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State Incorporated: Statemaking and the Incorporation of Nonstate People in the 19th Century in Sarawak

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Abstract. The article examined the process of incorporation of the pre-Brooke polities and nonstate people in Sarawak through the perspective of the Sarawak native officers. It offers a historical view on the statemaking and state formation in Sarawak during the rule of the Brooke rajahs. The article engages a method of historical reconstruction based on the official report and published works contemporary to the era. It has selected the first decade of the cession of Baram district (1883 to 1893) as a case study to emphasise the challenges faced by the Brooke state in enticing nonstate people into its territorial lines. The study found that the role of native officer was key in the process of incorporation. The theory of practice explained how communication between the native officer and the tribal elites was facilitated by social prestige and social class, indigenous to the political culture predating the Brooke's modern state. This shows the continuation of the primordial political-economy culture into the construction of a modern, colonial state.

Keywords and phrases: statemaking, 19th century Sarawak, native officer, nonstate people, Baram residency

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Introduction

The Native Officer Service in Sarawak was a product of the Brooke rule. The formation of the native service and its expansion went parallel with the Brooke's belligerent statemaking, which started in 1841 with the acquisition of the Sarawak Proper (Kuching) and concluded in 1905 with the transfer of Lawas. When Sarawak was ceded to Britain after the end of the Japanese occupation, the service was revamped and remodelled after its counterpart in the Federated Malay States the Malay Administrative Service and was renamed the Sarawak Administrative Officer Service.

The history of the Native Officer Service has been studied by Naimah (1999) whose work situated the service within a structure of the civil bureaucracy in Sarawak. Organisationally, the Native Officer Service occupied a junior rank to its superior, the all-European Sarawak Civil Service. The native officer played very important role in the outstation administration. He was the first point of reference about the place and the people. Historian, Robert Pringle (2010), states that the Native Officer Service existed to meet the gradual expansion of the Brooke's state beyond the Sarawak River. In addition, the Brooke's administrators, both European and native, were expected to exemplify the founder's penchant for informality, common-sense and gentleman approach. Porritt (1997, 34) elaborates the administrative implication of the informality had translated into a form of rule where native leaders were empowered to govern the conducts falls under the remit of local custom. As a result, Brooke rajahs put an emphasis on the importance of local language and empathy towards local custom among the personnel in the Native Officer Service. Furthermore, the rajah's awareness that social prestige played considerable influence in the society led to a recruitment of his native officers who had good social standing and raised in a reputable family. Through the strategy, the rajahs gained advantage in shoring up support among the aristocratic element in the society, ensuring their loyalty and interest were synchronised with that of the state and well as maintaining social equilibrium.

Perspective and Method of Inquiry

The current article examines the Native Officer Service by placing it in the context of the attempts at incorporating nonstate people and spaces into the Brooke's government. There are two reasons to emphasise this context. First, it revealed the practice of state akin to James Scott's method of looking at the early state from the subject's perspective, "Living within a state meant taxes, conscription, corvée labour and condition of servitude" (Scott 2010, 7). The demands placed by the state appeared to the nonstate groups irrational.

In this regard, the deployment of native as agent of state was critical in luring the nonstate people into the fold. The other reason was to interrogate what foreign rule meant to the subjects. Since the native officer was a representative of the state's interest and its values, was that identity alone enough to sustain their credibility among the people?

Some brief comments on terminology. The term "nonstate" refers to a situation where a group of people did not see themselves to be members of a state-defined political community or subjects to it. Among the nonstate in the precolonial societies, they were variations of political organisation. One of them was a kin-based society where a chiefdom style of leadership prevailed. Earle (1997, 5) characterised chiefdom as follows, "kin-based societies, a person's place in a kinship system determines his social status and political position". Another form of political organisation was *negeri* (state), defined by Trocki (2000) as "the basic unit of maritime Malay political structure" existed in the archipelago and was recognisable by some common features: "collections of thinly-populated centres at river mouths, held together through trade, kinship; shared ceremonial or religious practice; forms of clientship and dependency; violence and intimidation and possibly language" (Trocki 2000, 4). The co-existence of multiple polities facilitated by the common interest for trade had for a long time a powerful catalyst for cooperation as well conflict. Trocki holds that the sultanate-*negeri* carried ephemeral quality; it waxed when cooperation between the multiple-centred states brought prosperity, and waned when conflict eclipsed cooperation. Internally, the state's decline was also predicted by the rate of exchange and cooperation with its hinterland tribes, of whom it depended for food supply and trading articles. In the context of the 19th century Borneo states, Healey (1985) points out the coastal *negeri* was dependent on the hinterland tribes for agriculture and economic surplus. In the near absence of coercive, direct control of the upriver tribes, the dependency necessitates a relation of cooperation rather than dominance. Brunei, for example, with its complex and overlapping territorial ownership system, demonstrates a weak central authority had led to the path of monopolisation not in the interest of the state but to the accumulation of its governors and vassal. The fragmented nature of the sultanate-state weakened its ability to apply coercive control over the upriver and the hinterland tribes. When they were organised and brought to bear for such purpose, it came with a considerable cost.

The indigenous source from Borneo, especially the *kerajaan*-type (state-type) of writings, can shed some insights into how *negeri* is idealised as a socio-political organisation par excellence. Written in 1898 by the 14th ruler of Matan, "Syair Pangeran Syarif" contained a description of a wealthy state of Pontianak in West Borneo (Arena Wati 1989). Pontianak was portrayed as a successful *negeri* in which the standards of success were enumerated in the poetry: led by a pragmatic sultan whose wisdom in dealing with the Dutch colonial power had translated into a well-off *negeri*; the presence of ships from various ports across the archipelago and beyond; the congregation of multi-national traders in the city and ports; the reputation of the *negeri* as a place where everyone can seek livelihood known to the people across the region; and the peace enjoyed by the population and the visitors. The emphasis on trade as a source of credibility and affluence for a good *negeri* becomes normative in the *kerajaan*-sources and similar worldview can be gleaned from "Syair Rakis" written by a Brunei *pangeran* (noble), Muhammad Salleh (1983) in 1847 or 1848. In it, the 19th century state of Brunei was presented as a contrast from its former glory. Its ports were quiet, trades were slow, people from various places, origins and groups were no longer attracted to the city and the *negeri* was at mercy of foreign powers especially the British who was eyeing for a bigger chunk of its territory. The poetry offered advice to the ruler to be more astute in negotiation with foreign powers and to ensure that every decision was collectively decided with his ministers and advisers. In the two of the Bornean poetry, the emphasis on prominence as a normative purpose for a *negeri* reflected the ambition of such polity to grow beyond local and into a regional stature.

The construction of a modern state by the Brooke rajahs altered the practice of multiple political orders in Sarawak. This was a different form of political order. The state was construed as singular and totalising. It held the absolute monopoly of people and territory and no other form of political community was allowed to exist apart from the state. It establishes a form of political obligation, built not upon kinship or culture affinities, but by allegiance to a state. The project of modern state, therefore, is about inventing a new political order that can only thrive through the dismantling of other forms.

Sarawak, under the Brooke's government, was a state fashioned after an oriental type of absolutism. Rajah Brooke held total power in the state. He chose which foreign companies can trade in the state. All Europeans who served in his government were handpicked from family acquaintances and by their families' association with Brookes and Sarawak. The rajah's words were law, known informally as the Rajah's Orders. Sarawak came under the British Crown's protection in 1888 through the treaty of protection, which was signed by the second rajah, Charles Brooke, which states that in exchange for the British protection, the rajah and his successors will not cede, "or otherwise part with any territory" without the permission of the British government (Foreign Office 1888).

The study examines the textual source from the Brooke government's periodical the *Sarawak Gazette*. The historical data pertaining to the statemaking was observed from the reports written by the resident and the district officer. The native-subjects' point-of-views were constructed from these reports, while their response was interpreted as one that reflected their self-understanding of independence and virtue. Other published works contemporary to the Brooke rajahs were also consulted to gain historical perspective of the pre-Brooke polities.

Before Outstations: Pre-Brooke Polities in Sarawak

In the context of the Brooke rule of Sarawak, the term "outstation" was crucial in the construction of a new political order. Outstation was juxtaposed to Kuching as the seat of the Brooke's government posturing to its political importance. The Resident of the First Division was the most senior role in the civil service relative to other divisional residents. He also sat in the Supreme Council, and during the reign of Charles Brooke, the Resident of the First Division was the President for the Committee of Administration when the rajah or his heir absent from Sarawak. For the Malay, the Kuching Datu were the most senior among the ranked Malay and who held a court of Balai Datu to decide and to set precedent for matters relating to Malay customs and Islam. Given the prestige that the rajah bestowed on Kuching, the outlying areas were not given the same respect they deserved. Instead, the state approach to the outstation was one of exploitation and control. The dependence on the outstation's residencies like Simanggang, Baram and Belaga for exports articles were important for the economic and survival of the centre. The state also viewed the outstation with constant fear evident from the frequent punitive expeditions launched against the pockets of dissents. The arrogance of the centre demonstrated its deep-seated insecurity because in the previous those outstations were the centres of their own right.

Prior to their fall, the outstations were village-settlements with towns at their centres, well-stocked by food supply and fortified with armoury. This proved trade was considerable in those villages, hence, became the focus of the Rajah Brooke-led military attacks whom they accused for being pirates or in league with the villains. Captain Henry Keppel of the Royal Navy, who commanded *Dido* in a 10-day military assaults in Saribas in 1843, had described Padeh, a settlement on the banks of Saribas river, a "town". Of Paku, "a town larger than Padeh", and "the place was alive with goats and poultry" (Keppel 2015, 62–63). *Dido*'s next victim was Rembas, located 60 miles further up from the mouth of Batang Lupar, "the largest and strongest place we had assaulted" (Keppel

2015, 62–63). Right before the town was razed to the ground, Keppel (2015) was admiring its wealth, “We found very large war-boats, both fitted and building, one measured ninety-two feet in length, with fourteen beams ... good supply of fruit, goats and poultry”. Speaking before the subdued chiefs of Saribas, Keppel (2015, 60) recalled James’ speech, “He fully explained that our invasion of their country and destruction of their forts and town, was not for the purpose of pillage or gain, but as a punishment for their repeated and aggravated attacks of piracy”. In August 1844, *Dido* participated in the Brooke’s military expedition in Batang Lupar. The first settlement under attacked was Patusan, located 70 miles from the mouth of Batang Lupar, had a population of 5,000 people and was led by Sayyid Sahibuddin. The “town”, wrote Keppel (2015), “was very extensive, and after being well-looted, made a glorious blaze”. Before setting the town ablaze, Keppel described the destruction, “four strong forts destroyed, together with several hundred boats, upwards of 60 brass cannons captured and about a fourth that number of irons spiked and thrown into the river”. It took two days for everything in the settlement to be completely demolished by fire, “every boat and sampan, as well as house or hut” (Keppel 2015, 91–92).

This existence of wealthy settlements was evidence of successful trading relations between the downriver and the upriver groups or tribes. In addition, trade was also conducted in the hinterland shows that in the pre-Brooke era trading existed in multiple marketplaces. Before he ever set foot in Rejang, James Brooke had learned about the trading practice in the upriver Kayan’s country. He wrote down the information in his journal which was printed in Captain Rodney Mundy’s (1848) book, “a trader coming from the coast, whether Malay or Dayak, stops at an assigned place and sends word of his arrival, with a description of his tribe, object and cargo to the chief who orders a party of his people to bring the goods to the village”. The gruelling journey into the interior took “four- or five-days” on foot was done “without the slightest article being pilfered”. The trader was put up as a guest of the chief house, “every civility is shown to him and he incurs no expense”. The merchant presented gifts to the chief who had the first right to choose among the items brought to him and only after that his men could purchase for an agreed exchange item, usually in bees’ wax, camphor and bird nests. While the purchasers were out in the wood looking for the articles to trade, the trader remained under the chief’s hospitality until the payment was made. After the transaction completed, the trader returned to the landing place in the company of the tribesmen (Mundy 1848, 263). The motivation to trade and to purchase was a strong incentive for keeping peace between the downriver and the upriver polities. George Earl, who visited Kutai Sultanate in 1834, wrote about the mutual interests served in the relation of trade between the coastal Muslim kingdom and the tribes, “The people belonging to various tribes would be brought into communication with each other. The commerce thus established would soon create a demand for foreign articles. The love of finery natural to the Dayaks would induce them to collect the valuable productions of their country" (Earl 1971, 263).

Therefore, from the perspective of Muslim sultanates and *negeri* in Borneo, a direct, coercive control which amounted to a subjugation and incorporation of nonstate people was not a primary mechanics of statecraft when cooperation could be realised especially through trades and tributes. In the context where the direct claim upon people's service was compelled, it was done with the intent in monopolising and consolidating access to specific export item. An example to the latter was the working on antimony in the Sarawak river which became the thorn in the Brunei side ever since Pangeran Indera Mahkota Mohamad Salleh was dispatched to monitor the activity in 1824. For the most part, the various river settlements and the upriver tribes did not see themselves as subjects of particular sultanates. Even though some of the lands and the rivers were the appanages of either the sultan or his wazirs, the effective control of the nonstate people and to bring them into the *negeri* orbit was almost unrealisable. The insurmountable risks of a direct rule of the hinterland groups were hardwired into the preservation of *negeri* for its rise and fall depended on the integration with the internal and regional trading network, of which the hinterland was crucial. Christie (1990, 46) states that in Borneo, "for which there existed significant overseas markets for forest exotics, metals and semi-precious stones. Very few of these items were collected directly by members of the rakyat of coastal states. Since the producers of most of these trade goods were not members of the states, and in many cases appear to have calculated prestige in a different manner, the mechanism which drew these goods into the state's economy were to some degree distinct". In this regard, soft approaches were preferred to coercive rule by engaging in forms of cooperation such as through marriage, bestowing titles, conversion and adoption. In ensuring the constant access to the supply of forest valuables and the movement of goods in the internal networks the state was conscious in not asserting direct authority over the tribal and other polities.

James Brooke wrote about these independent polities in his journals. Lingga River was administered by Sayyid Jaffar whom he described as a "self-constituted chief". In the interior of Lingga, the Balau Iban had trading relations both with the downriver chief and further up on the side of Pontianak and Sintang, suggested there was no exclusivity to any particular polity. Sayyid Mullah, who administered the Skrang River and had a population a mere 150, was said to have "little control over the Skrang Dayaks" believed to be numbered around 10,000 males. The relations between one riverine polity to another was also facilitated by kinship ties, for example Sayyid Mullah was a younger brother to the de facto chief of Sadong, Sayyid Sahibuddin, thus, enhancing the interdependence between these two polities. Sarikei, whose population "are numerous and flourishing with a considerable trade", led by Datu Patinggi Abdul Rahman was said to be independent from the political units in the Batang Lupar and which was its rivals (Mundy 1848, 365). In the case of Sadong, a vessel of Brunei, the existence of factions between the Datu Patinggi and the Datu Bandar, on one side, and its de facto ruler Sayyid Shahabuddin, suggested that local politics carried considerable consequence than what could be dictated from the centre (Mundy 1848, 370). For the tribal groups, living outside *negeri* was often viewed as an advantage. Panglima Dalam, a title of a chief of a Kayan group in Baram, explained to James Brooke that they were "the most powerful people in the interior". They paid "neither tax nor nominal allegiance" to the powerful sultanates of Brunei and Kutai. The tribes traded in all kinds of cloth, gongs, brass and wares which they exchanged for camphor and beeswax. Trade rendered them prosperous, "plenty of food and are rich, for they give everybody that comes to their country as much rice, fowls, goats and pigs as they can eat" (Mundy 1848, 257).

Thus, before these centres were condemned to peripheral, outstation status, they were wealthy, independent polities whose relation with sultanate did not occur in a framework of coercive, non-voluntary relation, rather, in a form of political cooperation. When the cooperation operated in a framework of mutual recognition of space and authority, the multiple polities were refrained from exercising domination over each other, and the claim of sovereignty was not an exclusive right of a *negeri*.

When centres became outstations: Transformation of pre-Brooke polities

The attacks on Saribas in 1843 and Batang Lupar in 1844 with the assistance of the mighty British Royal Navy spelled the first of the many stages of annexation of various rivers and territories in the long march of the Brooke's statemaking (as shown in Figure 1). After receiving the governorship of Sarawak River, which gave James the "permission to live in the province, to seek profit by trade" (Mundy 1848, 241), the first rajah romanticised his grand design as follows, "to ameliorate the native condition, and give them a taste for British manufactures and some appreciation of a just and protecting government" (Mundy 1848, 243). Subsequently, one of his early steps was in coming up with the "Law of Sarawak" stipulated the following: punishment for murder, robbery and other serious crimes; trade and labour to be conducted freely by every race with no constraint; paths to trades, "both by sea and land" to be opened; revenues to be collected by appointed officers of state; imposing standardised tax and weighing system. The law spelled out the rajah commands and the obligation which bound him as the ruler to the people, and the people to him, "the Governor issues these commands, and will enforce obedience to them; whilst he gives all protection and assistance to the persons who act rightly, he will not fail to punish those who seek to disturb the public peace" (Mundy 1848, 278). Thus, a new and different political community under a singular political order was constructed. Living outside his state was no longer an option.

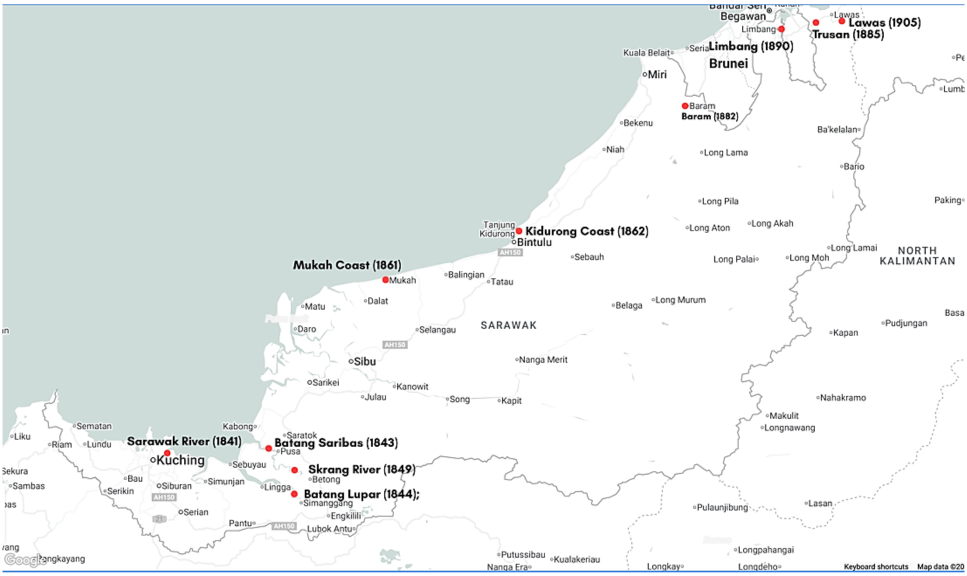

Figure 1. The annexation of territories in Sarawak and year

A crucial mechanism in the incorporation of nonstate people and other independent polities was the creation of outstation administration symbolised by a lacklustre unit known as the fort. It was a peculiar system in the district governance believed to be an efficient method in gathering people and produce into a single collecting point. A fort was an administrative post, staffed by a single or two European officers, assisted by a clerk, native officer, policeman and a few rangers. In addition to the government structure was a bazaar where all items bound for export and incoming imports were collected, taxed and distributed. However, in the early phase of the takeover, the functioning of the fort was punctuated by the climate of fear and uncertainty. Fort was not able to substitute the multiple trading towns flourished prior to their destructions. In the case of Skrang, following the repeated attacks on the river in 1844 and in 1849, the fort was rarely able to attract people to bring their produce there to trade. When the future second rajah, Charles Johnson, arrived in Skrang in 1852, the fort was manned by a former missionary school's teacher, William Brereton. He was the first European posted outside Kuching in the hope that his lone presence was enough to inspire confidence of the natives about the new state. Instead, the fort became a quiet affair. Charles wrote, "There is little to be seen, except native groups in all directions, tumble down sheds formed a Chinese bazaar". Furthermore, its Resident lived under a restless fear of impending violence, "Mr. Brereton was fully armed, and prepared for all emergencies. But according to the several statements, matters were now quiet and there was no cause for alarm or anxiety" (Brooke 1990, 21).

Nevertheless, the fort in its early form exemplified a site where political obligation between the state and the people was tested and rehearsed. The outstation was lightly armed and received weak support from the capital Kuching. Its security was only assured because the state had furnished a sense of obligation that had to live up through its collective defence. Being part of a state-sanctioned political community was significant considering that the alternative for a separate political order diminishing over time. The phantasm of invisible enemy lurking became a rallying cry to raise and defend. Whilst in Skrang, Charles Johnson witnessed Resident Brereton's reminder for the people about their obligation, "the inhabitants were assembled and recommended to be more careful, both for the maintenance of the government under which they now live, and for their own welfare as government and subject must live and fall together". When Skrang fort was attacked by the Rentap forces in 1853, Brereton was able to muster the Malays and Dayaks to help him in the pursuit of Rentap.

The inability of fort to bring people and trade to its sphere was not only due to its insecurity but also because the new trade centre would eliminate the marketplaces which already existed in their nonstate spaces. The desire to maintain trade outside the management and interference of government was resilient to the extent that the European Resident and officers were struggling to sell the concept of a fort. This was amply demonstrated in Baram, a station established in 1883, almost a year after it was ceded by Brunei. Resident of Third Division, Claude Crespigny, who assumed the management of Baram following its cession, was excited about the prospect of developing revenues from Baram because of the wealth of its jungle. He reported: "I learn neither gutta nor camphor have ever been properly worked. Bird nests are collected by there are some extensive caves which are inaccessible. Red transparent dammar is abundant and has never been worked because those who purchased it offer so little" (Crespigny 1882a, 71–72). Furthermore, Crespigny also discovered that in the vast jungles of Baram going upriver, there were multiple trade centres such as Tinjar, Bakong, Tutoh and Batu Gading. Baram also offered a unique trade culture as a result of its deep interlinked with Brunei. Although not being the immediate subjects of the Brunei Sultanate, the chiefs of the tribesmen demonstrated sophistication in appropriating the high, literate culture in their conduct with the state. The Jawi-scripted letters were written by a *menteri*, formerly Brunei functionary who played an important role in relaying official correspondence to and from the hinterland. When they came to govern Baram, the Brooke's officers imitated the practice of letter correspondence in communicating with the leaders. These letters were important mode of communication between the tribal elites and the European officer. Such a written method declined steadily from 1900s as the native officers became directly involved in representing the fort's interest and communicating orders to the tribal chiefs.

Despite the wealth of Baram's natural resources, the Brooke's government was struggling to make the people participated in the state economy. This was not appealing to the tribes because their respective trade centres were more dependable and had sustained for much longer time than the fort had. They were also not easily convinced by the promise that the value offered to them was much higher than what they had before. The effort to persuade the upriver tribes such as the Kayan and Kenyah often faced stumbling block because the government's Resident lacked clarity about the nonstate trading network. Crespigny suspected that one of the Kayan chiefs, Aban Nipa, had undermined the state's effort to get the upriver people to come down to the fort to trade. Crespigny reported that Nipa and his trading partner, Haji Taha, had "tried preventing the Kenyah from coming down to trade here by making misrepresentation to them such as they would be made prisoners or fired at, so that these two can get the greater proportion of the trade of upper Baram into their own hands" (Crespigny 1883a, 35–38). When the voluntary drive to get people to work for the state failed, a coercive strategy was devised. In order to enforce people to work the jungle, especially the rattan which fetched a high export value, fines were imposed excessively in the hope the tribes would be subjected to debt. Aban Jau was forced to work the jungle for rattan and camphor to pay his fine to the government worth 100 piculs ($2,500) for a murder committed by a party of 10 Kayan men attributed to him (Crespigny 1884a, 44–45). Haji Taha, a tradesman in Tinjar, was fined for deserting his wife and children in Oya and was made to pay 100 bundles of rattan. Not everyone responded to the threat. The Resident was suspicious of the Orang Kaya Temenggong, the chief of Long Pata, who claimed that his gutta percha went missing. Instead, Crespigny suspected the chief sold his gutta to an independent trader in a black market-type transaction. Nonetheless, the fine method contributed to some degrees the increase of revenue in Baram. It was reported that for the first four months of the year 1884 the value of its export was $68,584 compared to the whole of 1883 at $62,655.

A Native Officer for a New Government: Baram Residency

James Brooke imagined his rule of Sarawak an enlightened one. His first code of Sarawak law was the statement of his principles and vision of governing the natives. He believed that Sarawak should be ruled jointly with the native, albeit they were the former Brunei's functionaries. This was a useful myth for governing which required a continuous embellishment for it to be believable such as through the formation of instruments like the Supreme Council in 1855, while his successor Charles, had initiated the Council Negeri in 1868.

While Kuching might afford the luxury of pomp and spectacles, the business of running the outstation was largely an accumulation of hard work, often dreary and commonly frustrating. A native who worked alongside a European officer relieved some of the burden felt by the white men in the faraway stations by providing counsel on local matters. Unlike the aristocratic Datus in Kuching, native officer in the outstation had to carry certain skills in interacting with the upriver groups. Having a native officer with knowledge of the people and their language helped in giving some legitimacy to the state on the ground, building confidence and opening path for communication between the tribal leaders and the fort. The persons among natives who embodied these qualities were usually the ministers who were appointed by Brunei to administer its interest and also traders who had business interest in the upriver country and maintained networks with the chiefs of the tribal group.

The earliest native officer dispatched to the outstation was Sayyid Mohsen. James met him for the first time during the civil war in Belidah in 1840 when Mohsen acted as a negotiator representing Datu Patinggi Ali's faction during the civil war against the pro-Brunei camp and in which James was party to. When Skrang fort was built as the first government station outside Kuching in 1849, Sayyid Mohsen was sent there from Kuching to man the station because of his kin-relation with the former chief of Skrang, Sayyid Mullah, who was defeated in the *Dido* expedition. However, Mohsen, "the clever, pleasant but untrustworthy", was removed from Skrang when "complaints continually came in" about him (St John 1994, 228). There could be more to the story. After his dismissal from Skrang, he was appointed to a newly created fort in Belidah in 1952 as its first officer (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde 2007, 18), suggesting his personality and skill were of value to the state. In 1860, Sayyid Mohsen was entrusted to carry a letter to the Dutch side of the border to warn the officials there about the plan hatched by the former Datu Patinggi Ghafoor to overthrow the Brooke government from his base in Pontianak (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde 2007, 236).

In the early years of Baram residency, to get the native chiefs to collaborate with the government was crucial in ensuring a successful extraction of the resources (as shown in Figure 2). Hence, there was an interest in engaging the local elites. They had links with the key chiefs in the territory which could facilitate communication between the tribes and the state. They were also able to provide intelligence about the untapped areas with rich resources. Trade matters because each residency was fiscally responsible for the running of the districts under their jurisdiction. The cost of starting up and running a residency was expensive. In the six months since the cession of Baram to Sarawak, the import amounted to $29,500 and the export was a meagre $9,000, while the expenses recorded at $5,052 (Crespigny 1883a). As Baram residency grew over the years, the balance between the revenue and expenditure recorded almost similar loss margin. In 1906, the revenue gained by the district was $13,204.98, the "highest revenue ever", reported by its Resident R.S. Douglas but the expenditure remained higher at $14,478.77. Some of the spending were put on military salary at $354.41, officers' salaries at $407.53, police at $81.48 and public works at $373.28 (Douglas 1907, 56).

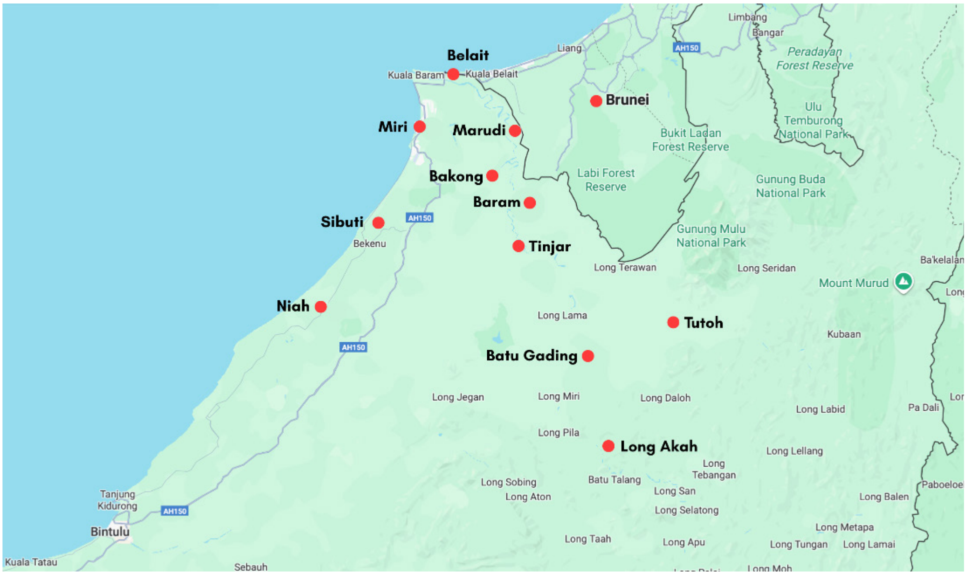

Figure 2. Map of Baram residency and the jurisdiction

In the Baram district, one of the earliest native officers was Orang Kaya Oyong Miyang who was formerly a trading functionary for Brunei and whose ethnic origin probably a Mirek. In the government report *Sarawak Gazette*, his name was stated "Ong Miang", most likely a misspelling from a possible Kenyah name

“Oyong” and “Miyang”. His previous role for the Brunei government had granted him with an extensive trading network in Baram, Miri and Niah. He reported directly to Resident Claude Crespigny. One of the instances reported by the Resident, “On the 25th (October), I received a letter from Orang Kaya Miang informing me that some Long Patas had killed a Long Wat named Sinipa brother of the Oyong Deng, and the actual murderer is a youth of about 16 years’ old who shot Sinipa first and then speared the corpse. Haji Taha had written to give the information in the first place to the Orang Kaya. I wrote once to say that I put the case into the hands of the Orang Kaya, Haji Taha and Aban Nipa and relied entirely upon them that there should be no retaliation” (Crespigny 1882b, 104). Being a native officer, the Orang Kaya was empowered with magistrate roles such as settling a dispute as well as imposing and collecting fines. In the murder case which can only be settled by the Resident, the native officer was ordered to bring some facts for the Resident’s consideration. In the case cited here, the Resident imposed a fine of 60 piculs to the murderer, a portion of which handed to the brother of the murdered Nipa and chief of the Long Wat, Oyong Deng (Crespigny 1883b, 25). The depersonalisation of law through public courts and fines representing one of the earliest visible signs to the people of what the state could do for them. This early impression was vital to the government when most of the inhabitants were not yet willing participants. The new fort in Baram proved to be too unappealing to the people in the downriver which forced the government to bring in security force the Sarawak Rangers from Miri to construct it.

The hard work of Orang Kaya Miyang did not go amiss with his superior. Crespigny favoured him because he brought allies and revenues to the government. In a district report, Crespigny wrote about the Orang Kaya’s success in bringing Tama Sinan, “the principal Kenyah chief” into the government fold. In addition, the Orang Kaya was reported to have spent up to six weeks in luring the principal chiefs of Kayan to accept the authority of the government (Crespigny 1883c, 51–53). He also brought the prolific Kenyah collectors down to the fort and bringing with them produce valued over $10,000. He also managed to convince one of the Kiput chiefs, Orang Kaya Paduka Raja, to acknowledge allegiance to the rajah of Sarawak. Furthermore, the Orang Kaya had also been successful at collecting fines in the forms of valuables. In one of such cases, he collected fines imposed upon the Muriks for the murder of some Lebuns, a tribe from Balungan, consists of 17 *chanang* (medium-sized gongs with hemispherical boss, sometimes elaborately ornamented) and *tawak* (large deep gongs with hemispherical boss), 3 old muskets and 2 war jackets worth 10 piculs (Crespigny 1884b, 75–76). Crespigny valued his service very much that he recommended him to Rajah Charles, “I beg to recommend this Tuah to Your Highness as a fitting person to be Penghulu of Baram with a salary somewhat in advance of the provisional one he has received hitherto and a sum of money for construction of a house. His influence with all the tribes is great and his zeal beyond all that I can say, at the same time, I would retain his position over Miri" (Crespigny 1883b). In addition to Baram, Orang Kaya Miyang was also in charge of Miri. The instruction from the Resident to the Orang Kaya illustrates the responsibilities in holding multiple roles, "His instructions were to investigate the case against Haji Majair, then to Miri and remain with his family for four days, then to Sibuti to which place the pirate Undak has fled from Niah and who is to be captured if possible… The Orang Kaya is then to proceed to Niah and enquire into the murder of Kim Sun which up to the present has had no light upon it" (Crespigny 1883a, 35–38).

At the death of Crespigny, the role of administering Baram fell on C.W. Daubeny. Unlike his predecessor, Daubeny showed less sentiment to the Orang Kaya. After the Orang Kaya's retirement from the role, Daubeny hauled him to court to face a charge of "embezzlement whilst in the government service". Daubeny reported the proceeding, "It appeared that Tama Kallang had been fined by the Orang Kaya in 1884 for adultery and certain offenses against Long Kiputs custom. The proceeds of this fine were to be handed over to the heirs of Tama Kallang deceased wife. I recently received complaint that the fine was not handed to them in full and I later found no record of this fine has ever made in either the Government ledger or the Court book. It came out in evidence that the goods paid had not passed through his hands but a part of that taken from Taman Kallang's house to a Brunei living at Tanah Panggal. The next day the Orang Kaya voluntarily paid 31 catties of gongs to the heirs of Tama Kallang's late wife" (Daubney 1888, 49–50). The next native officer appointed to Baram was Tuanku Muda@Sayyid Akil. He had a trading connection in the upper Baram, but unlike the Orang Kaya, was not part of the former Brunei functionary.

The Brooke's government had a romantic belief that having a right personality was a sufficient mean for enacting a humanitarian rule. Such a romance belied the embarrassing reality that most of the inhabitants simply refused to be subjects of the new government. The new administration failed to persuade the nonstate people to abandon their relative independence. Realising there was more trade in the upriver than the fort in Baram could ever recoup, A.H. Everett, the Resident of the Fourth Division, proposed "an inland station in Baram, in charge of a European Officer with Tuanku Muda (as the native officer)". The area proposed by the Baram's officer in charge, Daubeny, was Long Akah, "if it is impressed on the chiefs and people widely that the station will be for their protection" (Everett 1888, 77–78). While a recent assessment of the fort tends to highlight its security function for the border communities (Mashman 2023, 9), its economic dimension should not be overlooked. The construction of a new fort up north from the one in Marudi reflected a desperate measure from the government. Right until 1888, the number of people who voluntarily came into the state's space remained low which had adversely affected the revenue of the district. While the revenue of Baram had raised in 1887 to $9,106.70 from the year before at $7,164.57, the gains were offset by the increase in the expenditure from $9,177.82 in 1886 to $9,738.46 in 1887. The revenue came largely from the tax paid by the Kayan tribes at $2,390 and the exemption tax at $1,579. The figure, nonetheless, reflected a low population base. This proved that in the first decade after the takeover of Baram, the Brooke's government was still unable to bring the nonstate people into its' so-called "protection". When a census was carried out and showed that the Baram population was a mere 14,000 inhabitants, the cynical Resident Everett was unimpressed, "the population of Baram has either been greatly exaggerated or else it has greatly decreased since the late Divisional Resident (Crespigny) estimated it at 30,000" (Everett 1888, 77–78). The tribes' cold response towards the state was a perplexing problem for the Brooke's government to figure out, but from the nonstate actors, it was a rational choice for life within the state was such an inconvenience.

Discussion: The Cause for Voluntary Incorporation

Since the statemaking project was problematic, what made the nonstate people eventually cooperate with the state?

With the Brunei Sultanate before, indigenous groups associated the sultanate with its appointed officers and their decorated titles such as "Orang Kaya", "Panglima", "Paduka Raja" and "Datu Setia Raja". The idea was carried on into the early years of Brooke's residency through the native officer who acted on behalf of the government. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice reminds us that "In fact, it is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of social position" (Bourdieu 2009,82). The recruitment of native officers with good social standing showed the Brooke's government's awareness of how prestige operated in the traditional society. In the context of the pre-Brooke polities of which trade was the main source of prosperity and hence, stratification, what construed as a good standing involved some kind of monopoly of economic goods, access to valuables and network. Thus, it was a calculated move by the state to enlist the service of people of prestige in a newly established residency such as Baram. These traders were given roles such as custom collector, magistrate, penghulu and assistant to the resident. Orang Kaya Miyang was a trader of some repute and whose relationship with the leading chiefs of Kiput, Kayan and Kenyah were able to bring them into a working relationship with the new state. Another example was Tuanku Hamid who came to Baram as a trader when his father Tuanku Muda was a native officer. Later, Tuanku Hamid was appointed as the government revenue collector in Tinjar and subsequently promoted to native officer in 1902. As these officers often combined their leadership role with trade, their dealings with the natives were conducted between equals. From the ground perspective, the tribal chiefs did not deal with a state's agent but with a familiar concept-figure. To cite Bourdieu, individual did not deal with another individual, but with his "habitus", "Though it is impossible for all members of the same class to have had the same experience, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for the members of that class" (Bourdieu 2009,85).

While it was rational for the nonstate groups evading incorporation by the state, others have looked for opportunities to increase their well-being in the new political order. For the latter, the native officers were building confidence for the chiefs about the new economic system. Despite priority for every residency in securing goods, opening path for trade, and improving communication between tribes, the outstation management was simply too inept to fulfil the priorities. Against the backdrop of the state's inherent limit, the fulfillment of tasks and responsibilities expected of the native officer deserved to be treated as a subject of historical curiosity.

Conclusion

The article looked at the practice of colonial administration from the perspective of its native officer. While the duties discharged by the native officer remained quite similar throughout the duration of the Brooke rule, the challenge faced by the state at the district level was more challenging especially in the first few decades after integration. The real challenge for the government was in persuading people to abandon their independence and to voluntarily accept the sovereignty of the new state. This was not an easy call because the state that the people saw through its fort was far from being impressive. It lacked fiscal, poorly defended and timidly isolated. When the state was terribly lacking in appeal, the task of drawing people into its orbit was left upon its officer to carry out. Hence, the early history of modern state may be remembered primarily for the relentless work of native officer as a primary agent of state-building and the incorporation of nonstate people.

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