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Contesting the Tenure of Territoriality

The Orang Suku Laut

Introduction

President Soekarno declared land reform to be 'an indispensable part of the Indonesian Revolution' (CCCIL 1988).¹ The consequent execution of development programs for reconstructing the nation have provoked much hostility over issues concerning territorial rights. Global market forces in Indonesia have also seen heavy transnational flows of investments, capital, technology, foreign exchange and human resources that have similarly created a great demand on sea and land spaces.

Repelita VI, a chapter in Indonesia's twenty-five-year long-term Development Plan under the leadership of President Suharto, affirms the pledge to carry out planning that will encompass 'the whole nation, in an integrated, well-directed manner involving continuous and interrelated stages'. Yet in this momentum of change, several aspects of rural culture, in particular those categorized as the *suku-suku terasing* (isolated peoples) in Indonesia, are severely criticized as a hindrance to progress.

The Orang Laut (sea nomads) in Riau, a categorical example of the *suku-suku terasing* who practice a mobile lifestyle and economy, will provide my main point of reference, since that is where my own experience as an anthropologist lies. This paper focuses on the Orang Laut's anxious speculations about development projects infringing upon their living and life spaces. The general ethnography presents the Orang Laut self-perceptions and their living spaces, their mode of production and the perceptions of the Orang Laut by others. This paper is based on information and observations gathered through fieldwork.

Prevailing definitions of development, which misrecognize certain modes of living and claims to property rights as unproductive, have resulted in pressure programs causing dramatic changes to existing communities, thus threatening their claims for the tenure of territoriality and their livelihood systems. Hence, whether the momentum of change brought

¹ My heartfelt thanks are due to the Orang Laut and Malays in Riau who opened their maritime world to me. I wish to thank Gerard Persoon for his careful reading and excellent suggestions for this paper and to Tim Barnard for being so efficient in getting me the necessary information from across the Atlantic Ocean. The faults that remain in this paper are solely my gaps to be filled.

about by development programs in Indonesia is harmoniously propelling continuity and adaptation into its agenda to encompass one and all is the issue I want to consider in this paper.

Several pertinent questions are thus raised in this paper. The first concerns rethinking the concept of nomadism and the question of production. The second looks at the concept of ownership by examining forms of land tenure, or what I deem more appropriate: the tenure of space or territoriality. This paper is thus not solely devoted to the processes of change. Rather, it aims at provoking anthropologists, economists and planners for development programs to examine where and why they erect categorical boundaries. This simultaneously confronts us with a new agenda in the framework of change with two related questions. First, 'Are nomadic peoples capable of participating in developmental programs?' Second, 'Who is to assume the responsibility of continuity and adaptation?'

Background and Setting

The Orang Suku Laut in the Riau archipelago of Indonesia are more commonly referred to as the Orang Laut. When translated, 'Orang Suku Laut' means 'a tribe of sea people'. Existing literature refer to the Orang Laut as 'sea nomads', 'sea folk' (Sopher 1977:47), 'sea gypsies' (Thompson 1851:140) and 'people of the sea' (Sandbukt 1982). The Orang Laut are also sometimes referred to as Suku Sampan (boat tribe) or Orang Sampan (boat people). The Orang Laut have also been described as 'sea hunters and gatherers' rather than as 'fishermen' (Sopher 1977:218). Reasons given have been that 'sea fishing with them is for the most part simply an extension of simple hunting and gathering', which is basically a 'primitive' culture (Sopher 1977:233). Hence, with this prevailing view, I proceed to re-open the case for the Orang Laut.

The Orang Laut in Riau traverse an archipelago that encompasses over 3,200 islands in an area spanning from the central part of the east coast of Sumatra to the South China Sea. The archipelago is checkered by a diverse population of about 50,000 people, which also includes the Malays, Javanese, Baweanese, Minangkabau, Buton and Chinese (*Kepulauan Riau Dalam Angka* 1987:32). In 1993, the Kantor Sosial in Tanjung Pinang estimated the Orang Laut population in Riau as comprising 1,757 males and 1,652 females (verbal communication). These given figures are highly disputable. In the course of my fieldwork, I found it impossible to coincide officially registered figures with the census that I had recorded. The mobile economies of the Orang Laut and the relaxed system of registering births and deaths officially in island Riau are among the various reasons for their hazy population figures for the Orang Laut.

The Orang Laut live in a region which has been designated as a zone for increased economic programs since December 1989. An economic co-op-

eration agreement formalized as the 'Growth Triangle'² was signed between Riau, Singapore and Johor in Malaysia. This subregional co-operation is aimed at complementing and linking the three countries endowed with different comparative advantages to form a larger region with greater potential for growth (Lee 1991). As a result, limelight has once again shone on Riau bringing it to new heights of political and economic importance.³

Government and private business propositions have, among their various other enterprises, focused on promoting the marine tourist industry in Riau. The province is seen as boasting 'an archipelago of virgin islands' (Soh and Chuang 1990:34). Plans are under way to transform the island chain into the 'Caribbean of the East' (Wong and Ng 1991:272). To lure investors to the area, 'pioneer status and tax breaks are being awarded to promote marine tourism, particularly the building of marina clubs and resort hotels, in the more remote parts of the archipelago' (Soh and Chuang 1990:34). Golf courses have also been part of the scheme to turn Riau into an ideal tourist belt.

Against the backdrop of plans to transform Riau's sea and land space are the three million people who earn their living from fishing, farming, forestry and trading in the province. Business analysts are taking note of Riau's territorial waters that span 235,000 square kilometres. They are now talking about the vast 'potential of the fishery industry' (Soh and Chuang 1990:35). Presently, the local inhabitants in Riau practice open sea and *kelong* (palisade trap) fishing and fish farming. However, the joint partners of the Growth Triangle are more interested in promoting higher-technology ventures in 'aquaculture, seaweed and prawn farming' (Soh and Chuang 1990:35).

Potential dangers of displacing the local inhabitants posed by unchecked development projects have not gone unnoticed. Soeripto, the governor of Riau province, has noted the need to involve the Bintan islanders, with special mention of the fishermen, in development projects planned for the province. He was quoted as saying that they too could become involved in some way so that they would not be 'disturbed' by the planned development. However, his suggestions were without elaboration on how these fishermen could be involved in the tourism industry (*Straits Times* 26-09-1990).

On many fronts, both directly and indirectly, the Orang Laut have been targeted for what are hailed as modernization and developmental schemes. The Growth Triangle program has either already had an impact or is beginning to make imprints on some local communities including those of the Orang Laut.

² This term was formalized by Mr. Goh Chok Tong, the then Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore (*Straits Times*, 21-12-1989).

³ See the contribution by Vivienne Wee and Cynthia Chou to this volume.

Just as critical is the official definition of Orang Laut communities. Indonesian authorities classify rural communities into a hierarchically ordered four-category scale. The four categories comprise *swadaya* (traditional) villages, *swakarya* (transitional) villages, *swasembada* (developed) villages and *pra-desa* (pre-villages). The latter is regarded as a group prior to rural community.⁴ These categories correspond to ideas of 'the expected stages of development through which rural communities are to progress uniformly as they move toward true integration into an advanced and modern Indonesian nation' (Colchester 1986:89). The Orang Laut are defined as the *suku-suku terasing* (isolated and alien peoples), or *suku-suku terbelakang* (isolated and backward peoples), who form communities categorized as 'pre-villages' or 'traditional' villages.

Based on Colchester's translation of the explanatory memorandum which accompanied the 1979-1984 Five-Year Plan (Colchester 1986:90), the identifying characteristics of the *suku-suku terasing* are as follows. I have italicized the issues for further emphasis in this paper.

1. Many of these people subsist partly by hunting, *fishing* and by gathering forest products. Their *rudimentary economics* employ *extremely simple nomadic farming practices and equipment*. These farming techniques are *devastating the environment* and pose dangers to maintaining ecological equilibrium.
2. These peoples have animistic practices. They are contrary to the five principles of the state philosophy of Pancasila. The first of which is belief in one Almighty God.
3. Their *social systems are unstructured*, in which people live in *small scattered and dispersed groups*, isolated from the mainstream of religious, ideological, political, economic, social and cultural life. They *distrust anything coming from the outside*.
4. These peoples, *depending as they do on the resources of their natural environment*, are nomadic and, therefore, it is impossible for the government to extend to them administrative and other services.
5. These peoples are generally minimally clothed, covering only their vital parts.
6. The diet of these peoples is inadequate.
7. Their dwellings are merely places that provide shelter and a place to sleep. They are far below the norms and requirements that have been established for healthy, secure and pleasurable human dwellings.
8. The health conditions of these peoples are far below generally accepted norms for healthy living.
9. Formal education is unknown. Most of these people are illiterate.

⁴ Their characteristics are that the population is composed of a group under a single head or clan and are outside government administration (see *Pelita*, 26-12-1975).

10. The art and culture of these people has merely achieved a very primitive level and their dances are still predominantly magico-religious in character.

11. Their economics are centered on a system of barter. Monetary exchanges are still largely unknown.

12. Most of these people remain ignorant of the existence of the government or of the concepts of the Indonesian nation and state. They have no sense of their duties as citizens.

13. These peoples have no capacity or ability to withstand external and internal political threats. In the context of the state doctrine of total people's defense, these isolated communities constitute weak groups and regions within the total system of defense.

14. *These people are not yet in a position to enjoy the fruits of national development. Moreover they are not contributing anything to the progress of nation and state.*

Such views of the Orang Laut's non-relationship with spaces that they occupy clearly mean that they are regarded as possessing no tenure systems.

Their problems are compounded by Indonesian land rights legislation. Indonesia's land laws are enshrined in the Basic Agrarian Law of 1960 whereby *adat* law replaced formalized Western laws relating to land-ownership. Under the traditional *adat* land rights system, land is an inalienable and common property of the community that cannot be bought, sold or leased.⁵

However, Article 5 of the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law simultaneously contradicts the traditional territorial rights of the Orang Laut. It states that, 'The agrarian law which applies to the earth, water and air space is *adat* (customary) law, as long as it does not conflict with the national and State interests, based upon the concept of one nation, and with Indonesian socialism along with regulations that are issued according to this Law and with other legal regulations, all of above with due regard to principles deriving from religious law.'

Furthermore, Articles 3 and 14 of the Basic Agrarian Law No. 5 weaken the position of tribal peoples to their land. Article 3 of the Law states clearly that traditional communal property rights (*hak ulayat*) must have a form 'that is consistent with the national and State's determination, based upon the concept of one nation. Also, it cannot be contrary to other laws and regulations with higher force.' Article 14 adds to the anxieties by stating that the government 'shall, within the framework of Indonesian socialism, make a general policy with regard to the supply, preparation and

⁵ See Article 51 of the Constitutional Law of the Netherlands Indies. It constitutes the foundation of the colony's agrarian legislation. The first three paragraphs date from 1854 and the latter half were included in 1870.

use of the earth, water and airspace along with the natural wealth they contain for the needs of the State, for the need of religion and other sacred uses, according to the principle of the One True God (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa), for the basic living needs of the people [...] for the need to increase the production of agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing [...] [and] for the use of developing industry, transmigration and mining.' Hence, land rights are under pressure to be relinquished in the face of competing claims by the state. The Law also only provides legal security to registered (titled) property (Weinstock 1979:99). This requirement overlooks the fact that documentary proof of title is irrelevant in traditional law. Hence the predicament of the Orang Laut.

Argument

It is thus not surprising that most *orang asli* (indigenous peoples) studies are concerned with sociocultural problems in view of changes brought about by developmental or modernization programs. Yet, as cautioned by Benjamin (1989:14), 'unarmed investigators have tended [...] to take up implicitly (or even explicitly) an evolutionary-ladder approach to cultural differences [...] Consequently differences that have in fact resulted from choice, such as following a foraging way of life instead of swiddening or an intensive agriculture one, have been seen instead as unavoidable steps in a progression from primitivity toward civilization.' Such characterizations of the *orang asli* as noted by Benjamin have appeared numerous times in textbooks, newspapers and other media.

Heed must be paid to Benjamin's insightful caution. It is precisely the 'evolutionary-ladder approach' that deems the Orang Laut to be foragers moving around helter-skelter in the vast expanse of the sea in search of food. Tenure of territoriality for the Orang Laut is thus denied because they are not recognized as producers, but as nomadic foragers. Depicted as primitive foragers, the Orang Laut are also viewed as practising a rudimentary sort of economics. Their fishing activities are seen as focused on immediate needs with no regard to securing anything for their long-term well-being. Consequently, the Orang Laut are depicted as a people whose lifestyle runs contrary to all aspects of development, responsibility for the environment and the progress of the nation and state. Such views have perpetuated the agenda of all those concerned with developmental programs to aim for drastic changes such as the 'disappearance' (Martono 1985) of communities such as the Orang Laut.

This misrecognition is addressed in this paper. I argue for the need to abandon the oversimplified dichotomy of equating nomadism with the unmonitored extraction or removal of resources from the environment for human use, and sedentarism with responsible producers or developers who appropriate resources and convert them into objects of property that are properly managed for present and future needs.

The question of production and tenure of territoriality among hunters and gatherers is addressed here. Marx and Engels (1970:44) were of the opinion that hunters and fisher-people belong to 'the undeveloped stage of production'. Marx (1970:125, 146), in the 'Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy', also implied that production first begins with agriculturalists. Childe's model of social evolution (Childe 1949:58), however, distinguishing between 'savage' food-gatherers who act as parasites on nature, and 'barbarian' food-producers who culture plants and animals, also harmed much subsequent discussion of hunting and gathering activities. The Orang Laut, who are often regarded as hunters-gatherers of the sea, are thought to forage for rather than produce their food. They are almost never seen as owners of resources.

These perceptions assume a passive relationship between hunters-gatherers and the physical world. I extrapolate Hunn and Williams' (1982: 1-2) point on hunting societies to argue that there is considerable evidence to show that the Orang Laut communities, too, 'actively manage resources via social control, political manoeuvres, symbol and ritual.' Ingold's (1986) challenge to traditional views on the definition of production inspires the need to re-examine the appropriation of nature in hunting and gathering societies. I take as my starting point Ingold's study of the interrelationship between environment, society, technology and culture to introduce a clarity to the concept of production in Orang Laut communities. Several key issues are raised to look at how the Orang Laut interact and transform the maritime world via their social organization and strategies to produce a clearer understanding of their economic framework.

First, I challenge the view that the Orang Laut are simply foragers who do not engage the components of their environment in relations of tenure. I argue for their tenure of territoriality and coin the concept of the Orang Laut's network of tenure of territorialities. There is free access of sea space and most coastal fringes to all Orang Laut and non-Orang Laut alike. Yet, the issue that must be stressed here is that the Orang Laut regard the sea not only as their life space that provides them with their main source of food and income, but also as a living space (Chou 1995a). I show how different groups of Orang Laut modify and organize sea and coastal spaces into areas for custodianship. Orang Laut communities have stories to tell to stake their tenure of territoriality. These stories are verified and respected by other neighboring Orang Laut and non-Orang Laut communities in the region. For generations, their stories and rituals have accrued as their title deeds that encode their primary claims of responsibility for the area and its resources.

Second, I argue that the Orang Laut are engaged in an enduring relationship with their maritime environment. They are not foragers who procure their food through instantaneous activities of extraction from an unmodified environment. In taking Ingold's (1986:198-221) cue to rethink the concept of production, I argue that the Orang Laut manifest ways of

production similar to other food producers. The Orang Laut are involved in what have been distinguished as the hallmarks of production. They are namely, investment of labor, a creation of a lasting mutual dependency with a modified environment and a delayed return system of harvest and consumption. I show how the Orang Laut's ongoing and cordial relationship of making prestations to sea and land spirits is the essence of reproducing resources. The aim is to access and appropriate resources.

Third, an ethnographic account of the Orang Laut's repertoire of material and intellectual technology furnishes a requisite account of their external and internal tools of production and reproduction respectively. This is an analysis countering prevailing criticisms of the simple practices and equipment of the Orang Laut. Besides the remarkable range of self-constructed fishing gear that enables the Orang Laut to own their own means of production, this section also draws attention to their intellectual technology. The latter must not be overlooked. Intellectual technology is an important component of their productive process (Godelier 1980:6). It is that which forms the platform of the Orang Laut's invaluable knowledge of the biodiversity of the maritime world, how maritime species reproduce, the best ways of approaching and appropriating different species and methods of labor co-operation or formation of working partnerships best suited for gleaning successful harvests from the sea.

Fourth, the discussion narrows to looking at the individual Orang Laut's strategies for producing for the future. This reorients notions of the Orang Laut as foragers concerned only with the present. The ensuing ethnographic discussion on the networks of social obligations to share and help must be seen as the Orang Laut's framework of production. Within this framework of production, the Orang Laut are able to stake a claim to the appropriation and expansion of their resources earned through sharing and helping. This network of obligations to share and help is comparable to a scheduling of productive activities steeped in relations that are social, but more importantly, material. Ingold (1983:553) speaks of the relationship between 'storage' and sharing whereby hunters and gatherers 'invest their labour' and 'store their food [...] in the expectation of a delayed return'. I go a step further to argue that the Orang Laut do not just earn equivalent shares in their network of social obligations. In ways similar to all other producers keen to glean profits, the Orang Laut invest in these networks and hope to multiply their resources as an insurance for their future well-being. On this note, I shall proceed to discuss in greater detail each of the issues that have been raised.

The Tenure of Territory

Historically, the Orang Laut were feudally organized into various *suku* (clans or tribes). Different clans occupied different territories and were assigned different tasks to serve the ruler and were ranked accordingly

(Andaya 1975:7; Sopher 1977:92-114). For example, the *suku* or *orang Tambus* (Tambus people) who were in charge of hunting dogs were among the lowest in rank, and the *suku* Galang, a piratical tribe, was a privileged group.

Such traditional polities no longer exist. Nevertheless, the Orang Laut still organize themselves into separate clans occupying different islands and moorage areas throughout the archipelago. Nowadays the Orang Laut do not speak very much of themselves as *suku* Tambus or *suku* Galang, et cetera. This is understandable in view of the connotations of servitude that such terms of identification are associated with in the historical context of Riau.⁶

Rather, my Orang Laut informants readily identified themselves as Orang Pulau Nanga or Orang Teluk Nipah. It was a clear indication that they were keen to talk of themselves as belonging to a certain territory. For instance, Pulau Nanga and Teluk Nipah are islands in the Galang area occupied by two different groups of Orang Laut. These islands are in such close proximity that they are within hailing distance. Yet, the Orang Laut of both communities were adamant that I recognize them as different groups occupying distinct territories. Each territory also acknowledged a different *kepala* (head) Orang Laut.

The sea and coastal fringes constitute life and living spaces for the Orang Laut. Different groups of Orang Laut respect each other's collective tenure of territorial ownership. It is significant that other local non-Orang Laut communities respect such areas as belonging to the Orang Laut too. On my first visit to the Pulau Nanga Orang Laut community, the Malays in the neighboring island of Sembur instructed me to inform Bolong, the headman of the Pulau Nanga Orang Laut community, of my presence before I commenced my fieldwork. Likewise, while making known my presence to Bolong, the latter reminded me that he was only the headman for the Orang Laut in Pulau Nanga. Bolong stressed that should I decide to cross over to the other Orang Laut community in Teluk Nipah, then I would have to seek Meen's permission. Meen was the headman of the 'other' (*lain*) Orang Laut community in Teluk Nipah.

In the weeks that followed, Bolong's younger sister, Suri, explained her family's territorial ownership of Pulau Nanga:

'My father, Apong, used to live on the sea. Then he had enough interaction with the Malays and took up a religion. He then cleared the jungle – Pulau Nanga was formerly all jungle – and built his house here. It was an *atap* (thatched roof of palm leaves) house. Not like the zinc houses that we live in now. Sometimes, my

⁶ It was impossible to draft a comprehensive list of the different groups of Orang Laut based upon information given by my informants. This was due to several problems. First, almost everyone had a different listing. Second, it was not uncommon for them to make situational changes in their identity. Third, rival groups would often contradict each other on their identification claims.

father would live on land. Sometimes, he would live on the sea. Our father was the first to live on Pulau Nanga. Therefore, our *keturunan* (ancestry, descent) is in Pulau Nanga. This is our *tanah* (land). No one can buy or take Pulau Nanga away from us. All of us who live here are family. There are no outsiders among us.'

Non-Orang Laut communities in the area support Suri's claim of territorial ownership. They verify and respect the fact that Apong, an Orang Laut, was indeed the first settler on Pulau Nanga, and thus the owner (*punya*) of the island. In fact, the Chinese in the area tell me that even before Apong had set up house on the island, his boat-dwelling family had already long before moored their houseboats in the waters of Pulau Nanga.

In recognition of Apong's descendants' territorial claim to Pulau Nanga, Meen, the headman of the Orang Laut community in Teluk Nipah, explained how his family had in turn come to claim ownership of Teluk Nipah. In his account, Meen also explained why his family had chosen not to go to the neighboring Pulau Nanga in spite of it being inhabited by Orang Laut:

'My mother's name was Nenah and my father name was Gebak. Their *keturunan* is Daik. We were facing difficulties there, so we rowed here for fish. We were boat-dwelling. We set up a *kebun* (small farm plot) and built a house in Teluk Nipah. There were already people on Pulau Nanga. Apong had settled there, but our *asal* (origin) is different. Although there were Orang Laut on Pulau Nanga, we did not want to settle there. They were *suku lain* (a different clan). We were the first Orang Laut to settle on Teluk Nipah. This is our *tanah* (land).'

Meen's claim of his family's territorial ownership of Teluk Nipah parallels with that of how Apong's descendants have come to claim territorial ownership of Pulau Nanga. The tenure of territoriality is contingent on the exclusive story that each clan possesses. The crucial aspects being how they were the first group to recognize the potential of the area as a moorage ground or as a place to be cleared of jungle shrub for a settlement.

These stories are the group's collective territorial rights to a particular place or places. Although there continues to be free access of sea and land space to all, the Orang Laut hold the title deeds to these territories in the form of their stories. These title deeds modify and organize sea and coastal spaces into areas for custodianship for the Orang Laut. These rights mean that others should ask permission to enter their territory. Perhaps more importantly, these rights also invest the Orang Laut with responsibilities for the area and its resources. It is thus the concern of the Orang Laut to *jaga* (protect and look after) their territories and to maintain and reproduce the resources in the area. The rituals performed by the Orang Laut are a manifestation of their responsibility for custodianship.

Lacet, a member of the Pulau Nanga Orang Laut community, explained how his older brother Ceco was responsible for protecting their village:

'None of us knows everything. Hence, each of us is responsible for different things. My elder brother *Ceco jaga kampong* (protects the village). He protects our *kampong* from other people who might try to harm us and disturb our *tanah*. From time to time, *Ceco* will *jampi* (cast spells) and give *beras* (uncooked rice) to our *tanah*.'

The explanation offered for *Ceco*'s act of scattering grains of uncooked rice was twofold. First, the rice is scattered in the open space that separates the front and back of Pulau Nanga from the other island communities. This rice-scattering ritual was thus to protect the Pulau Nanga Orang Laut from outsiders who may have entered and caused harm and induce them to leave the territory. Second, the rice is scattered to appease the *hantu* (spirits), governing the territory to ensure the well-being and continued productivity of the area.

Thus, contrary to criticisms levelled at the Orang Laut's apathy to establishing an enduring relationship with their environment and their lack of interest in increasing the productivity of the areas they occupy, the Orang Laut have in reality expressed and exhibited a compelling manifestation of their concern. The Orang Laut assume responsibility to protect and take care of the area as soon as they assume collective tenure of territoriality. This responsibility is enhanced by the fact that the territory is given to them by their ancestors. This gift establishes an inalienable bond between the givers and recipients.

Ingold's (1986:138) approach to understanding tenure as analogous to Mauss's treatment of the gift is appropriate for understanding the inalienable bond between the Orang Laut and their tenure of territoriality. Mauss's theory of the gift revolves around the spirit that is embedded in persons and things. A gift is more than an inactive object. The spirit that is embedded in the gift bears the personhood of the giver 'beyond the spatio-temporal bounds of his own immediate self' (Ingold 1986:138). Thus through gifts 'the giver has a hold over the beneficiary' (Mauss 1990:12). The gift contains a power that is 'invested with life' and it seeks 'to produce, on behalf of the clan and the native soil from which it sprang' (Mauss 1990:13). Hence the constant concern of the Orang Laut lies in the way they should *piara* (adopt), care for and protect their territory. The Orang Laut express this concern by carrying out periodic rituals to empower the continued life between the giver and themselves as recipients of the gift.

Every claim of tenure, as Ingold (1986:138) correctly argues, is a 'linear projection of past into future, rather than as a sequence of isolable events each frozen in the instant of the present'. All claims constitute 'part of a continuous process, expressing an intention or promise for the future through the fulfilment of past obligation. [...] A contemporary patch of land is thus seen as having a time dimension represented by ancestral estates.'

Elsewhere I discuss the categories of things possessed by the Orang

Laut and how these things are expressions of Orang Laut identity (Chou, forthcoming). I adapt Weiner's (1985) terminology to refer to the gift of territoriality as inalienable (adopted) objects of the Orang Laut. In Weiner's analysis of inalienable wealth, she states that 'keeping these things instead of giving them away is essential to retaining one's social identity [and that] the primary value of inalienability, however, is expressed through the power these things have to define and locate who one is in the historical sense. The objects act as a vehicle for bringing past time into the present, so that the histories of ancestors, titles or mythological events become an intimate part of a person's present identity. To lose this claim to the past is to lose part of who one is in the present. The quality of sacredness increases the more these things are kept out of circulation' (Weiner 1985:210-1).

Thus, during the second phase of my fieldwork, when developmental projects were threatening to encroach upon the Orang Laut territories in the Galang area, the Orang Laut voiced their anxieties over losing their gift of territoriality. Boat, a member of the Pulau Nanga community, was among the first to raise the issue with me:

'This place is going to be developed (*bangunan*). In time to come, we will experience difficulties. The government wants to build this place into a town (*kota*). We are still uncertain as to whether or not we would have to move. For us, we have been on this land since we were young children. This is *tanah kami* (our land) and not the *tanah* of others. Hence, we want to know what they intend to do with our *tanah*. If the government wants to help, we will accept their help. However, if they want to buy this *tanah* from us for Rp. 20,000 or Rp. 50,000, we will not accept it. We have a lot here.⁷ This is because our father, mother and siblings are all buried here. We do not want to disturb them. It will only make us *malu* (ashamed) to move. Who wants to move? No one wants to. Just think. If your father has died and you have buried him. You still want to disturb his place [...] what more do you want? Who is going to look after his grave if we move? His *hantu* (spirit) will *kacau* (disturb) us. We may not be able to see them, but they are able to see us. We do not want to move to another island. We just want to live and die in this one island, which is ours. This place has been marked out for development all the way from Batam to Senyentong. They are building a highway to link Batam to Senyentong and it will pass through Galang. Perhaps if this development happens, they will *tutup* (close) our *tanah* and we will no longer be able to *kerja nyelan* (work as fisher-people). We will have to *kerja ojek* (motorbike services) or *bawah mobil* (drive cars or taxis). If we do not know, we will just have to learn. If we can *dapat* (get) fishing, then of course we will *kerja nyelan*. However, we not want to move. Our father gave us this *tanah*.'

The Orang Laut also possess a concept of a network of interrelated territorialities. In ways similar to the Bajau (Djohani 1995:122), the Orang

⁷ That is, for example, their coconut trees, their small farm plots and the graves of their ancestors.

Network of Orang Laut interrelated territorialities

Laut have three types of fishing grounds in relation to their land-based settlements. They may choose to fish in areas close to their village. An alternative decision is to embark on fishing voyages that may take them several days away from their village. Otherwise, they may fish in distant areas, which may take them away from their village for a number of months.

Yet the sites of production chosen, especially those of the latter decision, are usually areas that are also considered as part of their clan's. It is a network of territorial ownership through kinship (see map). For example, it was a common practice for Orang Laut families from Tiang Wang Kang to move to Pulau Nanga when they wanted a good harvest of sea cucumbers. Likewise, during the season for *comek* (a variety of cuttlefish), the Orang Laut from Pulau Nanga would go to Tiang Wang Kang. In contrast, the Orang Laut in Teluk Nipah would head for Bertam and Pulau Cakang, and vice versa.

Ingold (1983:560) has termed this as 'fixed-point nomadism', which entails 'a series of moves between pre-established locations'. The term 'fixed-point nomadism' does not offer sufficient justice to the Orang Laut. Several reasons prevail. First, the Orang Laut identify these sites as *tempat kita juga* (our place too). Second, by identifying certain territories as such, they also assume responsibility as custodians of the territory as discussed above.

Having made a point on why these sites of production should be considered as the Orang Laut's network of tenure of territoriality, I must also stress that the Orang Laut do fish in other preestablished locations that they do not identify as *tempat kita*. They consider these other territories as borrowed areas and present prestations to the spirits whom they believe to govern the area. On the side of pragmatics, these movements of settlement to the sites of production mean that populations of Orang Laut are never so concentrated in any one place to overharvest the area's resources. The network of territories thus serves to parcel out resources.⁸

Within the concept of territorial ownership for the Orang Laut, they also observe the notion of the territorial ownership by sea spirits (*hantu laut*) and land spirits (*hantu darat*). Two Orang Laut friends from Pulau Nanga, Halus and Bagong, rowed me in a boat to educate me in recognizing and respecting the various forms of territorial ownership by spirits. Halus said:

⁸ Scholars have argued over the reasons pertaining to such settlement and fishing patterns (see for example, Djohani 1995:122-3). Some maintain that this has arisen due to the restraint of exploitation of resources and the conservation of resources. Whatever the dispute, such spatial organization of settlements and fishing activities have been applauded as an admirable model of ecologically balanced coastal communities. Dangers of intensive fishing and depletion of marine resources in populated areas are avoided. The removal of fish may lead to abundance of algae on the reef or sea-urchins. This could lead to an imbalance in the coral reef ecosystem and lead to an irreversible degradation of reefs and depleted fish stocks.

'These [corals] here are *rumah ikan* (the house of fishes). These are not dangerous areas'.

Later Bagong added:

'Over there [pointing in the direction of jutting rocks] is a *rumah hantu laut* (sea spirit's house). It is best to avoid that area so as not to disturb the spirit. There are spirits in all the *tanjung* (capes). Sometimes when we come home, we fall ill immediately with a fever because the *hantu laut* has hit our head.'

Important correlations can be drawn to territories identified as places or houses of fishes, sea and land spirits. The houses of fishes are usually coral reefs and small rocky or pebbly areas. These are important breeding grounds for various varieties of fish. According to my Orang Laut friends, these areas could be approached without fear of much danger. On the other hand, the houses of sea spirits were linked with accident-prone areas. Sacred territories are also danger zones where the Orang Laut do not fish. These areas must be approached with great caution and great respect. For instance, while traveling with a group of Orang Laut from Tiang Wang Kang to Pulau Nanga, I was instructed to remain silent to show respect to the spirits as we negotiated a cape. This observance of silence and great attentiveness also served to avoid any mishaps until we had cleared the zone.

The Appropriation of Maritime Products: Of Spiritual Matters and Economic Production

The Orang Laut's diet and income derives from a range of several fish species, crustaceans, molluscs and other maritime creatures.⁹ Sometimes, they supplement their diet with hunted animals, fruits and berries gathered from surrounding islands.

⁹ Certain maritime products are valued above others for their special qualities. For instance, the meat and eggs of turtles are prized delicacies. The shells of turtles are also believed to possess supernatural qualities. Out of concern for my journey through the archipelago, an Orang Laut gave me a turtle-shelled bangle for protection. I was told that should I hold a glass of beverage spiked with poison, the bangle would crack as a warning signal. Although turtles are prized food for the Orang Laut, my informants mentioned that should they catch a turtle whose shell is inscribed with a person's name, the turtle must be returned to the sea. This was because it indicated that someone had staked a claim on the turtle. It would not only be *dosa* (committing a sin) for them to kill such turtles, but misfortune would also befall them. Turtles were also a valuable product in demand by Singapore until the nation state faced immense pressure from American conservationists to impose legal restrictions on the import of turtles. However, the law has only removed turtles from the market for export. The Orang Laut have no trouble selling turtles to the Chinese in Riau. This is because the latter believe in the aphrodisiac properties of turtles. Likewise, the *duyong* (sea cow) which is now close to extinction, is another prized maritime product for the Orang Laut. *Duyong* meat is another delicacy, and the tears of the *duyong* are highly sought after to make a powerful love potion. Environmentalists have voiced their concern over the Orang Laut's capture of turtles and sea cows.

The Orang Laut are not passive dependents on the natural environment for their resources. Instead, they have shown that it is not uncommon for them to plan for amounts of catch to be harvested from the sea prior to their fishing trips. For the Orang Laut, production levels are achievable based upon the cordial relations that they establish with the spirits who govern the territories they are entering. Territorial ownership, as noted earlier, confers on the owner the right to be asked for permission to enter and for the owners to be accorded due respect. Ceco of Pulau Nanga elaborated:

'Boat had asked the spirit to give him five to sixty fishes. The spirit gave him even more. After that, [Boat gave] one kilo of glutinous rice to the Tua Peh Kong (a Chinese spirit) near Teluk Nipah. Not to the Tua Peh Kong here, but to the Tua Peh Kong there because Boat entered there and not here. Others give an egg on a plate to the spirit. Yellow glutinous rice is given to the land spirit and white glutinous rice is given to the sea spirit. There are also different sorts of spells for different spirits. Let me explain. The sea spirit takes care of the sea. It owns all the fish, cuttlefish, crocodiles [...] It owns everything in the sea. If we cast spells, we will get the fish. If we do not cast spells, the fish will leave.'

Ceco's point was that Boat could decide and had decided upon a certain amount of catch that he wanted. Upon obtaining the catch, Boat was obliged to make an offering of glutinous rice and spells to the spirit that had allowed the fish to be caught. Boat explained his offering to the spirit as follows:

'It depends on where you want to go – land or sea. You have to request for permission from the spirit there. You place glutinous rice, bananas and rice wine in your boat for the sea spirit. This will appease the spirit from harming us. The spirit wants to eat. If you do not give glutinous rice to the spirit, you would fall ill. We give [this offering] three times [and place it in] the middle of the boat. If we give the spirit the wrong offering, the spirit will eat us. Later, when you go fishing, you *baca ilmu* (recite spells) and ask the sea spirit to help give you fish. The sea spirit will help you. The spirit will not harm you. We also give this food [offering] once every fifteen days [to the spirit]. For three times, we give food at the front and at the back of the boat. For two times, we give food in the middle of the boat. There is mutual help between the sea spirit and us. The sea spirit helps give us food, so in turn we have to help give the sea spirit food. There are many spirits in the sea. There is Hantu Gin Bisu, Tok Putih, or Raja Blaer. There are many more.'

The types of food prestations named by the Orang Laut varied, as did the ways in which the prestations were made to the spirits. The crux of the issue was that the appropriation of maritime products is possible only if skill is combined with humble and respectful attitude to the spirits governing the territory. An amicable relationship rested on an exchange of goods and observing proper rituals. In sum, spiritual matters and economic production are inseparable.

Intellectual and Material Technology

The Orang Laut deploy an outstanding wealth of material (Chou 1992) and intellectual technology to obtain their catch. The material technology of the Orang Laut is wide ranging. Their boat is an important example of their material technology that facilitates their mobile economy. It functions both as a vehicle for them to traverse the archipelago and as a house in which to live. The boat is thus their home and an important site of production.

Apart from buying their boats, most of the other fishing gear such as their spears, lances and harpoons are self-constructed. Hence, the Orang Laut are able to own their own means of production. The Orang Laut obtain wood for the shafts of their spears, lances and harpoons from the forest or mangrove swamps. They need only buy the metal spearheads, prongs and nylon lines for their fishing gear. The Orang Laut find these things affordable. They manifest great resourcefulness in constructing their own fishing devices. There are times when they do not even have to buy any material at all. Along the shoreline they look for washed-up materials such as tyres or broken umbrellas to construct their fishing gear.

The Orang Laut also *piara* (adopt) or care for things that are of importance to them. These things include their fishing equipment. The word *piara* is also used when the Orang Laut refer to the adoption of persons. Therefore in ways similar to adopting a person, the Orang Laut explain that to adopt things and spirits entails taking care of, feeding, protecting, raising, maintaining and guarding the things or spirits. To adopt things and spirits also entails binding them with a spell. The Orang Laut explain that when they cast spells over their material technology for fishing, it endows their fishing gear with supernatural power. In the example given below, Meen, an Orang Laut from Teluk Nipah, explains why he must adopt his boat:

'I adopt my boat because I would not have enough to eat if I were to catch only Rp. 1,000 worth of fish per day. Therefore, in order to travel further away safely and to catch as much as say, Rp. 40,000 worth of fish, I need to adopt my boat properly. I must feed and spellbind it to attain a good catch. To adopt my boat, or as the Chinese would say, to *kong* (spellbind) it, I have to feed it with glutinous rice and nuts by placing them in front and at the back of the boat.'

It is clear that the Orang Laut's intellectual technology is intertwined with their material technology for their fishing activities. The Orang Laut adhere to the belief that to reap plentifully from their possessions, such as their fishing equipment, they have to adopt their things well. More importantly, by adopting a thing, a bond is established between the owner and the thing. This is because the owner, through adoption, has decided to merge his and the thing's identity that in essence is their soul (Chou, forthcoming).

The material technology of the Orang Laut is ever increasing. Those who have moved ashore are also adding the net-fishing method to their range of material technology. However, most of these nets are expensive and they have to be acquired from Chinese middlemen. Initiative is also exercised by the Orang Laut to expand their fishing methods. During the course of my second field trip, I observed how the Orang Laut in Teluk Nipah had started to construct their own fish farms next to their coastal homes. They were breeding the fry that they had caught to reach sizes that would fetch them a good market price. They also explained that live fish were in high demand by sea food restaurants and could thus be sold for higher prices.

Above the constellation of their material technology, the Orang Laut never failed to emphasize their possession of *ilmu*¹⁰ as a necessary aspect of their technology for fishing. The word *ilmu* is an Arabic-derived term which means 'knowledge' or 'science'. Wilkinson (1959:421) lists the different kinds of 'knowledge' that the word *ilmu* refers to as, 'learning [based on divine revelation], science, magic, any branch of knowledge or magic'. The word encompasses similar meanings of 'magic', 'knowledge' and 'science' for the Orang Laut and Malays in Riau.

For the Orang Laut, the word *ilmu* is intertwined with meanings of magic, knowledge and science. I aim at showing the applicability of looking at *ilmu* as the Orang Laut's intellectual-cum-material technology in accessing and appropriating their maritime resources.

The Malays often talk of the Orang Laut as possessing the most powerful and extensive *ilmu*.¹¹ By this, Malays usually mean *ilmu hitam* (black magic), since they regard the Orang Laut's use of *ilmu hitam* as resulting from the latter's 'lack of religion'. Consequently, the Orang Laut are seen as *jahat* (evil) and dangerously beholden to spirits that control the maritime world.

The Orang Laut dispute this accusation. They talk of their good *ilmu* to help the general well-being of a person. The Orang Laut explain that they have 'not received any school education', but learn by 'retaining everything in [their] memory'. An Orang Laut likened their acquirement of *ilmu* to 'people who attend school'.

From a young age through observing and participating in their parents' fishing activities, the Orang Laut acquire the extensive *ilmu* necessary to be adept fisher-people. Their *ilmu* comprises learning how to construct

¹⁰ See Chou 1994:58-85 for a detailed discussion on the Orang Laut's use of *ilmu* and perceptions of the Malays with regard to the Orang Laut's possession of *ilmu*.

¹¹ The Malays believe that the Orang Laut's *ilmu* enables the latter to prepare powerful love potions, diagnose and cure various illnesses, safeguard pregnancies and deliver babies, construct houses, hunt and gather jungle resources to supplement their diet, pull in crowds when they entertain with their musical instruments during *joget* (dance) sessions, propitiate or intimidate spirits and control souls.

their fishing gear and how to spellbind them into effective and powerful tools. Their *ilmu* also includes learning how to understand and control the winds,¹² currents and tides that govern the sea, to be knowledgeable about rich fishing grounds, mangrove swamps, danger zones in contrast to areas for refuge, and how to navigate their way through the archipelago by studying the position of the sun, the moon and the stars.

Through their *ilmu*, the Orang Laut also establish a spiritual link with the spirits that control the maritime world. This link is mediated by deciding to *piara* spirits. Consequently, the Orang Laut enmesh themselves in a network of exchange and obligations to reciprocate with the spirits concerned. Suri, an Orang Laut from Pulau Nanga, explained the concept of adopting a spirit:

'We *piara* the spirit. It means like feeding a child – to give it food. They will not harm us if we cast spells. This is the way to befriend the spirit – so we become friends with the spirit. We place food on the rocks. We ask the spirit to place fish in front of our boat so that we would be able to spear the fish. Sometimes we cannot see the spirit. But we still cast spells and ask, "Please spirit! Give me fish. I face difficulties. If you want to eat, I will give [something] later, perhaps glutinous rice or cigarettes." It is not the spirit who asks, but we will utter this request to the spirit to place fish in front of our boat. The spirit will give and we will spear. After we have earned some money, we may also adopt our boats [by] giving glutinous rice and cigarettes. We give because we *minta* (ask).'

The excerpt above clearly emphasizes once again that the Orang Laut intertwine spiritual matters and economic concerns to increase their production.

When discussing the Orang Laut's technology in accessing their maritime products, it is important to stress the importance of the working partnerships of the Orang Laut. The fishing technique of the Orang Laut requires them to work in pairs. Men and women form regular partnerships when using the spear, harpoon and lance fishing method. The success of the Orang Laut's *ilmu* and *jampi* rests, among other factors, on whether the fisher-couple *cocok* (match). The powers in a couple's *ilmu* and their fishing abilities are further heightened when in partnership with one another. The partnership is so significant that the couple's productivity as a fisher-couple indicates if the couple is compatible. The success of a marriage is thus measured in this manner (Chou 1995a).

¹² The Orang Laut explain that the need to control winds is especially important for navigational purposes. Also, winds send ripples across the surface of the sea. This makes it difficult for the Orang Laut to gauge the position of the fish for their spear-fishing method.

Sharing and Helping: Strategies in Production

The Orang Laut's system of sharing (*bagi*) and helping (*bantu*) is yet another strategy entrenched in their mode of socioeconomic organization to access resources for the production of food. This system is configured within networks of social obligations in intra-Orang Laut community exchanges.

Elsewhere (Chou 1994:102-32; 1995b), I have elaborated on how there is really little or no actual sense of solidarity between the Orang Laut themselves. Yet the Orang Laut feel that they ought to have or at least to display a sense of group unity through their network of exchanges. It is the self-interest by calculating individuals that is the important motivating factor in fulfilling their social obligations to share and help.

Embedded in the obligations of sharing and helping are the knowledge and unsigned contract by both the giver and the recipient that the latter is obliged to reciprocate some time in the future. The delay in fulfilling the obligation to reciprocate establishes a bond of trust between the transactors and aims at waiting without forgetting. This network of social obligations is in essence the willful regulation of events by the Orang Laut. They are investing in an idea of the future for their own condition. Production is hence embedded in a set of social relations.

For instance, Halus, a young Pulau Nanga Orang Laut boy, was left behind by his father to fend for himself and his two younger brothers. His mother had died some years before. Halus had a boat which he described as *saya punya* (I own). The boat was in fact something that his cousin, Jais, had given Halus to *bantu* (help) the latter. However, it was an unspoken obligation on Halus's part that he would share part of his fish earnings with Jais. Likewise, it was a quiet understanding that Jais would be entitled to a share of Halus's catch procured with the boat that he had helped him with. Also, Halus was obliged to be Jais's fishing partner if the latter's wife was unable to join him. However, should Halus partner with Jais, there was also an unspoken understanding that part of the fish earnings would be shared with the former. Hence, the cyclical network of sharing and helping to increase the production level of each.

In yet another example, Pui's family in the Pulau Nanga Orang Laut community caught a huge turtle. News of her family's catch spread around the community immediately. After Pui had cut a sizable portion of the turtle for her own family's consumption, the rest was soon given to some of the other members of the community. These were either given by Pui herself or to those in the community who had come to ask for a portion of the turtle. While there was still enough turtle to be shared, none of those who had come to ask Pui for a portion of the turtle meat was refused. Pui was obliged to share and not to turn down anyone with a request.

The distinction between 'share' and 'sharing' is crucial (Bodenhorn 1989:83). The division of certain catches such as a huge turtle into 'shares'

was expected. The members of the community with whom Pui had to distribute the shares to was not determined. Pui could decide upon those with whom she would share the meat. She was only obliged to share the extra meat with those who approached her with a request. Although Pui had the freedom to decide with whom she would share her extra food, she was also under great pressure to share it with her extended family members.

Yet, each individual in this network also tries to gain as much as possible for himself. It was not uncommon for the Orang Laut to exercise calculated attempts not to share their surplus. These attempts are covered up to prevent accusations of *lokek* (selfishness), and becoming edged out of the community's network of sharing and helping that would profit them.¹³ Thus, it was not unusual to hear of complaints that there were members in the community who would fake illness to obtain shares simply because they were either too lazy to go out and fish or were greedy for more. It is another unspoken understanding that pregnant women and the infirm are entitled to shares without having to reciprocate.

The ideal objective of the system of sharing and helping however remains in its intention to space out small portions of delicacies and other resources for the person and the rest of the community over the same length of time. Everyone profits by this network of social obligations. This network of social obligations in sharing of resources involves economic ties that make the Orang Laut group more stable than they might otherwise be. The co-residence of kin is thus to some extent a function of the sharing of food and help. A person can rely on the other members of the community to share their resources with him because their sharing ultimately benefits themselves. Thus, the crux of the network of social obligations is that relations between the Orang Laut are both social and material.

Conclusion

Issues discussed in this paper have focused on the necessity of clarifying concepts of appropriation and production. It has been argued that oversights in conceptual clarity have led to perceptions of the Orang Laut as roving hunters and foragers engaged in an extractive economy. Defined as such, the Orang Laut are deemed not to have the slightest concern for the production and reproduction of resources. I have argued against these unwarranted perceptions by posing the challenge to rethink the concepts of appropriation and production. The implications are that they are inextricably tied to other issues.

First, we need to acknowledge the Orang Laut's claim for tenure of territoriality. Second, we need to be aware that the Orang Laut are keen partners in the production and reproduction of resources.

¹³ See Chou 1995b for an elaboration on this issue.

The Orang Laut's conception of coalescing the spirit of people with places and things has convinced many that their claims to tenure lack relevance in pursuing economic concerns for modern-day progress. Critics argue that such claims of tenure by the Orang Laut are merely spiritual concerns. My uneasiness is supported by Ingold's contention that 'implicit in this formulation is the notion that tenure must be either religious (as in the aboriginal conception) or economic (as in the Western conception), but cannot exhibit both aspects simultaneously' (Ingold 1986:139). This dichotomy rests on 'a very narrow view of the economy' (Ingold 1986:14).

It would be a futile endeavor to engage the Orang Laut in distinguishing between religion and economy. This is because their yields are contingent on their observance of ritual activities to ensure the production and reproduction of all maritime products. Ingold (1986:153) has an appropriate phrase, 'From their point of view both moral and physical environment, the religious journey and the economic quest for food, are part of the same process: namely living'.

I have also argued that in the Orang Laut's concept of tenure of territoriality, they neither prohibit others to enter nor use their resources. Rather, the Orang Laut modify and organize sea and coastal spaces to assume custodianship for the area and its resources. Their concern for the production and reproduction of resources is most evident in their parceling out of resources via their network of interrelated territorialities.

To argue for a refinement in concepts is to represent an entire social system of principles that shape the rights to a network of tenure of territorialities and the distribution of resources. The distribution of property, of course, has fundamental political implications. In view of this, anthropology, as the scientific authority for the relativistic interpretation of cultural 'others', can be employed to initiate programs to recognize cross-determining discourses and opportunities for consent from all concerned to set up new institutional arrangements. The poignant reminder voiced by the Orang Laut is that if they 'do not fish', they would have 'nothing to eat'.

The issues raised for conceptual clarity are relevant to anthropologists as they are to state planners and business entrepreneurs. In view of ambitions to promote marine tourism in Riau, and the concern of Riau's governor to include the local inhabitants in this program, it is important to consider the ways in which the Orang Laut's contributions and participation can be included in the realization of transforming Riau into the 'Caribbean of the East'. As Lee (1991:16) has noted 'in order to create an authentic rural environment and enhance the attractiveness' of the area as a tourist resort, 'a larger permanent settlement is necessary'. Hence, how can we bridge the gaps?

First, it would be an oversight to consider the archipelago as comprising thousands of 'virgin islands' (Soh and Chuang 1990:34) that are free to be taken over. Instead, it would be more worthwhile and economically

advantageous to work in partnership with the Orang Laut who have for many generations acted as custodians of marine territories. If close consultation between anthropologists, planners and the Orang Laut are held, the latter would be able to help determine areas to be protected for fishing livelihoods and areas best suited for tourist activities. The Orang Laut would be superb guides for the marine tourist industry.

Second, there is the need to support the logic of the Orang Laut's mobile economy and their settlement patterns as a preservation of maritime resources. During the course of my second field trip to the Orang Laut communities in Teluk Nipah and Pulau Nanga, my Orang Laut friends confided that they had heard of plans to move all the different groups of Orang Laut to a single island. This was to make way for an intended highway that was to stretch from Batam to Senyentong. Such plans cause great apprehension among the different groups of Orang Laut. Social harmony is a factor that must be given serious thought. Also, to concentrate too many groups of Orang Laut in an island community would only overburden the carrying capacity of the area in terms of its marine and fresh-water resources.

Third, the Orang Laut have shown a keen interest in increasing their levels of production. They have exercised great initiative in constructing their own fishing gear and more recently, their own fish farms. Developmental and business ventures would be highly cost effective if they were to build on existing structures and activities of the Orang Laut. Training programmes in new methods to obtain credit, increasing production levels and income can be introduced to the Orang Laut. The existing strategy of the Orang Laut's network of sharing and helping as an insurance scheme can be expanded. The introduction of shareholding schemes to forge income-generating enterprises is one possibility.

Fourth, Orang Laut men and women have for generations worked in partnership. It is important that the role of women as equal partners in generating productivity levels and income must not be forgotten.

Fifth, it is necessary to compensate or substitute lost incomes of the Orang Laut in view of protecting certain endangered maritime species such as sea cows and turtles. The Orang Laut have for generations earned sizable incomes from selling the turtles for their meat and for preparing love potions from the tears of the sea cow. Instead, they could be persuaded to catch these species and transport them alive to designated areas for protection and be financially compensated accordingly. The Orang Laut could be invited as paid custodians of these species in protected marine parks based on earnings from the tourist industry.

The challenge in this paper in working toward conceptual clarity is coupled with the aim of considering alternative developmental programs. There is a need to respect the right of the local population as equal partners in realizing the ambitions for Riau. Indeed, it would be most ironical if local permanent communities, such as the Orang Laut, are displaced in the name

of development. The Orang Laut are just as keen to produce and reproduce their resources. Hence, as custodians of the territory, they cannot and should not be denied the right that is due to them to pursue this ambition. The implementation of simultaneous, multiple economies would thus hold great promises for Riau and its people in combined efforts to face the challenge of yet again recasting their place in the world.

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