

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

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Abstract

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

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

1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

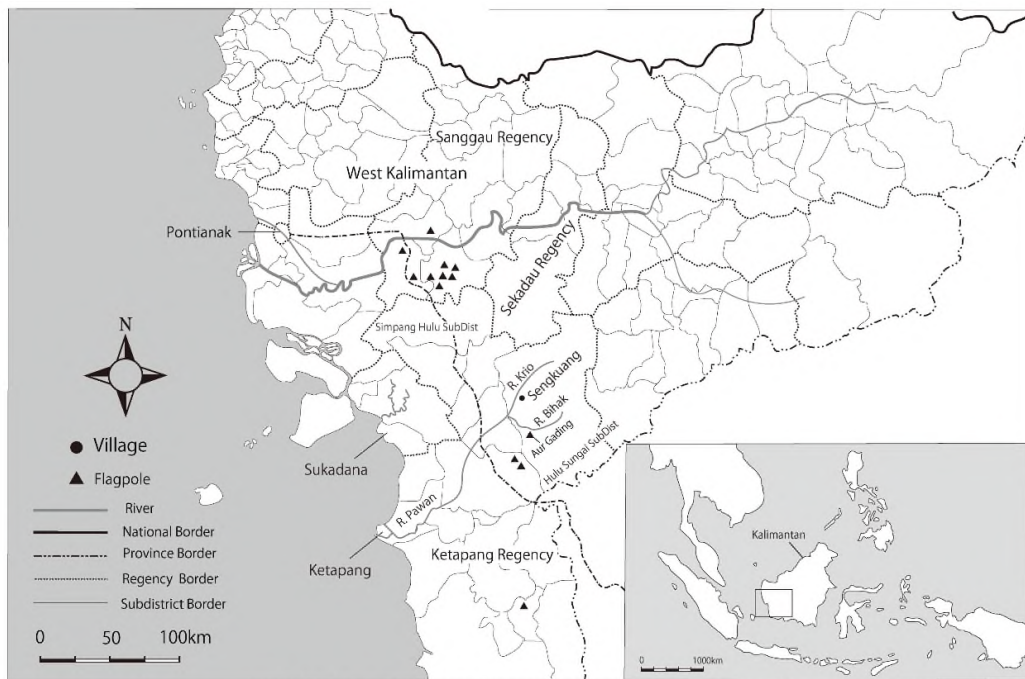
The Ulu Ai' resides at Sengkuang, Banua Krio village, Hulu Sungai subdistrict, Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan (Map 1). Sengkuang is a Dayak hamlet of about five hundred people. The Ulu Ai' is the custodian of sacred regalia called *Bosi Koling Tongkat Raya'at* ('yellow iron and staff supporting the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

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

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

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

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



created by the author based on Geoportal Pemerintah Provinsi Kalimantan Barat_Batas_Kecamatan_Jan 2019

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

2. Marginalization and indigenous movements

2.1. The marginalization of the Dayak people

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

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

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

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

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

This Dayak ascendancy continued to gain momentum even after the Dutch reorganized the independence of Indonesia in 1949.² The introduction of parliamentary democracy under Soekarno's presidency led to the elevation of the Dayak political elites, many of whom occupied seats in local both provincial and regency parliaments. The PD, the leading party in the provincial parliament at that time, appointed Oevang Oeray, a local Dayak from the upper Kapuas area, as the first governor of West Kalimantan in 1959 (Tanasaldy 2012: 103). However, the introduction of parliamentary democracy also led to fierce competition between political parties and paralysed the Soekarno administration. In late 1959, Soekarno proclaimed the concept of Guided Democracy and centralized the regime to reconsolidate his power (ibid.: 109). Because presidential decree No. 7/1959 banned the activities of regional political parties in order to suppress regionalism, the PD was forced to disband,³ and former PD members had to join the national parties instead (ibid.: 111-2). Because of the Soekarno regime's centralizing activities, the momentum of Dayak ethnic nationalism greatly declined.

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

² The NICA transferred western Kalimantan to the United States of Indonesia, which was thereafter dissolved and became the Republic of Indonesia in 1950 (Davidson 2008: 39).

³ Penetapan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 1959 Tentang Syarat-syarat dan Penyederhanaan Kepartaian.

⁴ Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 1967 Tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Kehutanan.

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

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

2.2. Claiming sovereignty as Masyarakat Adat

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

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

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

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

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

⁵ See Profil Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), <https://www.aman.or.id/profil-aliansi-masyarakat-adat-nusantara> (accessed 21 August 2021).

⁶ Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 32 Tahun 2004 Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah, and Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 1999 Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah.

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

3. The hybrid polity of the Ulu Ai'

3.1. The Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh and the kerajaan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2. Asserting sovereignty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo 1. Flagpole planted by the Ulu Ai'

4. The multiple articulations of the hybrid polity

4.1. The Desa Sembilan Domong Sepuluh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2. Rituals at the flagpoles

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3. Articulating the 'sovereign' kingdom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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