fire,* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHH10jIRJmQ. Recent events are outlined in Zuesse 2014, 2018, 2022, Hahn 2018, Dinucci 2022, Rubinstein & Blumenthal 2022, Webb 2022.

interests of a national elite), but are often harmful for most people in the countries being interfered with, in terms of promoting polarization and conflict? In this sense, could it be that intelligence agencies disseminate ways of thinking that are – at least in the long-term planning for our collective future – basically profoundly unintelligent?

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REVIEW ARTICLE

SHUBHRA MURARKA[1]

Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Border of Settler States*, Durham NC: Duke University Press 2014. 280 pp. ISBN electronic 978-0-8223-7678-1

Audra Simpson's (Mohawk of Kahnawà:ke) *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Border of Settler States* has had clear effects on anthropology and generally the social sciences. The term *refusal*, as theorized in her book, has now made its way into everyday conversations amongst anthropologists. Simpson not only won multiple awards for her book, including the Best First Book award, but has also greatly influenced the theoretical underpinnings of other prominent, award-winning books in the field, including Savannah Shange's *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Antiblackness, + Schooling in San Francisco* (2019) which won the Gregory Bateson Book Prize from the Society for Cultural Anthropology; Juno Salazar Parreñas's *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation* (2019), which won the Rosaldo Prize from the Association of Feminist Anthropology; and Saiba Varma's *The Occupied Clinic: Militarism and Care in Kashmir* (2020), which won the Edie Turner First Book Prize in Ethnographic Writing awarded by the American Anthropological Association, to name just a few. It is clear that Simpson's writings have been key to contributions made in critical race theory, Indigenous studies, and decolonial and feminist anthropology.

Simpson, a political anthropologist at Columbia University, considers how the structures of settler colonialism continue to shape the everyday lives of the Mohawk people. She shows how settler-colonialism forced the Mohawk nation to contend with issues of membership, which have led to measures of blood quantum and have gendered implications. She also shows how law and treaties granting protection have been ignored and how the settler state continues to infringe on Indigenous sovereignty. Simpson argues that the fear and anxiety of disappearance is alive and real and motivates legislative decisions over membership. She argues that by refusing Canadian citizenship, the Mohawk people are engaging in a politics of refusal that forces the settler

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apparatus to recognize Mohawk sovereignty. Although this leads to fraught border crossings, those who refuse to carry Canadian passports (and therefore pass as Canadian citizens) are refusing to be absorbed into the settler-colonial state.

In Chapter 1, Simpson lays out her argument and relevant context. She poses the question 'What does it mean to refuse a passport – what some consider to be a gift or a right, the freedom of mobility and residency?' This question reflects many of the issues that Simpson explores in her book: citizenship, refusal, border crossings, and the (internal and external) conflicts imposed by settler-colonial nation states. In this chapter, she establishes that colonialism continues to exist in the form of settler-colonialism, countering those who may believe that Canada and the United States are either postcolonial nation states, valorising European North American sovereignty and ignoring the struggles and colonisation of Indigenous peoples, or that the settler-colonial project is complete and the Indigenous population has been 'successfully' eliminated through either genocide or assimilation. Having established the context and theory of settler-colonialism, Simpson sets out how it continues to actively affect Indigenous lives. She makes three claims: 1) that nested sovereignty is possible, and the Mohawk people can be part of a sovereign Mohawk nation as nationals, as well as have rights and protections under the Canadian settler nation state; 2) that refusal is an alternative to recognition, in which the act of refusal forces and upholds the recognition of Mohawk political sovereignty; and 3) that anthropology needs to reorient its relationship with Indigenous studies. Simpson reminds us that Canada and the United States only exist as nation states due to Indigenous dispossession and that existing tribal nations and tribal territories are still managed by settlers and treated as wards of the state. She asks how it is possible to be a nation when one is slowly losing land and the right to nation and sovereignty is dictated by a foreign, settler-colonial government.

In Chapter 2, Simpson discusses issues of membership among the Mohawk nation. She shows how settler-colonialism has forced the very existence of these issues and continues to shape the anxieties and conflicts that are present in questions of membership. Although in the past the Mohawk nation was open to outsiders, under the contemporary settler state questions of membership are laden with ethical and moral implications that question ideas of identity, selfhood and nationhood. Who is recognized as a Mohawk? Who has the right to *be* recognized as a Mohawk? Kinship relationships become political. Simpson shows how territorial history shapes these questions. She argues the loss of land over time has led to the fear and anxiety of

disappearing, which is reflected in questions of membership. Defining oneself has become the only way to defend and articulate oneself in the face of settler-colonial dispossession.

In the following two chapters, Simpson subjects the discipline of anthropology to scrutiny. In Chapter 3, she problematizes how history and anthropology have discussed Iroquois people. Implicit in her discussion is how the Western gaze pervades anthropology in its methods, inquiries and conclusions. Anthropological writing seeks to make its work legible to outsiders— the White anthropologist outsider. These works, which constitute a body of knowledge on a group of people and are articulated as canonical works by outsiders, have material impacts on determining legal presence and claims to land.

In Chapter 4, she argues that anthropology's unit of analysis is difference, and that we need to move away from that. She argues that the voices of the people must be central and lives out her argument in the sheer act of writing this book. Simpson shows how the unit of difference is complicit in settler-colonialism by fetishizing Indigenous peoples and contributing to their elimination. By reminding us that 'culture' is defined by difference, Simpson is invoking the colonial history of anthropology and the reminder that difference was how colonial powers justified their imperial project by painting subaltern populations as uncivilized and barbaric. She points out that to be seen as civilized is the death of difference. Political recognition and citizenship are offered when the group is seen as being 'civilized enough'—code for assimilated enough. Decentring difference in anthropology means decentring the (settler) colonial gaze—all the more important given that the appeal of difference continues to dominate anthropology.

Chapter 5 focuses on the issue of borders and border crossings. Simpson argues that border crossings are not necessarily transgressive, as framed in Chicano studies, but rather an articulation of sovereignty and rights. The international border between Canada and the United States runs through Mohawk territory. According to the Jay treaty of 1794, Mohawk people have the right to cross the border freely and transport commercial goods to sell to other members of the tribal nation. However, as Simpson shows, this is not respected but flagrantly ignored through tense border crossings, questionings and detention at borders, the scepticism of border agents presented with Haudenosaunee passports, and the portrayal of Mohawk people as smugglers, despite having the right to transport commercial goods across the international border. Simpson shows how the racialization of minoritized identities has undermined the struggle for sovereignty. She also argues that the 'gift' of citizenship is yet another imposition

and assimilation tactic by a foreign settler government. Citizenship is another way to dismiss the rights of Indian tribal nations and absorb them as citizens of the settler state. She also articulates the idea of 'feeling' citizenship vs. citizenship of convenience.

Chapter 6 takes up the issue of gender and the disproportionate burden placed on Native women within the context of settler-colonial dispossession. She discusses the disproportionate violence Native women face and the conflation of Native female bodies with land. She also discusses membership issues and how Native women are dispossessed of their membership and rights when they marry outside the tribe, while white women gain status through marriage. This shows how membership questions are not only questions of who is included, but also of who is excluded, of which Native women bear the brunt. This, too, reflects the fear of settler-colonial dispossession—fear that the White man carrying membership rights would lead to further dispossession of land.

Each chapter in this book is densely packed with information, reiterating and reviewing many of the same ideas in multiple chapters. The reading of this text can feel repetitive, disruptive and nonlinear. While my first instinct was somewhat critical, the style of writing reflects the issues discussed. Seemingly reflecting Simpson's own internal thought processes and struggles, the iterative and repetitive style of writing reflects the urgency of these issues and shows how they pervade and are linked in several aspects of everyday life. The work reflects the disruption of settler-colonialism for tribal nations. All the chapters discuss citizenship, tribal sovereignty and the effects of colonialism. Simpson often repeats herself, with chapters and arguments overlapping, making it seem that no chapter is making one specific argument. On the contrary, they are all simultaneously making the same arguments, while never focusing on just one argument within one discrete chapter. They thereby subvert the typical model of the ethnography.

While not explicitly an autoethnography, *Mohawk Interruptus* has an autoethnographic feel. A member of the Mohawk community herself, Simpson's writings can feel as though they simultaneously reflect her own struggles as well as her community's. In a typical (auto)ethnography, the anthropologist analyses and reflects on the 'other'. For Simpson, her research and analysis will thus be more self-reflective—and even demand it–as her own histories and experiences are inextricably linked to her research. In studying her community, she is also

studying herself. This leads to powerful moments in which Simpsons' own reckonings around identity and membership come into tension with her interlocuters'.

Simpson's contributions are many. She argues that settler-colonialism still exists, countering settler-nativist fantasies of claims to land. She shows how settler structures continue to disrupt and affect everyday Indigenous life. Simpson also disrupts the idea of citizenship as a political good or 'gift' by arguing that bestowed citizenship is a way to undermine tribal sovereignty and is yet another tactic to continue Indigenous dispossession. She problematizes the anthropological tradition, including the canon and methods that uphold difference as the unit of analysis. She addresses these issues by offering an Indigenous mode of anthropology—a politics of refusal.

As a reader, I would have liked more 'thick description' and less repetition; however, I also recognize and respect the fact that these were intentional, political decisions. This discomfort and desire for more is intentional, and one that we, as readers, are forced to come to terms with. This book can read as though Mohawk voices are missing. However, the text is implicitly imbued with the Mohawk experience and decentres the White anthropological gaze. The mere act of reading Simpson's writings inherently requires listening and accepting the Mohawk authorial (and authoritative) voice and experience. This results in a paradoxical ethnography that is thoroughly an Indigenous text that centres the Mohawk experience while presenting the reader with very little ethnographic description of or interview excerpts with Mohawk people.

Simpson's book feels very much as though she is living out her reorientations of anthropology. Her theoretical and methodical intervention of ethnographic refusal is threaded throughout the book. In writing this book, Simpson is asserting Mohawk sovereignty and recognition. She is writing against the narrative of settler-colonialism and Indigenous disappearance. While we know Simpson has conducted interviews and engaged in ethnography, there seems to be little evidence of these encounters in her writing. She eschews traditional modes of the discipline by doing away with 'thick' detailed descriptions of her surroundings and participants—perhaps her own mode of ethnographic refusal. Decentring difference as the unit of analysis, the moments of difference that *do* show up feel like disruptions themselves, such as when Simpson disagrees with one of her interlocuters. Simpson also assumes a familiarity with Indigenous issues. Given the lack of geographical description, definitions or introductions to terms, she is assuming the reader either has some familiarity with Iroquois issues and/or is putting the burden on the reader to catch up to speed. This is a departure from traditional

ethnography, even those written by other Indigenous anthropologists. This brings up questions of: Who refuses? Who doesn't? And why?

My main criticism, or rather recommendation for expansion, would be to include an analysis of gender. I would have liked to see more discussion of the gendered implications and effects of settler-colonialism. I was left wanting more discussion of heteropatriarchy and perhaps a more explicit account of how it has been internalized in membership decisions and of the disproportionate burden placed on Native women with respect to marriage and membership rights. The fear of elimination restricts only choices for Native women, which reflects how fears of elimination and the responsibility for countering them primarily fall on the shoulders of Native women. Simpson mostly steers clear of any explicit critical gender analysis.

Simpson's book is an important contribution to the fields of anthropology, Indigenous studies, Iroquois studies, border studies, settler-colonial studies and decolonial methodologies. As mentioned in the introduction, she has also had immense influence on other anthropologists, consequently influencing other fields that *Mohawk Interruptus* may not explicitly be in conversation with. She writes against the ways in which history and anthropology have dealt with Indigenous groups as a depoliticized and historicized entity and challenges the foundations of settler-colonialism. Through her writings, she refuses the completion of the settler-colonial project and asserts Mohawk sovereignty and tribal political recognition. *Mohawk Interruptus* is certainly on its way to becoming, if it is not already, part of the new canon of both anthropology and critical Indigenous studies.

BOOK REVIEWS

Rebecca Cassidy, *Vicious games: capitalism and gambling*. London: Pluto Press 2020. 240 pp. ISBN: 9780745340395

In *Vicious games: capitalism and gambling*, Rebecca Cassidy debunks the myth of responsible gambling and the paradox of 'self-responsibility' in the gambling discourse. She delineates the relationship between the state and the gambling industry, exposing the ways in which the industry is always in need of the state's support to thrive. Consequently, it is considered a manifestation of the omnipresent atmosphere of neoliberal economics in which the state has transitioned from being a welfare provider to becoming an advocate for free markets and privatized industries. The result is enabling the environment and maneuvering the regulations to create, advertise and sustain people's desire to gamble. Rebecca Cassidy's expertise on gambling is extensive and encompasses her fieldwork in different countries in the world, in addition to the UK, USA and Gibraltar. She has over twenty years of experience in conducting ethnographic and anthropological research on gambling, using different methods and approaches to gather her data. She has conducted participant observation and worked in betting shops, interviewed people who gamble, and participated in different policy and business conferences related to the industry.

In her book, Cassidy questions and explains the expansion of the commercial gambling industry in the past thirty years. She focuses on the people who produce gambling, or 'the industry', as they call themselves, explaining how they envisage their industry as a 'secretive, litigious, and extremely well-funded one', as one North American casino manager told her in 2012 (2). Her research participants are gambling industry's stakeholders, people who gamble and staff from various sectors in the betting and gambling industry, in addition to regulators and politicians who create policies to regulate gambling. Cassidy shares her techniques on how to access the field of gambling research in the book, which is usually an unwelcoming arena for academic researchers, indicating that persistence, passion, and solid preparations did influence those involved and got them to talk to her.

The book is a solid analysis of how the gambling industry has been legitimized and regulated in the UK, describing the role of policy-makers, gambling corporations and researchers in 'reframing gambling from a potential source of crime to a legitimate leisure activity' (1). The

book has eight chapters that shed light on the UK Gambling Act, while advocating the need to revise it, and it presents the history of the UK's betting shops and its bookmakers' laments.

Additionally, Cassidy traces the emergence and popularity of the slot machine and explores the use of raffles as a way of gambling for good purposes. In her ethnographic fieldwork, she gets closer to the people working in the gambling industry to unpack how they 'accommodate the apparent paradoxes in life, including being loving fathers and husbands with selling harmful products' (4). Cassidy unravels the roots of these paradoxes by explaining that people may perceive gambling as harmless fun and as an industry that creates jobs and contributes to national economies. She unpacks one of the most important arguments in the book, which is the myth of responsible gambling. She puts upfront the idea that people working in the industry invest in the mainstream belief that people are responsible only for themselves, rather than thinking that everyone and everything is connected. Cassidy constructs the argument that personal responsibility in gambling only helps the industry, not the individual. I agree with her logic and wish to invoke the work of the philosopher Brian Barry (2005), who argues that the notion of a personal responsibility for addiction, misery and meritocracy is a paradox, or a myth, that is used to push down the disadvantaged members of the society. Equality means access to the resources, opportunities and information to make informed choices, which would lead to a more just society. Pathologizing gambling and investing in the idea that the harms from gambling are solely the responsibility of the person play a critical role in maintaining the unequal status quo (Cassidy et al. 2013; Schüll 2012).

Cassidy presents the shift, a moral shift, in how commercial gambling is being used to extract money from the people, while ensuring that 'the house' is always the winner. In the UK, the responsibility for regulating the gambling industry is a 'poisoned chalice' (4), as Cassidy describes it, because regulators try to balance managing the business with the gambling corporations while at the same time responding to the public debate over problem gambling and its harms. Indeed, gambling is a contested topic: it is loaded with meanings and emotions that accompany easy wins and interferes with the morality of gaining wealth through hard work, not through play and luck.

In the final chapter, Cassidy describes her encounters with online gambling and her ethnographic fieldwork in Gibraltar. Generally, the online gambling sector emerged in the late 1990s, only to be banned by the state, thus creating a channel for an illegal online gambling

industry offshore. The UK thus created regulations for online gambling that attracted companies to operate from the UK, making the UK a world leader in the online gambling sector and its largest regulated market. Cassidy argues that women became more involved in gambling because of the affordability of the online platforms, mainly because they are anonymous and use attractive advertising techniques that transcend the class politics and gender dynamics that are present in the UK's betting shops. Therefore, Cassidy explains, gambling regulations are interwoven with the neoliberal economics and politics of late capitalism, always finding ways to conjure up political decisions to increase national income.

Ultimately, although legalizing gambling is a source of income and a recession-proof industry, the dark side of gambling cannot be ignored in favor of its economic benefits to the state. Cassidy explains that the expansion of commercial gambling has high costs, manifested in the harms it does, negatively impacting on the lives of problem gamblers and their loved ones. It may lead to unemployment, divorce, suicide, substance abuse and addiction, and ultimately to negative impacts on national economies. Gambling is a vicious cycle that influences people and economies for the benefits of the gambling corporations. Cassidy puts it in numbers, showing that the UK has between 340,000 and 1.4 million people who are called problem gamblers. And for everyone who is considered a problem gambler, on average six other people are harmed.

Cassidy's book demonstrates the importance of revising gambling polices to include all the ways in which gambling is performed and made available. She emphasizes that individual gamblers have a responsibility to seek help and that not everyone who gambles develops an addiction. It is a matter, she insists, about striking a balance between individual and collective responsibility, encouraging conversations around gambling, and revising the UK's gambling legislation.

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Jennifer Erickson, *Race-ing Fargo: Refugees, Citizenship, and the Transformation of Small Cities.* Ithaca NY: Cornell Univ. Press 2020. 223pp., USD26.95. ISBN 978 1 5017 5115 8.

The city of Fargo in North Dakota has long been known as an economically thriving location, boasting one of the lowest unemployment rates in the United States. However, today Fargo is much more than that: it is a place of cultural learning, interaction, conflict and understanding. With four hundred first-generation refugees making Fargo their new home every year, the city, which is one of the destinations of the nation's refugee resettlement scheme, is in a constant state of transformation. What in 1990 was a 97% white community of predominantly Scandinavian heritage by 2015 had come to consist of an 11% minority population of ethically and racially mixed groups. Consequently, the original inhabitants now share their everyday lives, spaces and institutions with people speaking fifty different languages, and diversity has become key to every aspect of the city's life, even if not to everyone's approval.

In this engaging ethnographic narrative, Jennifer Erickson tells the story of Fargo's transformation by documenting the backstage processes of refugee resettlement from the 1980s to the present day. The book does an excellent job of exposing the lesser known aspects of newcomer integration by showing the important role support organisations play every step of the way. From the creation of living spaces through the design of preparatory courses to lobbying against cuts to the resettlement programme, these institutions are key drivers of change in the city. Moreover, by constantly zooming between the institutional and individual levels, the study also allows an insightful glimpse into the deeply personal sides of these processes by describing the support workers' dilemmas and frustrations, as well as their experience of solidarity fatigue.

Of all the refugee population, Erickson's comparative study puts Bosnians and South Sudanese in the limelight. She traces the two groups' journeys of integration from the reasons for their flight and their conditions in the home country through dreams of normality to potential issues of cultural adaptation and the long-term determination to stay. Although the focus on these two

groups alone sometimes hinders the cross-cultural analysis of the bigger picture, the astute descriptions of both communities, facilitated by Erickson's long-term engagement with them, help evaluate the holes in relevant policies through concrete examples. By portraying individual experiences, the book demonstrates that a blanket approach to refugee resettlement is insufficient, as needs, previous experiences and skills differ greatly across the sending countries.

By embedding the study in a theoretical framework of 'assemblages' and 'the common', Erickson skilfully broadens out her scope of analysis to include more than just the key players involved in the process of creating New Americans: she emphasizes the need to consider all those who come to cohabit Fargo as a result. Through her detailed descriptions of everyday encounters between old and new residents, the book highlights the ways in which cross-cultural understandings of race, ethnicity, gender, religion and class have formed and continue to form experiences of identity, citizenship and belonging. Furthermore, it showcases how experiences of non-belonging can be reasons for non-productivity, withdrawal from social engagement and mental health issues, while affirming how instances of cultural comprehension can transform experiences of inhabiting the city together.

The book clearly calls for the inclusion of anthropologists in debates on refugee resettlement, cultural integration and the creation of inclusive public spaces. It exhibits the strengths of the discipline in eliciting the mismatches between service users' needs and the available services and identifies the areas where further engagement is necessary. Erickson does not shy away from pinpointing the practices of institutional and political economy that have characterized the United States for the past two and a half decades and that are collectively responsible for the racialization of places like Fargo. However, the closing chapter does send some hope the readers' way by suggesting feasible ways forward for the establishment of a more welcoming environment and by introducing a concrete architectural project tailored specifically to the needs of a highly diverse community.

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