

*Field Studies in Natural Resource  
Management in Lemanak and Batang Ai  
Oil Palm Estates*



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## Aknowledgements

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# **Introduction**

## **1.1 General Introduction**

This report is based on four different field studies conducted in the Lemanak area in Sarawak, Malaysia during a field trip of a period of 12 days in October 1998. We were 12 graduate students from three different universities in Copenhagen, The University of Copenhagen, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, and Roskilde University Centre, together with two Assistant Professors from the University of Copenhagen, Ole Mertz and Quentin Gausset from the Institute of Geography and Institute of Anthropology respectively. The field work was conducted in co-operation with UNIMAS (University of Malaysia Sarawak), and six students and four professors from UNIMAS, joined our group during the field course.

Before we went to Sarawak, we had five weeks of preparation in Denmark. During this time we were introduced to South East Asia in general and to Sarawak in particular concerning physical, biological, economical, demographic, social, political and social aspects of natural resource management. We were also introduced to a wide spectrum of methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), design of questionnaires, interview techniques, soil analyses, transects, field measurements, etc.

In the research area of Lemanak and Batang Ai, we stayed at the staff quarters of SESCO and also in four different longhouses where the research took place. After twelve days in the study area, we returned to Kuching. Here a prepared a debriefing seminar was held at UNIMAS where our interim results were presented and the methods used were discussed.

### **1.1.1. Introduction to Sarawak**

#### *Soil and Topography*

The two Bornean states Sarawak and Sabah together form East Malaysia. The area of Sarawak is 124,449 km<sup>2</sup> and can physically be divided into three major regions (Cramb & Dixon, 1988):

1. Coastal lowlands dominated by peat swamp areas
2. Intermediate regions of undulating hill areas (up to 300m above sea level)
3. Interior mountainous regions (up to 2,000m)

Lemanak is situated about 250 km east of Kuching close to the borders of Kalimantan (Indonesia), in the intermediate regions of undulating hills.

Sarawak is located in the humid-tropics. The climate is characterised by an average temperature of 25 degrees Celsius, only varying slightly during the year, heavy rainfall that varies between 2,500 to 4,000 mm per year, and a relative humidity of about 98% at night decreasing to about 70% by midday. The natural vegetation is humid tropical forest and the soils are dominated by histosols in the lowlands and red-yellow ultisols in the hill areas (Jackson, 1968).

### *Population*

The population of Sarawak is about 1.65 million people containing various ethnic groups. The five largest groups are the Iban (30%), Chinese (29.5%), Malay (19.7%), Bidayuh (8.2%) and Melanau (5.7%) but a numerous of smaller ethnic groups make up the remainder (Cramb & Dixon, 1988).

The Iban tradition for shifting cultivation goes back several centuries. They started as pioneers moving around in large areas felling a new plot of primary forest every year for cultivation. Today they primarily live in settled communities and cultivate along the river sides and only penetrate the primary forests to a limited extend (Brookfield et. Al., 1995).

### *Land use*

The land use in Sarawak is dominated by shifting cultivation that accounts for about 20% of the whole area of the state (Cramb, 1993). As the fallow period ranges from six to ten years, and the cultivation of the fields follows a cyclic pattern, the re-growth hardly reaches a forest stage. Shifting Cultivation is carried out in both primary and secondary forest areas and mostly for subsistence use (Mertz & Christensen, 1997; Cramb, 1993). The primary crop cultivated is upland rice, but also maize, cassava and other vegetables are cultivated. At the same time cultivation of cash crops like pepper, rubber, cocoa and oil palms is of great importance (Cramb, 1993).

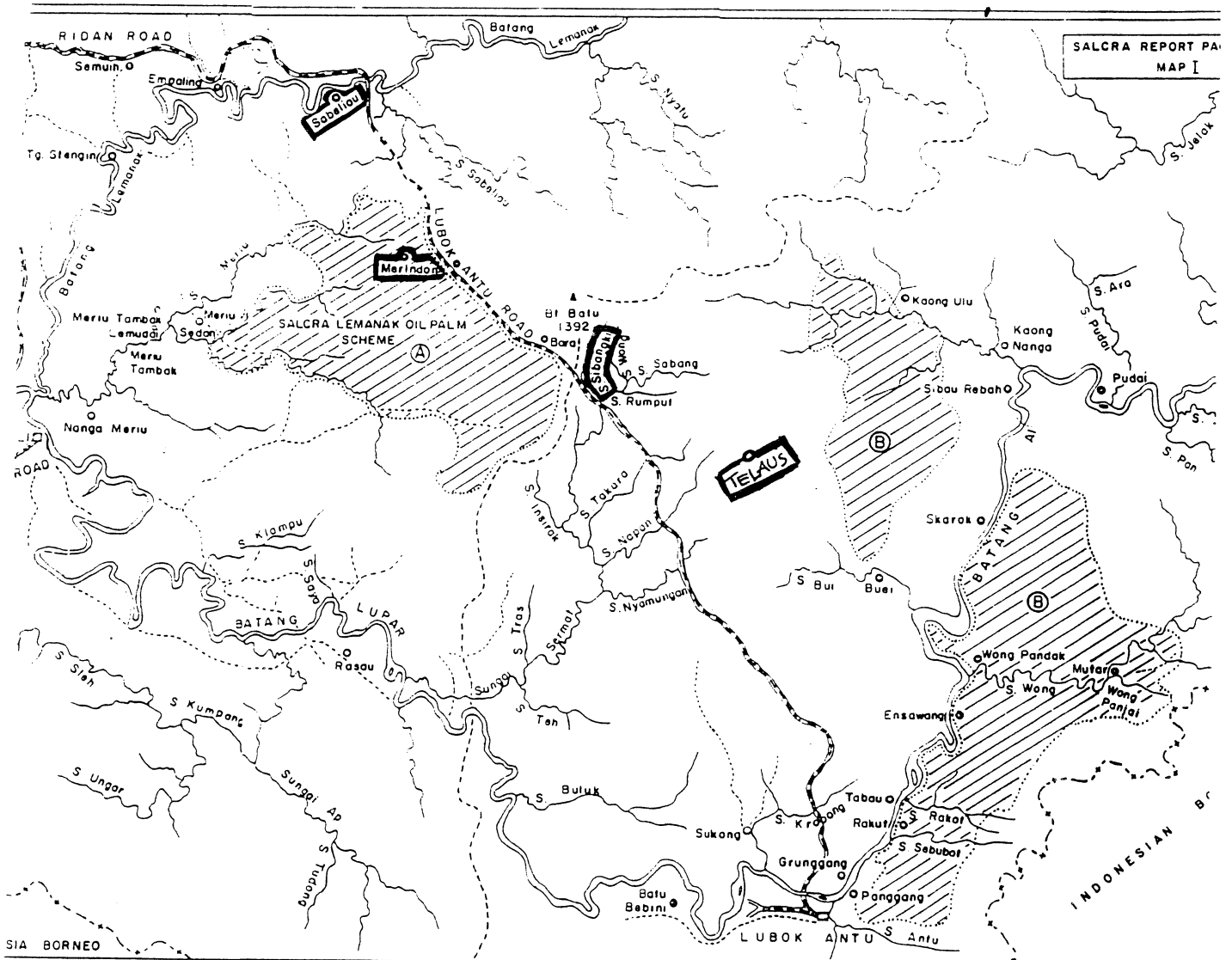
### 1.3 The Lemanak Area

The field study was located in the SALCRA (Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority) Lemanak and Batang Ai estates and the surrounding areas. It is situated close to Lubok Antu town, south of the Batang Ai hydroelectric dam in Sarawak (see figure 1.1). A highway leads

through the area towards the Indonesian border. The majority of the local inhabitants are indigenous Ibans.

The land use pattern in Lemanak consists of subsistence- as well as cash crops and the land use system is a mixture of shifting cultivation, permanent agriculture and plantation. The fallow is utilised for gathering (wild) vegetables and hunting (see later for further details).

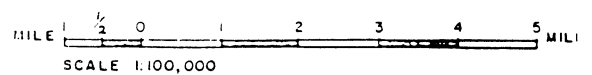
Figure 1.1: Map of the study area.



MAP SHOWING STUDY AREA OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ATTITUDINAL RESEARCH ON SALCRA OIL PALM SCHEME PARTICIPANTS IN LEMANAK-BATANG AI DISTRICT, SECOND DIVISION, SARAWAK, APRIL, 1977.

KEY

- LONG HOUSE
- ROAD
- Ⓐ LEMANAK OIL PALM SCHEME
- Ⓑ BATANG AI OIL PALM SCHEME



## **1.2. Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (SALCRA)**

In Lemanak, changes in the traditional land use patterns have taken place as a consequence of the different development initiatives of SALCRA. SALCRA comprises a number of estates that have been established since the start in 1976, with the general concept of in situ development of Native Customary Land for the benefit of the "owners". After a period of consulting the land "owners" and establishing what their wishes for development are, SALCRA can declare a piece of land to be development area. This makes SALCRA able to improve or develop the land, without changing the legal ownership or any customary rights to the land. SALCRA has estates for oil palms, cocoa, rubber and tea (Cramb & Willis, 1990).

The objectives of the schemes are to raise the productivity and utilisation levels of the farming activities, to generate employment and income thereby raising the standard of living, to cause a shift from subsistence farming to income - generating activities, to create a self-reliant population and provide schools, roads, health clinics, water and electricity.

The Lemanak Oil Palm Estate Scheme covers an area of about 3600 ha and it has 508 households participating. The Estate was established in 1978 and originally there were 16 longhouses involved, but now another 5 has been added, because some of the original have split up. Furthermore, there is a mill in the area, Lubok Antu Palm Oil Mill, which processes the fruit harvested from the estate. The mill is part of SALCRA but it also buys and processes fruit from a number of privately owned oil palms, planted outside the scheme. About 90 percent of the staff employed on the Estate are locals from the longhouses participating in the scheme.

SESCO (Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation) is the company in charge of the Batang Ai Hydroelectric Dam. In 1980-85 the dam was constructed with the main objective to increase the electricity supply to Sarawak (King and Jawan, 1992). As a consequence of the construction of the dam 21 Iban longhouses were resettled to the study area, in two phases, in 1982 and 1984. To develop the resettlement area the Batang Ai Estate was established by SALCRA.

In the Lemanak - Batang Ai area SALCRA is organised as follows; SALCRA headquarters in Kuching; regional headquarters in Sri Aman, the manager of Lemanak Estate. Between the level of the Estate and the participants there has been established a committee called JKKK (Jawatan Kuasa Kemajuan Kampong), that functions as a link between the Estate and the participants. JKKK has 2 members from each longhouse and the chairman, Tuai Rumah, is the manager from the estate. The most important tasks undertaken by JKKK are discussions concerning the running and management of the estate and passing information, from the higher levels of SALCRA to the local participants of the schemes, regarding changes in management.

### **1.2.2 Rights to Land**

Regarding the conversions of land and the resettlements mentioned above, the issues concerning the rights to land seem interesting for our study. That is: who owns the land; are the rights to land based on the community or individuals; how is the ownership registered; has a survey been conducted; has a legal document or title been issued?

There are five different classes of land in Sarawak (Cramb & Wills, 1990);

Mixed Zone Land, in which there is no restrictions on who can acquire title to land

Native Area Land, in which only legally defined Natives (such as Iban or Malays, but excluding the Chinese), can hold a title

Native Customary Land, that is land not held under title, but subject to Native Customary Rights (NCR)

Reserved Land, land held by the government, principally as forest reserves

Interior Area Land, a residual category.

The Lemanak - Batang Ai area is located in what is called Sri Aman Division, formerly known as Second Division, and about 75% of the land in this division is Native Customary Land (Cramb & Willis, 1990). Each of the five classes of land has its own legal status, but in our context the most important class is the Native Customary Land. This land is usually surveyed along its perimeter, and the area is then registered as belonging to an entire longhouse community. The land is not surveyed to form individual privately - owned plots. The distribution of the land is supposed to take place within the longhouse community, according to customary procedures. This is different in the Batang

Ai area, where people have been resettled as a consequence of the dam. They were resettled on Native Customary Land originally belonging to other longhouses, but alienated by the state.

## **1.3 The Longhouses**

### **1.3.1 Organisation of the Longhouses**

In each longhouse there has been established a committee with 15 members, 5 is concerned with health and sanitation, 5 with security and 5 with development. The headman of the longhouse is automatically chairman of the committee. Furthermore, some of the people from the longhouses are employed as team leaders by SALCRA.

### **1.3.2 The Iban longhouse**

In the Lemanak area, the typical domicile is the longhouse either the traditional wooden construction or a modern version of two-storeys. The longhouse is described by Freeman (1955) as “made up of a series of independently owned family apartments which are joined longitudinally one to the other so as to produce a single attenuated structure.” The longhouses visited consisted of thirty to fifty bileks. The term bilek is applied for the households and its members both the ones staying in the longhouse and the ones living outside the area, e.g. doing migrant labour. Thus, the term covers the physical structure, and the household-concept is based on kinship to a large extent. Each bilek contains from two to eight persons as three generations are often seen living together. Besides the bileks, the longhouse contain a common area known as the ruai. The ruai is a kind of roofed porch and it is the area for all kinds of social activities and meetings. Every longhouse has a headman who is called the tuai rumah. “A tuai rumah is looked upon as an intermediary between his longhouse and the administrative system” (Freeman 1955). The tuai rumah is head of the Longhouse Committees and acts as a representative of this when dealing with land rights and tenureship. Furthermore, he is the judge concerning the (native) customary law, adat (Brookfield, 1995; Freeman, 1955).

Among the young Iban men it is customary to leave the longhouse for a period of time (traditionally the six months when the rice is growing). Bejalai simply means to “walk” or “go on a journey”. The term is used for going upriver for a week to hunt and gather, but also for migrant labour. Working



offshore seems to be a popular way of doing bejalai since it is for a limited period, usually 1-6 months, and its well paid (see articles later).

### **1.3.3. The Longhouses in Lemanak**

The surveys were carried out in four different longhouses: Merindun, Sebeliau, Telaus and Sebangki. Their location can be seen in figure 1.1.

#### *Merindun Longhouse*

The Merindun Longhouse, having twenty-nine bileks, was one of the longhouses pioneering in the establishment of the Lemanak Oil Palm Estate. Their land of Merindun belongs to the category Native Customary Land (NCL), parts of this, four ha per household, were included in the plantation. Only five of the bileks are not involved in the scheme. The rest are involved partly as plantation owners, partly as workers at the plantation and at the Lemanak oil palm mill. Besides oil palms the households cultivates pepper as cash crop and for subsistence rice and vegetables. Rubber used to be included as a cash crop but has proven unprofitable due to decreasing prices.

#### *Sebeliau Longhouse*

The Sebeliau longhouse is also part of the Lemanak Oil Palm Estate. One third of their land is included in the scheme. Furthermore they have twenty hectares of private owned oil palms. These twenty hectares of palms are subsidised by the government and they sell the fruit to the mill. No exact figure for the number of ha entitled to the longhouse could be obtained, but they have no shortage of land for farming. The land of Sebeliau belongs to the category of Native Customary Rights Land (NCR-land).

#### *Telaus Longhouse*

Telaus longhouse is part of the Batang Ai Estate. It is the only resettled longhouse included in the survey. In 1983 the Telaus longhouse consisted of twenty-two households, who were all resettled, because of the Batang Ai Dam. Today, the longhouse consists of thirty-three households, and households work within the estate. The resettlement scheme set by SESCO provided economic compensation to the farmers for the lost land and longhouse. A very important component of the resettlement scheme was the farm scheme designed by SALCRA. The new resettlement area

provided the farmers with one ha of land, and access, but no legal rights, to three hectares of cocoa and five hectares of rubber. In 1998 the cocoa fields were converted to an oil palm plantation because the cocoa-production was unprofitable. Due to the recent conversion to oil palm plantation, the farmers have no income from the oil palms yet. Their present cash income rely on a community fishpond, migration work and rubber production. For subsistence use the area around the longhouse as well as the non-flooded parts of their old land upriver are utilised. In both locations rice and vegetables are cultivated, while in the upriver area collection of NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products), fishing, timber extraction, and hunting takes place.

### *Sebangki Longhouse*

The land of the Sebangki households is NCL. In relation to the resettlements due to construction of the dam, the longhouse dwellers had to give up some of their NCL to a resettled longhouse. None of the fifty-three bileks in Sebangki Longhouse are involved in the SALCRA scheme. Their income rely mainly on migration work and pepper farming. Rubber used to be one of the major cash crops, but the present prices are too low for it to be profitable. The main subsistence crop is rice. Only one household cultivates oil palms on NCL.

## **1.3 The Sub-group Articles**

The team was divided into four sub-groups, each group having one to two UNIMAS students and two to four Danish students. The overall subject for the groups to deal with has been the consequences of the SALCRA and SESCO activities in the area for the local communities.

Four different study approaches have been selected and the results will be presented in the following articles. The first article has an institutional approach dealing with the organisation of the different institutions, both governmental and local, their interactions and the consequences of these interactions. The second article has a socio-economic approach, it deals with the impact of SALCRA on the local household economies and on land use strategies (livelihood strategies), including the environmental aspects of these. The third article, by Larsen and Pedersen, analyses the consequences of resettlement for the farming systems adapted in the longhouses. The fourth article analyses the off-farming activities, as it deals with the consequences of the schemes for the NTFP collection and production.

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# Article 1

## The Economic and Social Relationships between a SALCRA Estate and three Participating Longhouses;

*A case study from the Middle Batang Ai area*



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# **The Economic and Social Relationships between a SALCRA Estate and three Participating Longhouses; A case study from the Middle Batang Ai area**

*Martin Damgaard, Jesper Enemark, Peter Højskov & Ditte Marie Pagaard*

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## **Abstract**

*The Middle Batang Ai area has been involved in rural development supplied by SALCRA through the establishment of the Lemanak Oil Palm Estate which have created income generating activities as wage labour on the Estate. We have found a coherence between the development goals of SALCRA and those of the participants, but the commitment of the participants is currently decreasing. We have found that the general opinion among the participants is that the changes of SALCRA to SPS has caused that the communication between the participants and the management is deficient. This is because of differences in the sets of values that the Estate and the longhouses are building their future development on. The degree of the differences varies between the longhouses. Merindun wants to stay in the scheme, while Sebeliau wants to cultivate their own oil palms outside the scheme, and Telaus do not have the possibility to quit the scheme even though they want to.*

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## **Introduction**

The Lemanak Oil Palm Estate has had a fundamental impact on the livelihoods of the population living in the Middle Batang Ai area, both the households directly participating and households indirectly affected by the changed conditions in the area. The Estate have provided the area with a range of new opportunities, for instance employment as wage labour; new social services and improved infrastructure. On the other hand, the development of the plantation has occupied large tracts of the available land, to oil palms and rubber. This has reduced the households possibilities of diversifying their agricultural strategies and in a wider context have had an impact on the individual families utilisation of their resources, such as time, labour and land.

The development process is a constant interaction between all the involved actors in an ongoing struggle for optimising their positions by reflecting their set of normative values and goals upon the changes in the setting. In the attempt to understand a development process and what changes it has brought along, it is necessary to understand their

## **Problem**

How is the relationship between the economic and social goals of SALCRA and the expectations of the local population in the implementation, running and future of the Lemanak Estate?

SALCRAs overall objectives are to cause a shift from subsistence farming to cash crops and other income-generating activities and thereby create a self-reliant population. In the consecutive developing process there is a risk for the daily management to loose this at sight. We wish to investigate the goals of SALCRA on operational level and compare them with the expectations of the local population. The local population is seen in a longhouse perspective.

In recognition of the hazy nature of the concepts as *goals* and *expectations* we they are investigated mainly in an indirect manner. As indicators for this are: the participants level of commitment to the Estate and its development, the level of knowledge about the development of the Estate. These indicators sum up the expectations of the participants as well as how they influence the daily management of the Estate. At the same time we will try to investigate the formulated preference and interpret the different institutions attitude toward their counterparts.



One of the techniques is ranking, which is a useful tool to get an impression of what kind of possibilities the local people have (Mikkelsen, 1995). In this survey we used a pair-wise ranking which means that the target person has to compare two options and then prioritize the one which is the most important.

Another participatory approach we used was the Venn diagram. By drawing some circles which symbolise the different groups in the society and make them in different sizes and eventually cover each other, it is possible to illustrate the different weights or power allocated to the groups or organisations (Mikkelsen, 1995). By letting the target person do the drawing the insider is in charge of the details and free to express their knowledge.

It is important to note that no situations where PRA is used are the same. The ideas, problems and the cultural contexts of the target persons will differ, and so will the way the questions are addressed (Mikkelsen, 1995).

## **Method**

We started our survey by interviewing the manager at the Estate to get an idea of how SALCRA works in this area and what the purpose of the Estate is. We asked questions about the overall economic and social output of the Estate together with questions about the political and economical expectations of the Estate in the area. Furthermore we asked about the participants organisation and other institutional agreements between SALCRA and the participants.

The interview was conducted during a walk in the Lemanak Estate, this gave us the opportunity also to ask some specific questions about the practical work. Even though we had prepared a semi-structured questionnaire, we only used it as a topic guide because the interview turned out to be very informal, and the manager was very interested in explaining about the Estate.

Afterwards we stayed three days in Merindun where we interviewed the longhouse committee, a group of seven women, two single farmers, the headman and two single

Merindun and Talaus. By having this opportunity it was more easy to get a close relationship to the participants of the survey. Especially this is very important when the survey is conducted in a very limited time period.

As stated in the general introduction for our team, the three longhouses all have different backgrounds and different relations to the Estate. This is also seen in their responses to the changes currently taking place in relation to the aims of SALCRA. From the beginning of our survey we planned to speak to different kinds of longhouses. We were interested in talking to people who were in the area before the Estate was established, and people who had been resettled.

During our stay in the longhouses we tried various ways of changing the setting of the interviews. The interviews took place both during walks in the fields, and in the longhouses. The same general topics were covered in all three longhouses, and the interviews we conducted the focus groups and the individual interviews are comparable.

At last we examined the participants impression of their degree of influence on the decision making at the Estate. The method we used were a Venn diagram. By using this method, the target person was asked to make a drawing which symbolizes the relationship between two or several actors or groups, in this situation between SALCRA and the participants (see appendix 2).

### **Evaluation of methodology and changes during the survey**

Before we went to Sarawak, we prepared different kinds of semi-structured questionnaires with open-ended questions. The idea was that it would be possible to compare the answers from the local people and the answers from the Estate manager in an easy way, because a lot of questions were quite similar. During the first couple of interviews we realized that the questionnaires were too extensive, and some of the questions were too abstract or just irrelevant in the informants context. So we changed the way of interviewing into using an interview guide with some topics. The original questionnaire and a modified list of topics can be seen in appendices 3 and 4. The comparison then became a little bit more complicated but the different interviews went

in the longhouse could not choose to go to school. The comparison of the different agricultural activities also caused some problems, because in reality they did not choose between them. They chose several kinds of agricultural activities. For instance they could not simply use all their time just producing pepper or paddy, so they chose both of them.

To get some better results from the ranking method, it would be a good idea to ask the participants to find their own categories, but because we did not have so much time, we do not think it was a possibility to do so.

The Venn diagram turned out to be difficult to explain. We had to use an example before the participants were able to make one of their own. After we got some experience about how to explain, it went more easily. We got information about the different opinions between the surveyed longhouses regarding their understanding of their degree of influence in the decision making of the Estate. It was a complement to the interviews (see appendix 2).

Before we started our survey, we had planned to interview a responsible SALCRA official from headquarters in Kuching. The aim were to find out how the politicians, project planners on the policy level see the whole Estate in a developmental context. But after we had done the interview with the Estate manager, we did not find it important anymore, because he gave us a very distinct picture of the interests of the actors on the policy level.

Because there are a lot of Indonesian immigrants employed at the Estate we had also planned to make interviews with some of them. We had the impression that the employment of the Indonesian immigrant workers could cause some problems between the participants and the Indonesians. We also wanted to get an impression of their experiences with the project, and what they think about the Estate. After we had done some interviews, we found out that neither the manager nor the participants have any problems concerning the employment of the Indonesians. So we decided not to make these interviews. Most of the interviews in the longhouses were conducted with an

## **Results and Discussion**

In our analysis of the findings we have to be aware of the two different dimensions, both the expectations of the local population and the goals of SALCRA, but the same finding can often be interpreted in both dimensions.

### **General**

A recurring finding from all the three longhouses is that the population appreciates the development that has taken place. According to the headman in Merindun, the area was below the official poverty line when the Estate was established in 1978, the infrastructure in the area has been improved and schools and clinics have been built. Telaus is a special case because of the resettlement and the circumstances surrounding this, but they also recognize that SALCRA has in fact developed their area.

### **Lemanak Oil Palm Estate**

The Estate was established in 1978 with the aim of general socio-economic development of the area. The farmers was given title to the land, and received dividend from the profit of the Estate. Initially, the costs of land development have to be repaid by the farmers with the dividend. Farmers have priority as hired labourers in the plantation. The palms that were planted in 1978, will be cut in 5 years and new palms are supposed to be planted instead.

### **Merindun**

At Merindun the land is Native Customary Rights land, which means that the longhouse as a whole has the legal rights to the ownership of the land. The current headman was involved in establishing SALCRA in the Lemanak area. This means that Merindun was in the scheme from the start in 1978 and only five out of 30 households in the longhouse do not participate in the Lemanak Scheme. Because of the high level of participation, and because of the long duration of their participation, the longhouse has gotten used to a regular cash income from working at the Estate, and from the dividend. The longhouse has achieved a higher material standard of living and they attribute this to their participation in the scheme. When the scheme is due to be renewed in five years, a majority of the participants in Merindun want to continue in the new scheme, even

with the introduction of the Estate and the long period it has been there, the people have gradually shifted their priorities from cultivating paddy to oil palms. This could indicate a shift from a traditional emphasis on paddy as the most important crop, to a more modern attitude where the importance of the oil palms monetary value has substituted subsistence as the primary value among the people. Furthermore, the money generated by the oil palms gives a wider range of possibilities to buy different kinds of modern goods than a continued cultivation of paddy would have provided. On the other hand when they state that it is important that the children return home, it shows that they want to keep the family continuity and presence on this particular piece of land. The parents are very dependent on their children when they become unable to work. By having their children close by, it is more safe because they are more certain about getting a living.

### **Sebeliau**

At Sebeliau the land is also Native Customary Rights land. They participate in the scheme with 1/3 of the longhouse communal land. Besides, they have 20 hectares of privately owned oil palms, which have been planted five years ago with subsidies from the Departement of Agriculture. The fruit from these palms can be sold to the mill because they have a license to sell the fruit. Both participants in the scheme and non-participants can get a license, if they can show a receipt proving that they had bought the young palms from SALCRA. The price the farmer is paid at the mill for the fruit from the privately owned palms, differs from the fruit harvested at the Estate area. This is due to the fact that the Estate deducts the management costs and the cost of inputs, from the price that is paid for fruit from the Estate. According to both the farmers and the manager of the Estate, this fruit is bought for 25 \$RM per ton of fruit. The private owners of oil palms are paid 420 \$RM per ton of fruit, which is a huge difference. But they have to pay for all the inputs themselves, such as pesticides and tools, so the difference in price is then actually smaller. In fact it is very difficult to compare the two different prices.

According to the headman, they can harvest more from their own oil palms because they are younger and not so tall as in the Estate. They also manage these palms themselves. When they are doing the plantation work, they get some fertilizers from the plantation staff. It is the manager who decides how much they have to use, and in what

benefits the longhouse could get if they stayed in the scheme, or if they left. Because of their knowledge of the benefits and drawbacks after the change to SPS, it was a conscious choice to leave the scheme. They have used an opportunity to get their own oil palms. They think that the amount of money spend on inputs on the Estate is much higher than the amount they spend on their own palms, thereby the economic output of their own palms is higher. Furthermore they do not like to be supervised by the Estate.

In the pair-wise ranking school / education was ranked highest while the crops they grow themselves, paddy, pepper, and oil palms all were ranked higher than the Estate (see appendix 7). It shows a wish for independence from the Estate which perhaps is a natural consequence of the development SALCRA has performed, for example that they took the initiative to plant their own palms. We notice that migration work is ranked as the lowest, but perhaps it only reflects the personal preferences of the person who did the pair-wise ranking, and not a general trend in Sebeliau. Another explanation could be that they are currently constructing a new longhouse, and perhaps it is not possible for him to both contribute to this work and work as a migrant worker.

### **Telaus**

The situation at Telaus is different from the two other longhouses, mainly because of the resettlement and the ownership to land. Telaus was approached by SALCRA when the resettlement was being planned, in order to develop the area where they were being located. SESCO should originally provide new land to Telaus, since SESCO was responsible for the building of the dam at Batang Ai. SALCRA was then supposed to develop the area and provide possibilities for work, in the same manner as in the Lemanak scheme. Today 26 out of 32 households participate in the scheme. We could not determine the contents of the agreement that was made between Telaus and SESCO / SALCRA before the resettlement, it was a verbal agreement between the leaders of Telaus and a representative of SALCRA. Recently there had been an election in the longhouse of Telaus and a new headman was elected.

The people of Telaus were supposed to get title to one acre of orchard where they could cultivate crops of their own choice. So far this acre has been surveyed but no legal titles

The pair-wise ranking among a group of four women in Telaus, showed the same general trends as in Merindun and Sebeliau with school education as the highest priority. The pair-wise ranking gave the following results; school / education got sixteen (maximum); migration got twelve; paddy got eight; pepper got four and oil / rubber got zero (see appendix 8). It is remarkable that oil / rubber did not get scored while paddy got scored higher than the cash crops. This could indicate that the people of Telaus are holding on to some traditional values, concerning self - sufficiency in paddy. It could also indicate a lack of enthusiasm regarding working at the Estate. The reason why Telaus has scored the migration work high could be that they see it as a good way to get cash income, compared to the work on the Estate.

We think it is remarkable, and perhaps even naïve, that the people of Telaus expected to get piped water, electricity, housing and schools for free. But on the other hand it is essential to be aware that before the resettlement, the people of Telaus had free access to water and firewood gathered on their land. Perhaps it was not mentioned explicitly in the agreement that the people should pay for the new facilities, and therefore they expected them to be free.

SALCRA has a monopoly on processing the fruits from the oil palms in the area, since the only mill in a radius of several hundred km belongs to SALCRA. This means that Telaus cannot get an additional income by selling the fruit to middlemen. Of course it is not the purpose to sell fruit outside the scheme, but it has previously been practised with rubber. From the farmers point of view selling rubber to middlemen is a kind of security strategy, but the Estate regarded it as stealing.

The communication between the Estate and Telaus is deficient in various ways, the most important being the development loans. According to Telaus they have limited knowledge about their loans and they blame the Estate. The Estate says that the economic tables concerning the development loan for planting the oil palms, was given and explained to Telaus about three weeks before the loan was established. With reference to the pair-wise ranking and the interviews we find that Telaus is quite sceptical about the intentions and motives of SALCRA / SPS.

for instance when and where to harvest and how many workers are needed to do the task. The communication between the participants and SALCRA goes up only to the level of the Estate manager, from there the Estate manager is supposed to inform SALCRA about decisions taken in the JKKK committee. The organisational structure is shown in appendix 9.

In relation to the organisational structure of SALCRA and of the participants, and the communication between the two, there seems to be a contradiction. On one hand the participants are satisfied about the structure of SALCRA and the structure of the committees that represent their opinions in SALCRA, but they think there is a problem in the way the communication between the levels of the structure takes place in practise. According to the participants, the communication between SALCRA and the participants through the different committees is not going on very well. They perceive that they are not informed about everything that SALCRA has in mind, and that sometimes decisions are taken without consulting the JKKK committee. The participants also perceive that they do not get an answer on all the questions they pose to SALCRA. On the other hand the Estate manager told that he is very satisfied about the way the communication takes place, and according to him, he tries his best to pass on information to the JKKK committee and is willing to answer questions in relation to the management and running of the Estate.

### **The manager of the Estate**

According to the manager of the Estate the participants are working to earn an income on a short term, while their understanding of capitalist concepts like work, savings, credit and debt on a longer timescale, are more limited. The locals do the harvesting, but does not want to do the maintenance. As an example he mentioned that the Estate looked "untidy" with vines and old leaves lying on the ground between the palms. He compared with Estate in Peninsular Malaysia where the workers are employed by the landowner, and the Estate are managed in a more efficient way. The manager could not understand why the locals did not work more on the Estate, since it was their land and to their own benefit.



purpose of SPS is the above and to make more efficient production systems, where the socio - economic development of the local areas is secondary and to a large part the responsibility of the local population themselves. The local population perceive SPS as responsible for lower prices, decreased services for the farmers, no more Community Development Fund, no small job payment and a shift in employment from being daily workers to being contract workers, which means that they do not get APF (pension) and SOSCO (working insurance).

The change to SPS has also meant that the dividend is payed out through a bank account in Sri Aman, before it was given as cash at the Estate. The participants think that this way of paying distance them from the Estate, as they cannot ask in the bank why they get the amount they get. Before they could ask the manager on the spot. The manager of the Estate maintains that the system of payments to an account in a bank, is more efficient and in line with the new concept of a profit oriented company. Furthermore, he claims that this system keeps the participants from spending their dividends on the first day to buy liqueurs.

local people. Furthermore, they believe that it is possible to get a higher economic output when they manage the palms themselves because they decide what inputs to buy. Telaus do not feel they have the possibility to quit the scheme of several reasons. First of all they have not been involved in the scheme of the same duration as the other two longhouses, therefore they do not benefit from the oil palms yet, but only from the rubber plantation. The people of Telaus do not feel obliged to repay their loans because a little commitment to SALCRA. An example of this could be the rubber production which they sell to middlemen because of the price differences between SALCRA and middlemen, and because they do not have knowledge about the loans. This is not the rule for the oil palms because they are monopolised by SALCRA. As oil palms is a new crop in Telaus it can have a range of consequences for Telaus. On the one hand they get more integrated in the scheme but on the other hand the oil palms are monopolised by SALCRA because the only mill in the area is owned by SALCRA. Furthermore, the land of Telaus do not belong to the longhouse but to the state and is not Native Customary Rights land as in Merindun and Sebeliau. This makes it even more difficult for Telaus to quit the scheme and use the option as Sebeliau to plant their own oil palms.

The interviews revealed different levels of knowledge between the longhouses about the changes from SALCRA to SPS, which is summarised in table 1. The different levels of knowledge are not only unequally distributed between the longhouses but also within each longhouse. If the Estate has to continue to work in a constructive way we think it is important to improve the quality of information the participants get concerning the decision making. For instance the headman of Sebeliau told us that from their point of view it is understandable that they get less dividend in SPS, but they would like to know the reasons why and exactly what the money is used for. It is not the changes as such they are dissatisfied with, but the practical way they were informed about these changes. This is normally the role of the headman, but in the case of Telaus it seems that due to the recently elected headman this obligation is passed on to the committees. The uncertain structure of the longhouse of Telaus can be a reason for the unclearness of the consequences of transformation from SALCRA to SPS. It seems that between the different longhouses exist different interests towards the changes of SALCRA. We found that between the longhouses there were different traditions of discussing affairs

SPS will mean that the maximization of profits from the Estate has gained increased importance, and is now essential. The participants have a far more complex range of activities to optimise in order to secure their livelihood. For example, the social requirements of the longhouse is very important for the participants and therefore they will use more time on these activities than what the Estate management find reasonable.

the children. The possibilities for education has improved in the area, since the Estate was established, and it is obvious to us that the locals value the idea of education as a sign of progress.

The link between SALCRA on the organisational level and SPS on the political level is getting stronger, while the link between SALCRA and the participants on the operational level is getting weaker. Furthermore, the new structure of the Estate which increase the possibility of losing messages between SPS and the longhouses, and inside the longhouses as well.

The participants in Merindun and Sebeliau mentioned that they do not feel that the Estate is their, they know it is their land, but since they do not have the responsibility of managing the Estate they do not care. For instance the women told that they feel that they are being pushed around in the daily work. The locals feel that they are employed on the Estate, and the ownership to the palms is more important for the manager and the investors. There is a strong feeling of ownership to the land, as shown in the statements of the children coming back to keep the land. If the locals had a stronger sense of ownership for the Estate, we think a lot of the misunderstandings about SPS could be avoided. This shows that the locals place a high value on independence and the opportunity to run the Estate as they do on their fields.

ago when SALCRA had been implemented and running for some years, then the need for communication could be taken care of in the JKKK. Now, on the other hand, there is a great need for explications about SPS, and the system cannot accommodate this need, and therefore the communication is central for the participants. Another example is the 'subsidy syndrome' mentioned earlier in the report, the manager claims that this is one of the reasons why the local population are unsatisfied with the structure of the new scheme, five years ago this question would not have present, as the subsidies were not being removed.

Because we had made our survey in a period of restructuring it could be interesting to do another survey in the future, when the changes of the Estate has taken place.

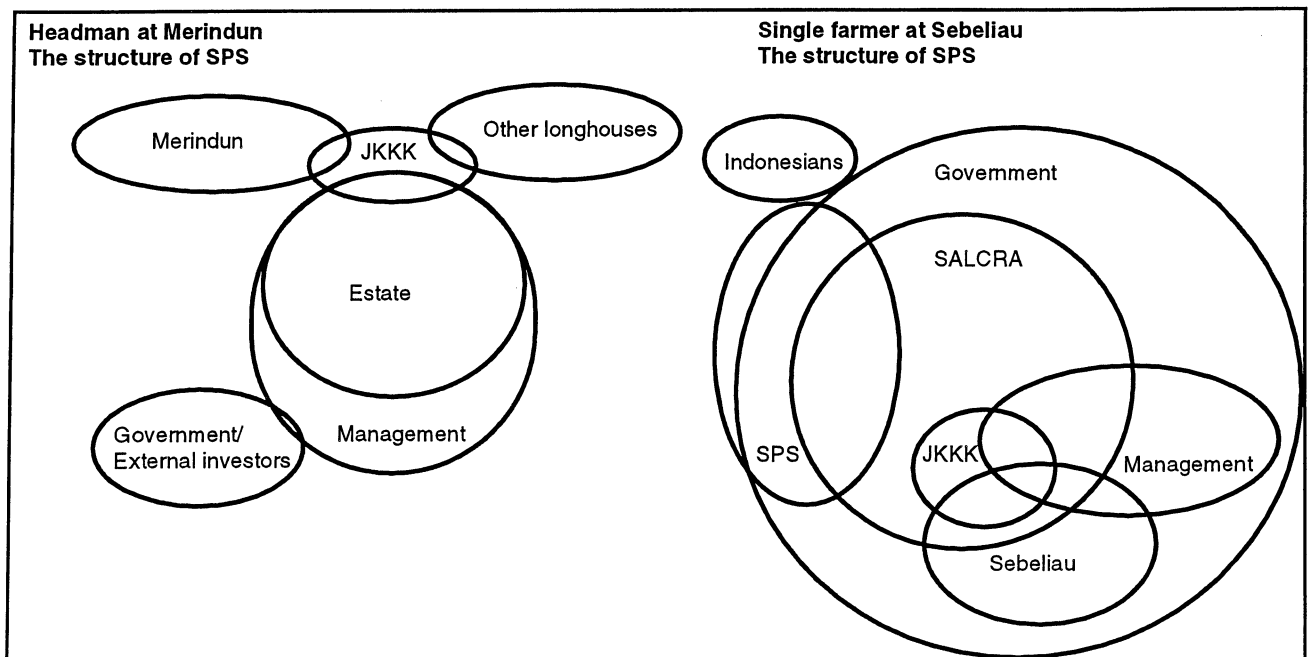
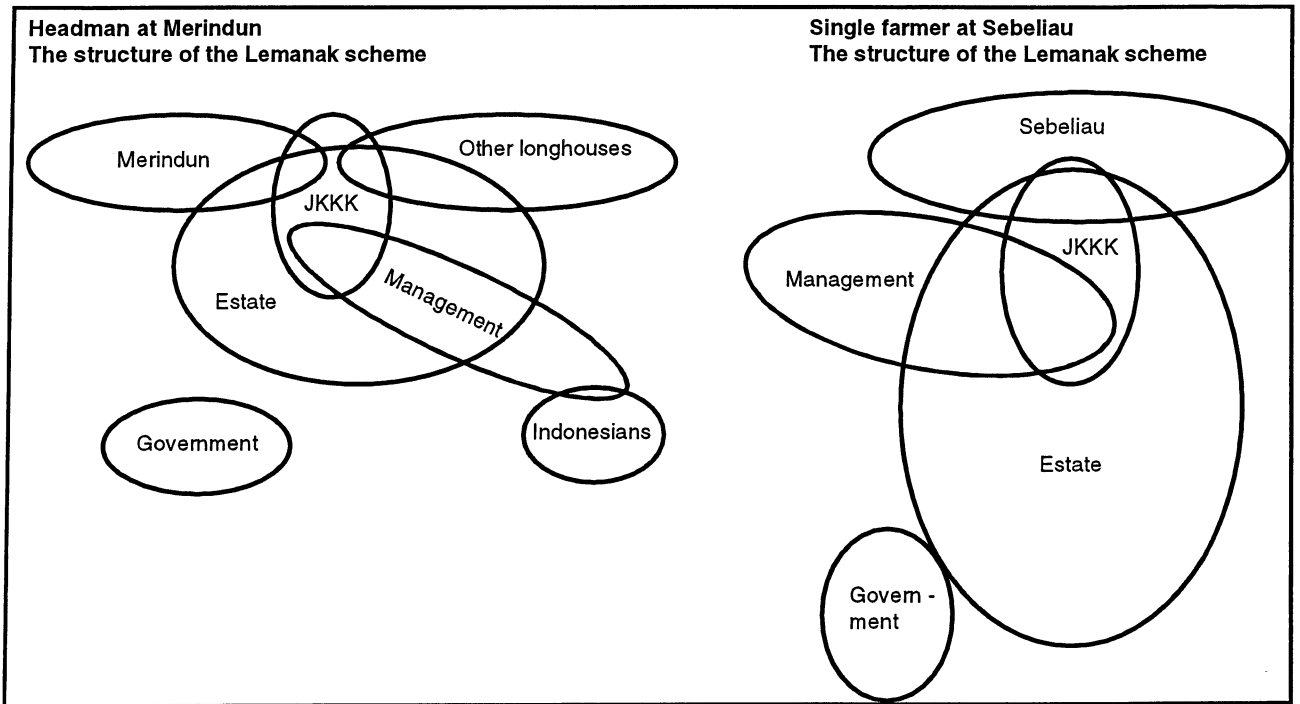
# Appendix 1

## Actual Time Schedule

7/10 1998	Arrival at SESCO	Afternoon:	Introduction meeting at SALCRA headquarter Lemanak Oil Palm Estate.
8/10 1998	Interview of the Estate Manager, conducted in the oil palm plantation		
9/10 1998	Merindun:	Morning:	Interview of a single farmer, conducted in the fields Afternoon: Interview of a single farmer, conducted in the longhouse.
10/10 1998	Merindun:	Morning:	Interview of two young men, conducted in the longhouse. Afternoon: Interview of a group of women, conducted in the longhouse. Evening: Interview of the longhouse committee, conducted in the longhouse.
11/10 1998	Went to the sunday market in Lubok Antu.		
12/10 1998	Sebeliau:	Morning:	Interview of the headman, conducted in the fields. Interview of two single farmers, conducted in the fields. Afternoon: Interview of the longhouse committee, conducted in the fields.
13/10 1998	Sebeliau:	Morning:	Interview of a group of women, conducted in the house of the headman.
	SESCO:	Afternoon:	Team meeting.
14/10 1998	Telaus:	Introduction to the Telaus longhouse.	
15/10 1998	Telaus:	Morning:	Interview of a single farmer, conducted in the fields. Afternoon: Interview of the team leader, conducted in his house. Evening: Interview of the longhouse committee, conducted in the longhouse. Interview of a group of women, conducted in the longhouse.
16/10 1998	Telaus:	Morning:	Informal conversation with the longhouse people.
	SALCRA:	Afternoon:	Interview of the Estate Manager.
17/10 1998	Excursion on the Lemanak River.		
18/10 1998	Return to Kuching.		

## Appendix 2

### Venn - diagrams



## Appendix 3

### Original Questionnaire to the local population

#### General introduction

General personal information

- Name, age, occupation, place in the family, historical background, education

Do you work at the plantation?

- How long time have you been working there and what do you do?

#### Choice of livelihood strategy.

From where does your household earn money? (What activities generates cash for the household?)

- Paid labour or trade, farming, collecting, NTFP, tourism and others?

Explain how you farm, what crops and techniques?

(Is the household practising shifting cultivation or another form of agriculture?)

Does the household have other cash - crops than oil palms?

- How important are these cash - crops for the economy of the household?

How much of your earnings is related to the Estate?

- Use of time and cash earned (to get an idea of how important the job on the Estate is for this person and the household, how involved he/she is)
- Do you like to work on the Estate?
- More or less than the other activities you have?

Does any of the members of the household work permanently or periodically as migrant labour

- Where and how?
- How important is this migrant labour? (Is the idea of working as paid labour already well established or is it a new concept for the locals?)

#### The relationship to SALCRA / Estate.

What is your impression of the oil palm scheme?

- For who and how (himself, family, the local community, SALCRA, the government?)
- Are you satisfied with SALCRA? Why? / Why not?

How do you think that the local population has been integrated in the Estate?

- Do you have any influence? (Decision making, choice, implementation, control, share of benefits)
- Are you satisfied with the level of influence that the local population have on Estate / SALCRA?
- Is there any organisation of the workers dealing with the relationship to Estate / SALCRA? (Is there a difference between SALCRA and the Estate?)

How have the local community organised itself in relation to SALCRA?

- Do you have some committees for dealing with the relationship to SALCRA / Estate
- Do you have any key persons in the management of SALCRA?

What is your relationship to the management of the Estate?

#### Rights to land.

Can you explain who owns the land and the trees? (Ownership)



- Do you have the ownership rights?
- In what form is your ownership rights to land registered or documented? (Is his land divided between the Estate and other areas. Is all his land registered?)
- Does SALCRA / Estate rent the land for a period of time?

Do you have land included in the plantation area?

- How much?
- How much of your land is not in the plantation?

Is it possible to withdraw your land from the scheme and return to growing other crops?

- How is it done?

Do you have a right to get a job on the Estate?

- Are you entitled to a job on the plantation?
- Do the local population have a favoured position for getting jobs on the plantation?

Is the rights to the land fairly distributed?

### **New possibilities in relation to the establishment of the Estate.**

Has the Estate created new possibilities? (Wage labour, education, private enterprise)

- For you, your family, the community?

Has the Estate changed your choice of economic activities?

- Increasing number of new economic possibilities? What?
- Economic activities that are not practised anymore?

Could you tell how the development in the area has been since the Estate started? (transportation, electricity, schools and health services)

- Has this changed your daily life?
- Easier access to markets
- Better health for you and your family
- Education for you and the children
- Increased welfare in general

How has the Estate changed your agricultural activities?

- Introduction of new large - scale cash - crops, (marketing possibilities, storage and extension services)
- Decreasing opportunities practising shifting cultivation

### **Social changes.**

Has the establishment of the Estate given any social changes?

- In the family?
- In the local community / longhouse?
- On a regional level?

Has the establishment of the plantation changed the relationships between the household members?

Could you tell us how these changes take place / shows (does the youngsters move away earlier, more marriages (less?), more immigrants, people from other parts of Malaysia, the role of the headman / elders)

Could you or other members of the household think of moving permanently to town to work?

- Are you more likely to go to town now, than before?

How do you experience the relationship between the original residents and the resettled people?

1) (to a young person) Are your life different from that of your parents? How?  
• Do you think the development of the area is the prime cause?

2) (to an old person) What do the young people want / expect today?  
• Is it different from 20 years ago?  
• Do you think the development of the area is the prime cause?

How is your relationship to the Indonesian immigrants?

### **Economic changes.**

What kind of products do you buy? (Why?)

Do you go to town more often than you did before? Why? (Do you sell or buy)

Has the local market for food and other necessities changed after the establishment of the plantation / dam?

Do you have more expenses today than before? To what? Taxes, health, school, electricity, fuel, transportation, agricultural inputs, food etc.

How is your wealth today compared to before the establishment of the plantation?

- Economically?
- Arable land?
- Other resources?

### **Future.**

What plans do you have for your household in the future?

- Employment
- Agriculture
- Residence

What kind of future do you want for your children?

- Education
- Agriculture (inheritance of the family land)

## **Appendix 4**

### **Final interview Guide**

#### **Topics:**

When did the cooperation with SALCRA start?

How did the cooperation with SALCRA start?

What is the purpose of SALCRA?

What are the conditions required of the participants?

How does the cooperation with SALCRA work, and how about the future?

#### **Key Questions:**

Who owns the land?

Who knows about the loans?

Who decides what to plant?

Is there a 25 year period with SALCRA?

What were you promised?

What did you get?

Was SESCO or SALCRA responsible for the resettlement?

## Appendix 5

### Former time schedule for the field stay in Middle Batang Ai, Sarawak

- Longhouse A: A Longhouse which has been in the area before the Project was started.
- Longhouse B: A Longhouse that has been resettled because of the construction of the dam.

5/10-98	Arrival Kuching
6/10 98	Interview with the responsible Manager from SALCRA in Kuching.
7/10-98	Arrival at the Oil Palm Plantation.
8/10-98	Interview with the SALCRA representative at the Oil Palm Plantation during a walk in the area
9/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse A	<u>Morning:</u> An Interview with an elderly male from longhouse A who primary practice shifting cultivation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with an elderly woman from the same longhouse who has the same kind of preferences.
10/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse A	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with an elderly male from longhouse A who primary work in the Plantation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An Interview with an elderly woman who has the same kind of preferences.
11/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse A	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with a young male from longhouse A who primary spend his time practising shifting cultivation in his own fields. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with a young female who has the same kind of preferences.
12/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse A	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with a young male from longhouse A who primary work in the Plantation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with a young female who has the same kind of preferences.
13/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse B	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with an elderly male from longhouse B who primary practise shifting cultivation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with an elderly woman from the same longhouse who has the same kind of preferences.
14/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse B	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with an elderly male from longhouse B who primary work in the Plantation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with an elderly woman who has the same kind of preferences.
15/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse B	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with a young male from longhouse B who primary practise shifting cultivation in his own fields. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with a young female who has the same kind of preferences.
16/10-98 Interviews in Longhouse B	<u>Morning:</u> An interview with a young male from longhouse B who primary work in the Plantation. <u>Afternoon:</u> An interview with a young female who has the same kind of preferences.
17/10-98	Interviews with some members from Longhouse A or B who represent the longhouse in negotiation with the Plantation manager.
18/10-98	Interview with the Estate manager (only if it is necessary, and if we have some further questions).
19/10-98	An interview with some of the immigrant workers from Indonesia.

## Appendix 6

### Ranking table of Merindun

#### Group interview with five women in Merindun

	School/ Education	Paddy	Plantation Work	Migration Work	Pepper/ Rubber	Total
School/ Education	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	5 S.E.	5 S.E.	5 S.E.	5 S.E.	20
Paddy	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	5 P.W.	3 R. / 2 M.W.	3 P.R./ 2 R.	5
Plantation Work	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	3 P.W. / 2. M. W.	4 P.W. / 1 P.R.	12
Migration Work	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	2 M.W. / 3 P. R.	6
Pepper/ Rubber	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	7

## Appendix 7

### Ranking table of Sebeliau

#### Single farmer in Sebeliau

	Paddy	Pepper/Own Oil Palms	Plantation Work	Migration Work	School/ Education	Building House	T o t a l
Paddy	XXX	P./O.	R.	R.	S.E.	R.	3
Pepper/ Own Oil Palms	XXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	P./O.	P./O.	S.E.	B.H.	3
Plantation Work	XXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	P.W.	S.E.	B.H.	1
Migrant Work	XXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	S.E.	B.H.	0
School/ Education	XXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	S.E.	5
Building House	XXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	3

## Appendix 8

### Ranking Table of Telaus

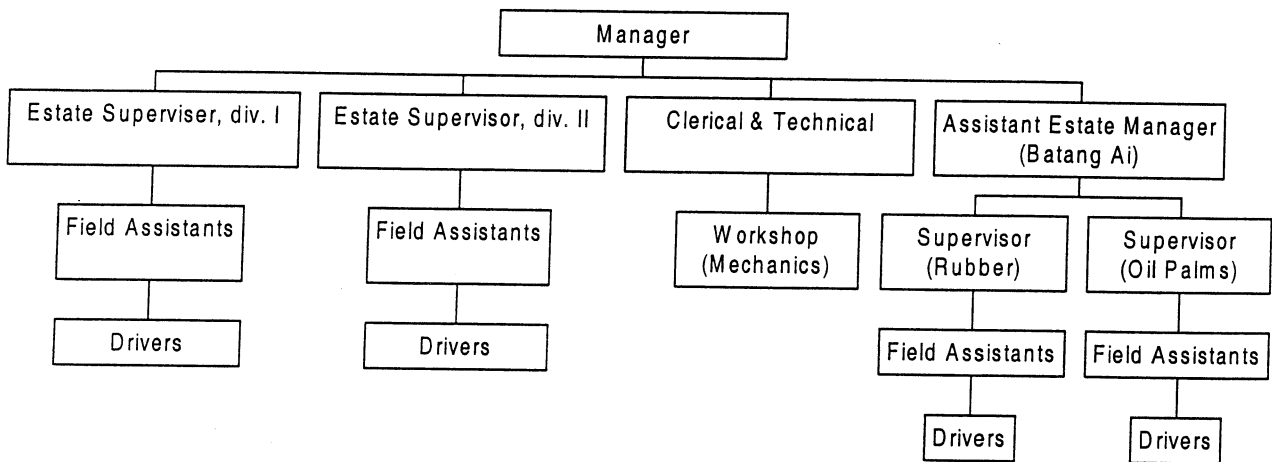
#### Group Interview with five women in Telaus

	Paddy	Pepper	Oil/Rubber	School/ Education	Work at home	Migration Work	Total
Paddy	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	4 R.	4 R.	4 S.E.	4 R.	4 M.W.	12
Pepper	XXXXXXX	XXXXX	4 P.	4 S.E.	4 P.	4 M.W.	8
Oil/Rubber	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX	4 S.E.	4 O./R.	4 M.W.	4
School/ Education	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	4 S.E.	4 S.E.	20
Work at home	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXX XXXX	4 M.W.	0
Migration Work	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXX XXXXXXX	XXXX XXXX	XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX	16

## Appendix 9

### The structure of Lemanak Oil Palm Estate Scheme, and the organisation of SALCRA

#### The structure of Lemanak Oil Palm Estate



#### The organisation of SALCRA

