



Convergence and Divergence:
Issues of State and Region in Tourism
Development in Malaysian Borneo, Brunei
Darussalam and Indonesian Kalimantan

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Working Paper No.24

Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Gadong 2016

Editorial Board, Working Paper Series

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Victor T. King

Abstract:

Tourism is making an increasingly important contribution to regional economic development in Borneo and is an important element in state development plans and programmes; considerable attention is also being paid to the potential offered in the East Asian market for attracting package tourists to the Borneo states, especially in Sabah, Brunei Darussalam and Sarawak. The Borneo states boast two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, one in Sarawak (Gunung Mulu National Park) and the other in Sabah (Kinabalu National Park), and the collaborative and coordinated 'The Heart of Borneo' conservation and forest and wildlife reservation project in which all Borneo states participate and which offers opportunities for the development of ecotourism. Nevertheless, tourism is a relatively new developmental enterprise in Borneo in comparison with the established tourism destinations in neighbouring Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. Even now research on tourism in Borneo is uneven and its conceptual contribution to tourism studies though empirically interesting and useful is poorly developed. Developments in research during the past 20 years are reviewed. Three ASEAN states are represented in Borneo: the Federation of Malaysia, Negara Brunei Darussalam, and the Republic of Indonesia and they offer fertile ground for comparative studies in the tourism field. Whilst the emphasis and direction of tourism development policies indicate some convergence in those pursuits offered to tourists: in ecotourism, ethnic and longhouse tourism, heritage tourism and even beach resort tourism, there is also evidence of considerable divergence. The reasons for this divergence are examined in terms of the differences in overall political and economic priorities in the three nation-states, and to different environmental, cultural, historical and infrastructural characteristics. These differences suggest that one way forward for tourism development is the organization and promotion of regional and cross-national tourism packages to take advantage of diversity in an already interconnected set of states.

Keywords: *Convergence, divergence, tourism development, regional cooperation, Borneo*

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Convergence and Divergence: Issues of State and Region in Tourism Development in Malaysian Borneo, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesian Kalimantan

Victor T. King

INTRODUCTION

A personal trajectory: The early years

The impetus for this re-excursion into Borneo tourism development arises from three interconnected sources. The first relates to two conferences in which I was involved in 1991 and 1992 and the publications which emerged from them. In 1992 I organized the first conference panels on tourism research in Borneo at the Second Biennial International Conference of the Borneo Research Council held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah in July 1992 (King, 1994a, 1994b). This had come on the back of a major international multi-disciplinary conference on tourism in Southeast Asia held in March 1991 under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK) and the British Academy. This gathering resulted in an edited book which addressed a range of issues in tourism development in the region in relation to the impacts, costs and benefits of tourism; economic growth, regional development, the environment and the sustainability of tourism; the politics of tourism; the history of tourism and European colonial images and representations of landscapes and peoples; the then current representations of Southeast Asian sites in tourism promotional literature; the dynamic encounters between ‘hosts’ and guests’ with regard to such issues as cultural performances, handicraft production and sex tourism and the positive agency of ‘hosts’; and the dynamic relationships between tourism, culture and identity (Hitchcock, King and Parnwell, 1993a). Above all there were contributions to debates about the variegated, complex character of tourism encounters; the process

of cultural ‘touristification’ (1993: 93-94, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2003; Picard and Wood, 1997); the relative, contingent, fluid, contested, symbolic, constructed and ‘invented’ character of culture (Wood, 1993: 55-66; and see 1984, 1997); and the methodological issues which tourism research has to address in terms of the time or period when the research was conducted and its duration and whether findings have been based on revisits, the kinds of tourism engaged in and the nature of the encounters and activities, the scale, intensity and duration of tourist activities, the origins and ethnic backgrounds of tourists and whether they are domestic, or from neighbouring, culturally related countries, or from entirely different cultural backgrounds, and the relationships between processes of change generated by tourism and by other processes of modernization and globalization (Hitchcock, King and Parnwell, 1993b: 4-8). In addition to drawing attention to the neglect of domestic and regional tourism and its conceptual importance (ibid.: 7-8), other concepts with regard to ‘authenticity’, ‘staging’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘identity’, ‘imaging’, ‘representation’ and ‘sustainability’ were discussed.

In the process of editing a book arising from the 1991 conference the opportunity was presented to consider some of these matters in a subsequent conference on Borneo in 1992. However, a major conclusion which emerged from the deliberations on tourism development there was that very little research had been undertaken and therefore much remained to be done. In prefacing an edited volume on Tourism in Borneo (1994a) I stated then that ‘Readers of this volume will readily see that research on tourism development in Borneo is only just beginning and some of the findings are preliminary in nature. However, it is [my] hope that we will provide the stimulus for increasing research on what promises to be one of the main elements in the future economic development of the island’ (1993c: vi). In summarizing the proceedings of the conference I also pointed to the need to focus on such major issues as the effects of cultural and ethnic tourism on the peoples, communities, material culture and performances of Borneo; the ways in which ecotourism has to address both conservation and the commodification and commoditization of the environment; the ways in which imaging and representation creates particular understandings and expectations among tourists and the effects of these on local populations; the roles which the tourism industry plays in the economic development of the island; and the policies and actions which governments and their agents deploy in the promotion and shaping of tourism in Borneo. I concluded that ‘These are large questions and issues for Borneo and we can only begin to tackle them in a rather limited way, given the lack of past and current

research on these topics. However, perhaps we can also begin to set out an agenda for future research, and, at least, sensitize students of Borneo to what is at stake in the opening up of the island to leisure and pleasure' (1994b: 4-5). Therefore, after over twenty years of the further growth and expansion of the tourism industry in Borneo, it seems timely to take stock of what has been done in developing our understanding of the transformations which have taken place.

Travel writing on Borneo: Engagements in the popular literature

The second source of renewed interest and inspiration on the subject of Borneo tourism emerged from my involvement in the compilation of two sets of travel writings on Borneo (King, 1992, 1999), and a recent translation of the first volume into Indonesian with a new preface (King, 2013). This work caused me recently to ponder the kinds of images of Borneo peoples and environments which have been created by primarily Western travellers, explorers, colonial administrators and tourists and the influence which these have brought to bear on the ways in which the tourism industry has presented Borneo to the wider world (Millum, 1993; Saunders, 1993). More recent work on 'imaging' Borneo has focused on 'wild Borneo' (both cultural and natural), tattooed and loin-clothed head-hunters, longhouses, blowpipes, women displaying their woven costumes, beads and silver jewellery, and exotic and mysterious fauna and flora (Gingging, 2007; Kruse, 1998, 2003; Markwell, 2001; Mayer, 1999; and see Selwyn, 1993). Indeed, the term 'wild' occurs with great frequency in the titles of books on Borneo. Robert Winzeler has also provided a very useful summary of some of the main issues in the anthropology of tourism in Southeast Asia including a discussion of 'cultural objectification' and the 'creation of eternalized traditions' in Borneo with particular reference to Kruse's work on Iban longhouse tourism in Sarawak and Winzeler's own research on the Bidayuh of Sarawak (2011: 220-236; and see 1997a: 12-15, 1997b: 223-237).

Return to Borneo

Thirdly, my research interests in Borneo were rekindled after an absence of some ten years with a period spent at Universiti Brunei Darussalam in 2012, and then subsequently in 2013 and 2015 accompanied by return visits to Sarawak and Sabah. In addition to the renewed concern to undertake a stock-taking of major issues raised in recent research on tourism in Borneo, and such matters as imaging and representations, it was immediately obvious in Brunei Darussalam that the

country's modest tourism industry was interlinked with considerable movements of Brunei citizens, expatriate residents as well as some international tourists, across the borders between Brunei, Sarawak, and Sabah. Brunei was an immensely important source for many of these movements. This in turn takes us back to the increasing interest in emerging inter- and intra-regional connections marked by the publication of the important book *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia* (Teo, Chang and Ho, 2001a, 2001b) and Geoffrey Wall's observations, in his concluding chapter of that book, that 'tourism is, at the same time, a homogenising and a differentiating phenomenon as global forces are mediated by local conditions and even small local differences may become causes for celebration and turned into tourist attractions' (2001: 319).

Preliminary conceptual considerations

With regard to reflections on the field of tourism studies in Borneo during the past two decades, this paper provides a preliminary evaluation of conceptual advances in the more general field of studies. To pre-empt my conclusions the overall judgement is that there has been a worthwhile addition to the empirical literature on tourism development in Borneo, but not much in the way of conceptual development and there are still large gaps in our knowledge of the effects and processes of tourism encounters across the island. In an important recent general review of tourism studies, paying particular attention to sociological perspectives Cohen and Cohen (2012a) draw attention to three promising approaches which enable the movement of our understanding forward in the study of tourism: mobilities, performativity and actor-network theory (and see 2012b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Their proposals have occasioned some debate (see, for example, King, 2015a, 2015b), but they do constitute a considerable advance on earlier concerns with 'authenticity', 'staging', 'hosts and guests', 'impacts' and the 'tourist gaze'. There is very little in the tourism literature on Borneo which inspires this level of conceptual contemplation or the realization of the importance of 'post-tourists', domestic and other Asian tourists and the replacement of concerns about such matters as the search for authenticity with the search for fun, play, entertainment and simulacra and other motivations (Cohen and Cohen, 2012a). Furthermore, the development of Urry's emphasis on the visual in his concept of the 'tourist gaze' into concerns with the multi-sensory experience of tourism encounters has also not been applied in a Borneo context.

One of the major concerns in tourism studies in the past two decades in Borneo has been issues of imaging and representation. But unfortunately these subsequent studies have not, in my

view, advanced beyond or even made recourse to Tom Selwyn's widely cited 'views from the brochures' chapter on Southeast Asia which considered both 'structuralist' and post-structuralist readings of tourism promotional literature directed primarily to Thailand and Malaysia (1993: 117-137; and see Selwyn, 1996). In 'structuralist' mode, following Dean MacCannell's pursuit of 'structures of modernity' (1976: 4) and the ways in which the 'homeless' and 'isolated' tourist captures, recreates and brings together the 'scattered fragments of [modern] everyday life', Selwyn indicates that tourist brochures (as well as other forms of advertising and representation) promote leisure as 'an arena in which the fragmented modern may recover his sense of structure or, to borrow terms from Louis Dumont, "orientation to the whole"' (Selwyn, 1993: 118). In this structuralist mode Lévi-Straussian 'mythemes' and 'traditional myth' are replaced by modern advertising and become 'mythemes' of 'sites', beaches and boundaries', 'smiles of local friends' and 'food' in tourism brochures. The language of tourism in this mode dwells on 'the construction of individuals and groups, also with relations between groups' (ibid.: 126), and 'the brochures do seem to be in the business of selling myths' (ibid.: 127). Overall then sites are 'signifiers which, linked together, form coherent structures within which individual tourists find historical and biographic meaning' (ibid.: 129).

Selwyn then develops his argument further by addressing post-structuralist readings of brochures in the context of the increasing interest in cultural commoditization and consumerism and the transformation of the world into a 'tourist supermarket' so that everything advertised is reduced to the same level: 'intellectual distinctions and judgements about the relative value of things becomes blurred' (ibid.: 119, 128). In this mode structure, boundaries, and frontiers are fragmented and even erased in the process of marketing commodities and in 'incentive travel' (ibid.: 127, 133). Selwyn argued persuasively that when tourism transforms destinations and sites into commodities they are presented as 'centres of physical and emotional sensation from which temporal and spatial continuities have been abolished', and the tourist experience is characterized as one of 'discontinuous intensity' (ibid.: 129).

Selwyn illustrates these two modes of reading brochures with examples, among others, from Borneo and the wider Malaysia: Discovery Tours (Sabah) and their brochure *Borneo, Sabah, Malaysia*, with a 'Penampang Cultural Tour' and 'the rich cultural heritage of the Kadazans', including a visit to a renowned head-hunter and his 'House of Skulls', another includes, not

unexpectedly, a visit to Kinabalu National Park; Api Tours (Borneo) and its brochure *Borneo Adventurama* comprising visits to Sabah's natural attractions, though with some attention to the state capital, Kota Kinabalu, and its prominent cultural sites; Musi Holiday's *Great Mahakam River Tours* where the tourist will have the opportunity to encounter 'ancient tribes' in East Kalimantan; and CPH Travel Agencies (Sarawak) brochure *Borneo Unexplored* with visits to an Iban longhouse (ibid.: 130-133). Therefore, the main sites are natural (especially rivers, rainforests, and fauna) and cultural (churches, temples, mosques, museums, colonial architecture, state buildings and monuments, and longhouses), and some visits focus on the interaction between culture and nature and between 'ancient tribes' and their surrounding natural environment. Selwyn argues that these brochures can be read in structuralist mode, and are amenable to Lévi-Straussian interpretation: the oppositions and connections through, for example, mediation, transaction and exchange, between nature and culture, hot and cold, modern and traditional, unity and diversity, tribal host and tourist guest, self and other, wild/unexplored/untamed and the domestic/familiar, and individuals (parts) and wholes. Selwyn suggests that the 'alienated modern' of Dean MacCannell 'cannot help but be invited into a universe which seems intellectually and emotionally warm and encompassing' (ibid.: 133). The brochures are preoccupied with structure, linkage, solidarity, sharing, belonging and unity, and interestingly most of the structuralist readings are taken from Borneo and essentially from the promotion of ecotourism and ethnic tourism.

On the other hand the post-structuralist brochures are taken from well-developed tourist sites with luxury hotels (Penang, Bali, Langkawi and Singapore), corporatist and large-scale tourism organizations, with an emphasis on refined elegance, privilege, quality service and hospitality, relaxation, recreation, and shopping, the tourist experiences, sensations, pleasures, dreams and feelings, mystique and magic, and 'the interchangeability of reality and fantasy' (ibid.: 134). According to Selwyn the changing world of tourism development will tend to move increasingly towards the post-structuralist mode which is 'above all, individualistic, and the representations..... elevate the individual - with his or her pleasures, fantasies, senses of power, and so forth - to a central position in the pantheon of symbols used by the brochure writers' (ibid.: 137). Nevertheless, the structuralist 'mythemes' familiar to the anthropologist will also continue to have resonance 'because this type of language links with dispositions which are so "elementary"' (ibid.).

Another impetus which has exercised me recently is that of regionalization and interconnections across boundaries in the tourism industry. Geoffrey Wall remarked some 15 years ago that there was clear evidence of an increase in the volume of travellers moving within the Southeast Asian region, and given its cultural and natural diversity and its attractiveness to international tourists then there are all kinds of opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and interconnection (2001: 316, 321, 323). Nevertheless, tourism sites have developed unevenly across the region, and in spite of the diversity and the potential for product differentiation and the establishment and expansion of niche markets and a range of market segments, the problems of infrastructure and ease of access, the lack of training and skill development in the tourism industry and the quality of service provision have still presented obstacles to tourism development in certain locations.

The concept of interconnections in *Interconnected Worlds* is closely interrelated with that of globalization, with tourism as a macro-global force, and with the processes underpinning it (Teo, Chang and Ho, 201b: 1-10). But in the circumstances which I am investigating, especially with regard to the northern Borneo territories, the interconnections seem much more to do with historically constructed relationships which were reconfigured during decolonization, boundary-drawing, and the immediate post-colonial period. Most certainly some movements of people across political borders in this part of Southeast Asia are to do with globalization, but they also occur more prominently because established historical connections and their associated social, cultural, economic and political relationships were artificially interrupted and transformed during the colonial period because of the boundary agreements which were agreed and the subsequent decisions about the post-war constitution of newly-independent states. This was particularly the case in the ultimate configuration of the Brooke Raj in Sarawak and of British North Borneo under the Chartered Company, both of which became British Crown Colonies in 1946 with the island of Labuan, previously a constituent member of the Straits Settlements, and together they gained their independence within the Federation of Malaysia in 1963; Labuan was separated from Sabah in 1984 to become a Malaysian federal territory. The remaining territory of the Brunei sultanate, divided by the 1890 annexation by the Sarawak Raj of the Limbang Basin, secured its full independence in 1984. Movements across borders between Brunei, Sarawak, Labuan and Sabah (and in another similar case land connections between Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia using the causeway), are occurring on a regular basis, especially at weekends, irrespective of ‘foreign

direct investments in tourism; government-to-government initiatives; and regional bloc collaborations' (ibid.: 4), and the existence of the 'Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines (East Asia Growth Triangle) (BIMP-EAGA) (Wadley and Parasati, 2000).

Tourist connections across the land borders between the Malaysian Borneo states and Indonesian Kalimantan are less intense and the significant movements are locally generated, primarily between Sarawak and such centres as Pontianak in West Kalimantan with regular bus services. International tourism, which is not as well developed in Indonesian Borneo as in Sarawak and Sabah, is usually routed through flights from Jakarta and Surabaya to the main urban centres of Pontianak, Banjarmasin, Balikpapan, Palangkaraya, Samarinda and Tarakan. Flights are also available from Kuching to Pontianak, and from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to Balikpapan. The main foci of tourism interest are West Kalimantan and Balikpapan and the Mahakam River.

Aside from the attempt to understand interconnections in terms of the impulse of globalization, another interesting approach is that of Erik Cohen in his analysis of tourism development in Thailand as 'four principal trends of change' (2001: 4). He categorizes these trends as: (1) 'massification: from personalized to impersonal tourism' from the 1970s; (2) 'expansion: from centralized to dispersed tourism'; (3) 'heterogeneization: from homogeneous to diversified tourism'; (4) 'regionalization: from isolation to regional integration' (ibid.: 4-14). Interestingly it appears that there is no general model of regionalization. According to Cohen, Thailand as a mature tourism market is somewhat exceptional. Surrounded by nation-states which were relatively closed to tourism until the 1990s, the regionalization of tourism has been a relatively recent phenomenon in that Thailand has become a hub and a springboard for movement into nearby countries. It is my view that cross-border relations in Borneo were well-established before then, but that these relations need to be understood in rather different terms from the mass tourism of Thailand and the expansion of tourism to neighbouring mainland Southeast Asian countries from the 1990s. In other words, in the Borneo states the contextualization of cross-border connections should not be seen in rather simplistic globalization terms, nor should it be seen as a product of what might be termed the logical development of regionalization in a maturing tourism industry. If we reorient ourselves to domestic tourism and the regular movement of Southeast Asians across borders within the region for a variety of purposes, but many of them for touristic pursuits, then we begin to shift our frames of reference.

Contributions to tourism research on Borneo: The past two decades

There have been several reviews of tourism development in some of the constituent parts of Borneo but no overall assessment. And yet Borneo offers an ideal site for comparative research. It is the only island in the Southeast Asian region which embraces three nation-states: Brunei Darussalam, two major states of the Federation of Malaysia, and five provinces of the Republic of Indonesia. In any comparative study of tourism development the island offers an ideal laboratory to examine issues of convergence and divergence, and homogenization and differentiation, as well as movements across borders and boundaries. Unfortunately, the main overviews of tourism have been confined to the Malaysian Borneo states (Douglas, 1999; Douglas and Douglas, 1999; King, 1994d; Lau et al., 2008; Pearce, 1997a, 1997b; Pianzin, 1992). In my view, what is needed for Borneo as a whole is the kind of conceptual analysis which Pearce briefly sketches for Sarawak and Sabah in terms of a range of concepts to do with nodes, interrelationships and movements: origins, destinations, gateways, hubs, multiple functions and synthesis, and scales and hierarchies (2001: 27-43). This approach is very much focused on tourism plans, strategies and policies, but, in its concerns with spatial arrangements it does cause us to think more seriously about the intensity, character and direction of tourist movements.

Nature and culture: Imaging

Convergence in tourism development in Borneo has focused on nature and culture (Mayer, 1999; Sanggin, 2009). Specifically the Tourism Master Plans for Sarawak, for example, emphasize the strategic importance of culture, nature and adventure (Nicholas anak Bujang, 2005: 30; and see Pearce, 1997a: 88). Adventure, excitement and 'hard travel' are emphasized (Schiller, 2001: 415; Adeyinka-Ojo and Khoo Lattimore, 2013). All the constituent administrative/political units of Borneo promote ecotourism, focused on national parks, lakes, river route ways, forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries (see, for example, Zeppel on ecotourism in Sabah (Kinabatangan, Mount Kinabalu), Sarawak [Sri Aman] and Kalimantan [Kayan Mentarang], 2006: 258-266). The most successful sites in this regard have been in Sabah and Sarawak. As Graham Saunders has convincingly demonstrated in his review of the European travel literature on Borneo, tourists arrive on the island 'with certain expectations' (1993: 270, 1994; and see King, 1992, 1999). Images of Borneo have been constructed over a long period of European contact with the island so much so that 'there are certain sights which they [tourists] expect to see, certain experiences they expect to

enjoy, certain activities they expect to undertake'. This is because '[t]hey carry with them an idea of Borneo, an image which tourist brochures have conveyed and tourist authorities have cultivated' (Saunders, 1993: 270). But the people of Borneo were not passive recipients of these images; they 'responded to European contact in ways which helped develop the European image of Borneo' (1994: 25). Saunders, unlike Selwyn, did not undertake a structuralist and post-structuralist reading of brochures; but what he did address was some of the influential European writings on Borneo and argues that the images of Borneo carried in the public mind were already firmly in place by the 1920s.

These images, as Selwyn also demonstrates, are those which continue to be conveyed in tourist brochures, by tour guides, agents, operators, and by government departments responsible for tourism promotion, though there tends to be significant promotional differences between public sector agencies and private tour companies. Nevertheless, Saunders captures them: 'orang-utans, Dayak head-hunters, longhouses, Brunei's Kampong Ayer, Mount Kinabalu, Bajau horsemen...' (ibid.: 284). We can add proboscis monkeys, Rafflesia, rainforests, rivers, hornbills, crocodiles, and costumed and bejewelled women. Even when new tourist sites in Borneo have been opened up and tours constructed and advertised they have been set firmly in an already established representational framework. These images persist and they continue to be addressed by recent researchers. Cohen draws our attention to the same promotional strategies in the development of hill tribe tourism in northern Thailand; images have been constructed by a small number of tour operators, which, like Borneo, emphasize 'tribes entertaining a way of life which contrasts sharply with modern Western urban civilization' (2001: 68). Selwyn's oppositions between tradition and modernity and 'the other' and 'the familiar' appears in a range of touristic contexts.

Therefore, one of my arguments is that the ways in which tourism in Borneo has developed conforms to the images designed to 'sell' the island as 'wild', 'untamed', 'unexplored', 'dangerous', 'mysterious' and 'exotic'. In this respect the tourism industry across most of the constituent political units on the island converges, especially in the promotion of natural attractions, ecotourism and the natural-cultural interface. Returning to Saunders, he captures the dominant perceptions of nature and ecotourism appositely which developed from European travellers who 'carried with them their own intellectual baggage along with their physical luggage: and concepts like the Noble Savage, the Romantic view of nature, Darwinian theory and the

scientist's impulse to collect and classify, combined with a human fascination with the unusual and the exotic' (1993: 285). What is more the research undertaken during the past two decades locks into these preoccupations and seems to have become fixed on imaging, representations and signs as well as managing and administering the conflicts between tourism pressures and the conservation and protection of nature.

Nature, ecotourism, imaging and sustainability

With regard to ecotourism in Borneo and its representations the papers by Norman Backhaus (2003) and Kevin Markwell (2001a, 2001b) are exemplars. They both reinforce the touristic search for pristine rainforests. Backhaus says 'In western countries the expression "Borneo" itself is a sign which stands for jungle, nature, adventure as well as for (indigenous) culture. Western tourists who visit Sabah and Sarawak mostly have this diffuse image of green, damp jungles, full of unknown creatures, where hidden tribes live secluded from the modern world' (2003: 154). However, on the basis of his local survey in Kuala Lumpur of 500 people, Backhaus recognizes that domestic tourists usually want different experiences in nature: hiking, trekking, camping, rafting, fishing, relaxing, and staying with friends and families; 'only a few...want to see plants, animals or local culture' (ibid.: 155; and see 2005: 7-8, 247-248). He remarks elsewhere that, given that the concept of national parks and environmental conservation are Western-derived concepts, 'Malaysians have only recently become aware of sustainable development' (2005:7). Western tourists too vary in their demands and interests; following Selwyn, 'post-modern tourists change their focus of interest almost by the hour', while modern ecotourists want evidence of environmental sustainability, conservation and eco-friendliness (ibid.). But all of them are 'semioticians' looking for 'signs' to address their expectations, although the diversity of interests suggests that signage to satisfy all tourist demands is problematical. Cochrane too draws our attention to the 'different way in which Westerners and South-East Asians perceive wilderness areas' (1993: 318; and see 2009: 254-269).

In a more substantial book-length analysis and assessment of tourism and environmental conservation in national parks, including Gunung Mulu in Sarawak (2005: 203-244) Backhaus expands on the themes and concepts which he had developed previously in relation to tourist sites as 'non-places', and touristic experiences contextualized and understood in terms of 'ontological security', 'critical situations', 'safeness and adventure', 'risk and control', and the sociological

concepts of 'structuration' and 'habitus' (ibid.: 1-23). With regard to the development of ecotourism those responsible for managing natural sites have the difficult task of coping with tourism pressures whilst having to ensure the conservation of protected and reserved areas.

Markwell investigates 'the visual and textual imagery' presented in tourist brochures, guidebooks, travelogues and postcards, and, in particular, the ways in which external perceptions of nature are constructed, developed and transformed, and strongly influence the expectations, actions, behaviour and experiences of the tourist (2001a: 248). Markwell's major conclusion confirms the general thrust of my argument in that 'The enduring qualities of Bornean nature which were constructed during colonial times, such as its exoticism, its association with the primitive and its wildness, continue to resonate in contemporary touristic constructions' (ibid.: 249; and see 2001b on Sabah). He presents substantial empirical material that tourist promotional material on Borneo commodifies nature, and tames it with modern chalet accommodation, transport, raised plankwalks, guided tours, signage, fenced viewpoints, but continues to image it as 'authentic, wild, primitive and exotic' (2001a: 252). Certain icons are also selected in this exercise of imaging: 'the hornbill bird, beautiful orchids, the carnivorous pitcher plant, the proboscis monkey, turtles, and, of course, the orang utan' (ibid.: 253). And the connection between wildness and animal imagery is most clearly expressed through the orang utan (literally 'person [man] of the forest'). Markwell says, 'To a considerable degree, the orang utan may well signify "wild Borneo" to Western tourists, most of whom are already familiar with this "wild man of the jungle"' (ibid.: 255). Yet Markwell emphasizes that 'wildness' has to be 'modified and mediated in order to make it palatable'; it is provided as 'a sanitised and safe product, generously removed of the unequal binds of reality' (ibid.: 259).

References to the natural attractions of Borneo for the ecotourist are too numerous to list in detail (see Hutton, 1993; Muller, 1990; Pelton, 1995; Robinson, Karlin and Stiles, 2013; Robinson, 1996; Turner, Taylor, Finlay, 1996). However, the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak and Mount Kinabalu National Park in Sabah) are heavily promoted. Other sites which appear on the tourist routes and featured in tourist guide books are, among others in Sarawak, the national parks of Bako, Niah, Gunung Gading, Batang Ai, Maludam, Endau-Rumpin, Lambir Hills, Kubah, Simalajau, Tanjung Datu, Talang Satang, the Wildlife [Orang-utan] Rehabilitation Centre of Semenggok, and the upland site of Bario. In Sabah there

are the national parks of the Turtle Islands, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Mustapha, Pulau Tiga, Crocker Range, Tun Sakaran Marine, Sipadan Island, the Sepilok Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre, the Danum Valley Conservation Area, and the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. In Brunei the major parks are Ulu Temburong and Tasek Merimbun. In Kalimantan the protected areas are numerous, but they include Tanjung Puting, Tangkiling, Betung Kerihun, Danau Sentarum, Bukit Baya, Gunung Palang, Kayan Mentarang, Kutai, Wehea, Mahakam and Kersik Luway Nature Reserve.

Several studies have been devoted to particular national parks and eco-sites and such issues as the management of precious natural resources and tourist assets, the impacts of tourism, and also visitor perspectives and activities (see, for example, Bako National Park [Chin et al., 2000]; Batang Ai National Park [Bratek, Devlin and Simmons, 2007; and see Buckley, 2003: 51-52]; Tanjung Puting National Park, Central Kalimantan [Atkinson, 1996; and see Øvstetun and Cochrane, 2014]); the Kinabatangan Valley [A. Hamzah and N.H. Mohamad, 2011; Goh, 2015], and Orang Utan reserves at Sepilok and the Kinabatangan [Newsome and Rodger, 2012: 60-64; see also Lew, 2013]; Tun Mustapha Park [Liew-Tsonis, 2012]; Mount Kinabalu National Park [Wong and Phillipps, 1999]). Janet Cochrane has also recently undertaken a comparison of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Gunung Mulu and Mount Kinabalu, with specific attention to the management arrangements struck between the state and the private sector in which she questions the balance between the benefits derived by private sector interests managing such tourist facilities as accommodation, restaurants and shops and what returns to the public sector for conservation purposes and local involvement (2016). Her work is closely related to the findings of Goh Hong Ching who undertook a detailed study of Mount Kinabalu National Park and concluded that ‘the privatization program has not been able to shift the focus of Sabah Parks to nature conservation and that the private sector is unable to fulfil all objectives of sustainable tourism’ (2007, abstract: iii; and see Zeppel, 2006). She examined sustainability from three perspectives: environmental conservation and protection; benefits to local communities; and visitor satisfaction (ibid.: 124; and see Goh, 2009; Goh and Masiney, 2010; Goh and Rosilawati, 2014). An informative context for this case study in Sabah is provided by Pianzin’s examination, though now somewhat dated, of the management of tourism development in Sabah (1992).

Culture, ethnic tourism and staged performance

The other major focus of tourism development in Borneo has been cultural or ethnic tourism, in the Malaysian Borneo states expressed in the longhouse tour and pioneered by Sarawak from the 1960s. Brunei and Kalimantan are unable to compete in this arena, though they also promote cultural tourism. Here the promotional images present tattooed warriors, headhunting and longhouses. They are strongest in Sarawak, but even in Kalimantan the images comprise ‘natives in traditional dress clustered around an orang-utan skull [and] headhunting dances’, and visitors have ‘the opportunity to see.....artificially extended earlobes’. ‘Long-eared Dayak [women]’ adds to the exotic images (Schiller, 2001: 416). A substantial literature has been produced on longhouse tourism in Sarawak; it has tended to be rather straightforward, preoccupied with the touristic ways in which the Iban in particular, have been represented and how they stage their culture, and the impacts, benefits and disadvantages of participating in the tourism industry.

Studies of Iban longhouse tourism go back some 40 years when Peter Kedit at the Sarawak Museum conducted a survey in the Skrang River in 1975 (Kedit, 1980). Follow up research was undertaken in 1989-1990, 1991 and 1992 and came to one conclusion that longhouse tourism ‘may be in danger of becoming too commercialized’ (Kedit and Sabang, 1994: 57). A subsequent study by Heather Zeppel was the first major piece of field research to be undertaken on Iban longhouse tourism (see, for example, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1998). She conducted research in longhouses on the Lemanak River. The Skrang and Lemanak along with other rivers such as the Engkari (see Caslake, 1994) and the Batang Ai were selected because they are not too far from the state capital Kuching and they can be reached within a day by road and river, and importantly include a river journey (Winzeler, 2011: 230). Moreover, sites have to be selected which retain some sense of what a ‘traditional’ longhouse is thought to be like, or they can be transformed into one with some judicious staging. Even in the early 1990s Iban longhouse packages, mainly organized by Kuching-based, Chinese-owned tour agencies were attracting annually over 16,000 visitors (ibid.: 221-250; Zeppel, 1994b: 59). Following on the heels of Kedit, Sabang, Zeppel and Caslake there were several studies of Iban longhouse tourism in the late 1990s and early 2000s (see, for example, Benji anak Jihen, 2001; Bratek et al., 2007; Dias, 2001; Kruse, 1998, 2003; Sanggin et al., 2000; Yea, 2002a; Yea and Noweg, 2000).

I undertook an assessment of the literature on longhouse tourism in the 1990s and I do not think that our understanding has progressed much since then (1994b: 1-7; 1994d: 29-43). The preoccupations of researchers on Borneo tourism have been with host-guest interactions, visitor perception and experiences, the positive and negative impacts of tourism, images of the 'exotic' and the 'other', local participation and agency, and socio-economic development (King, 1994d: 35-40). Zeppel, for example, formulated a simple distinction in her examination of host-guest interactions, and the process of 'getting to know the Iban' between what she terms 'cultural sightseeing': the structured and more controlled tour package (a longhouse tour, dances, games, handicraft sales, blowpipe and cockfighting demonstration, and a jungle walk, possibly including a jungle feast, fishing and hunting); and depending on the tour company there may also be the inclusion of chanting and singing, or a ritual offering to deities and spirits, and depending on the timing of the visit, a special ritual celebration such as a wedding. The other cultural engagement is a much more spontaneous 'meet the people' experience which provides for a more intimate encounter rather than one based on 'the tourist gaze' (1994b: 60-64; 1997a: 122-138). This distinction in turn has implications for the relationship between the imaging of the Iban in tourist promotional material and what tourists expect to see and experience, which is primarily 'staged tradition', and what they experience in a more personal and impromptu cross-cultural encounter (1997a: 132-138). Caslake too dwells on the ways in which Iban culture is marketed, and what happens when tourists are confronted by evidence of Iban 'modernity' (1994: 78-88).

Research on other communities involved in longhouse tourism in Borneo is rather more limited. This is for obvious reasons: Iban longhouse tourism is long-established, well-advertised and organized and therefore occupies a high profile in the tourist industry and agenda in Sarawak. Moreover there has been considerable attention devoted to the emergence of Iban identity and the ways in which the Iban and their culture have been presented and imagined (Lim, 2001; Tan, 2009). There have been studies of tourist visitor packages to the Bidayuh in Sarawak (Chin, 2014; Winzeler, 1997b); Ong Puay Liu's detailed field study of Rungus Dusun tourism in Sabah has made a considerable contribution to the literature on longhouse tourism in Borneo (2000, 2008). However, in conceptual terms her use of familiar concepts is clear: commodification and commoditization; the tourist gaze; host-guest encounters; authenticity and staging; media representations and imaging; changes in ethnic identity; local participation in tourism development and the social, cultural and economic impacts in terms of benefits and disadvantages of ethnic

tourism (2008: 21-35), There has also been interesting studies of theme parks: the most well-known example being the Sarawak Cultural Village at Damai about 25 kilometres from Kuching (Yea, 2002b; and see Abi et al., 2015). As with other studies of theme parks which demarcate, delimit, select, stereotype, construct and represent culture and ethnicity, an important theme is the relationship between the state's presentation of national and sub-national identities and those of the people who are being imaged and staged (ibid.: 241-244; see, for example, Hitchcock, 1997; Hitchcock and Stanley, 2010). An important focus is the way in which the state's concerns with unity and harmony are handled in relation to sub-national identities and autonomy. Even in more modest touristic presentations of 'a culture village' similar themes are emphasized and pursued (Schiller, 2001: 414-422).

In Kalimantan the Indonesian government policies from the establishment of Suharto's authoritarian and centralized 'New Order' was directed against elements of culture, especially among ethnic minorities in the Outer Islands, which were considered to be backward and primitive. One cultural marker of 'traditional culture' which was a target of coercive government 'modernization' programmes was the Dayak longhouse. Ironically this was the very symbol of exoticism among the Iban which tour agents and the Sarawak government marketed to such great effect, followed by Sabah with regard to the Rungus Dusun, in its cultural and ethnic tourism development policies, which the Indonesian government was bent on erasing. In her study of the government-sponsored touristic development of the Kenyah 'culture village of Pampang in East Kalimantan inland from the urban centre of Samarinda, Schiller remarks that when tourists arrived there they discovered that houses 'were simply like those of [poor] city dwellers in Samarinda...Most of all Pampang lacked a "longhouse"' (2001: 417).

Cross-border movements: Convergence and divergence

There has been some attention to cross-border issues and the development of tourism in Borneo, but this has not received the focus that it deserves. Some studies have examined the development of tourism across the land borders between Sarawak and West Kalimantan (Hitchener et al., 2009; Muazir and Hsieh, 2013). But what has intrigued me for some time, and it is part of an ongoing research project in which I am currently involved but which needs more empirical research, is the regular and continuous movements across borders in Borneo for weekending, shopping, and attending weekly markets. Some of these comprise daily excursions, but many involve overnight

stays for leisure and local touristic purposes. Had comparative studies been undertaken from the 1980s and 1990s then the importance of domestic and intra-Southeast Asian tourism would have served, over two decades ago, to re-orient our focus of research and the concepts which we developed primarily on the basis of encounters between non-Asian guests and Southeast Asian hosts. Instead the increasing interest in Asian tourists in Asia and domestic tourism has only emerged in a substantial empirical and conceptual way within the last decade (see, for example, Cochrane, 2008: 131-267; Cohen and Cohen, 2012a, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Singh, 2011; Winter, 2007, 2008, 2009; Winter et al., 2008).

During my sojourn in Brunei in 2012, 2013 and 2015 I undertook informal research on the tourism sector in Brunei which also included some attention to the movements of Brunei residents, citizens and expatriate workers to neighbouring states. Borneo provides a long-established site of domestic and intra-Southeast Asian tourism. In 1992, for example, Sarawak received 1,655,701 visits; we need to note that the statistics count visits not separate visitors; many of these visits are multiple undertaken by the same individuals (www.mot.sarawak.gov.my/upload/file_folder/1992-2000.pdf). Non-Asian tourists were in the minority. The majority comprised Malaysians (1,119,000) from other parts of the Federation since Sarawak continues to maintain its own immigration authority and records visits from Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah. The next major source was Brunei (207,644), and then Indonesia (136,945). A further 64,885 came from other parts of Southeast Asia (Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand) and the wider Asia (Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan). Somewhat over 140,000 came from other sources, but even some of these were generated within Asia. This pattern of movement has not changed significantly. The total figures for 2000 were 3,284,215; of these 1,789,809 were Malaysian, whilst visitors from Brunei quadrupled to 844,416; Indonesian travellers doubled to 273,421; and those from Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand remained in the 60,000s at 68,954; and visitors from other specified Asian destinations reached almost 100,000.

There are statistics available for 2012 for the full year; these give a more detailed breakdown of source countries and specify 14 Asian countries including the Indian subcontinent. The figures again confirm an overwhelming movement of Asians into Sarawak (www.mot.sarawak.gov.my/upload/file_folderdec%202012.pdf). Of 4,069,023 visits 1,434,308 derived from Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah. Visits from Brunei almost doubled from the year

2000 to 1,728,923; Indonesian visits totalled 417,072, and from Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand together just over 200,000. Taking these countries and visits from other parts of Malaysia along with other specified Asian countries then the number of visits totals just under 3,900,000. From the East Asian regions visitor numbers are relatively modest at 27,965.

Sabah presents a similar picture. Preliminary figures for 2013 give a total number of visits as 3,383,243, again overwhelmingly from other parts of Malaysia and neighbouring Southeast Asian and other Asian countries (www.sabahtourism.com/sites/default/files/visitor-2013.pdf). However, in contrast to Sarawak, which shares land borders with Brunei, in the case of Sabah visits from Brunei totalled a relatively modest 99,122; Indonesian visits stood at 211,145. The most significant difference between Sabah and Sarawak is that the visitor numbers to Sabah from East Asia stood at 551,621 in 2013, the majority of these from China, including Hong Kong and Macau, at 360,361, and from South Korea at just over 106,000. Good airline services to Sabah International Airport from East Asia and the promotion of recreational facilities as well as ecotourism sites, and particularly Mount Kinabalu National Park help explain this competitive advantage that Sabah has over Sarawak.

The overwhelming number of visitors to Sarawak and Sabah (and, of course, these also comprise business travellers, people visiting family and friends, public sector employees in other parts of Malaysia attending meetings and conventions and so on) cannot be understood primarily in terms of the interests, motivations and character of tourists from countries outside Asia. To be sure there are tourists from Europe, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand who visit Malaysian Borneo (though a not insignificant number of these will be living and working within the Asian region and taking vacations and short-term breaks), but these do not determine the overall direction of tourism development in the Malaysian Borneo states.

In the case of Sarawak and Sabah there is some convergence in tourism development policies. The promotion of ecotourism is an obvious sector that is mutually reinforcing in that there has been the promotion of tourism packages which take in the two World Heritage Sites of Gunung Mulu and Mount Kinabalu and the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre near Sandakan in eastern Sabah; some ecotourists will also have visited the Niah Caves in Sarawak and possibly some national parks sites closer to Kuching like Bako, and the Semenggok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre; side trips to the Batang Ai are organized from Kuching, especially with the

connection between the Hilton Hotel there and the Batang Ai longhouse resort whose accommodation is also part of the Hilton complex. Some of the more adventurous backpackers and travellers might take in a visit to Temburong National Park in Brunei (see below) whilst to-ing and fro-ing between Sarawak and Sabah.

Sarawak has coastal resorts at Damai Beach in reasonably close proximity to Kuching as a major gateway to Sarawak. But much of the coastline of Sarawak does not lend itself to the development of sand, sun and sea tourism. Damai's business also depends in part on local weekend tourism. Sarawak's tourism industry is also very dependent on its proximity to Brunei at the northern end of the state. Here there is a leisure industry, shopping, hotels, nightclubs and bars catering in particular for workers in the oil and gas industry and also for the large overnight and weekend market from Brunei. It therefore has a much more specific direction and market. Another important destination in Sarawak is Kuala Lurah, which provides a gateway to Limbang, and for those travelling by land onwards to Sabah. Labuan too, as a duty free federal territory of Malaysia a short ferry journey from Brunei is also a leisure destination, again primarily at weekends for Brunei residents. Between January and September, 2014 Labuan received 757, 588 visitors, many of them travelling from Miri, Brunei and Kota Kinabalu (*Borneo Bulletin*, 11 November 2014; borneobulletin.com.bn). A significant attraction of these Malaysian outliers, which are in effect closely interconnected with the Brunei economy, is the sale of alcohol and cigarettes which are unavailable in Brunei, and which are allowed into Brunei for personal consumption, though with restrictions for Muslims. This provision is a particular adaptation in Sarawak in relation to the Brunei market and the oil and gas industry.

Sabah's sand, sun and sea tourism industry is concentrated in and around the state capital Kota Kinabalu with its coastal location and its proximity to islands, beaches and offshore national parks. It presents a rather different picture from Sarawak and has been and continues to be an attractive leisure destination for tourists from East Asia, with the added attraction of Mount Kinabalu. This is the major location in Borneo for East Asian visitors and diverges significantly from what is available elsewhere on the island.

Therefore, there has been some divergence in tourism development. Sarawak pioneered ethnic longhouse tourism and has maintained a lead in this sector (Voon and Lee, 2009). It is difficult to obtain statistics on visitor numbers on longhouse tours or 'river safaris' as they are

marketed in Sarawak, but Zeppel gives us figures of 16,456 in 1991 (1994b: 59) and 18.200 in 2004 (2006: 262). Because of the nature of this kind of tourist adventure there is a limit on the number of longhouses that can participate in the tourism package. It is likely that numbers have increased during the past decade, but probably not by a significant amount.

In the Indonesian territories of Borneo the development of tourism is much more problematical and longhouse tourism very problematical. Yet again ecotourism and river journeys are promoted. Clearly the Indonesian government has ambitions to expand the tourism sector there, but the established international tourist sites of Bali, Toraja, Java (especially Yogyakarta, Borobudur and Prambanan), and Toba Batakland provide substantial competition. The main sites in Kalimantan are in the province of East Kalimantan (Samarinda, Balikpapan, and the Mahakam river basin), and West Kalimantan. At least these provinces have air connections with other parts of the region outside Indonesia. However, international connections with the island continue to be a problem. Distances are considerable between destinations in Kalimantan and the infrastructure is not well developed; accommodation also usually does not meet international standards and the quality of services is generally not competitive. English as the international tourism language is still not widely spoken and tourist guides and information about tours and sites is still not usually adequate. Schiller refers to some of the difficulties of tourism development in Kalimantan; longhouse tours are not really viable, given the lack of longhouses.

The main conclusion in relation to this re-visiting of Borneo tourism development is not simply that more research needs to be undertaken, which is poorly represented in large areas of the island, but that comparative research offers promising opportunities. In particular research which examines the themes of convergence and divergence and the implications and consequences of border-crossing and the increasing importance of intra-Southeast Asian movements for leisure purposes, especially in Borneo which encompasses three ASEAN nation-states, requires our urgent attention.

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