

Public Abstract

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Title:Patterns of Local Mobility in an Iban Community of West Kalimantan Indonesia

This study examines the mobility patterns of the West Kalimantan Iban community of Sungai Sedik, a small, subsistence-oriented society, in which groups and individuals use complex resource networks in order to satisfy physical and social needs. Mobility is defined as the capacity or ability to move over a landscape. The study focuses on the following questions: (1) Where and how often did people travel? (2) At what time during the observed year did people travel? (3) Are there differences in travel patterns, dependent upon gender and age? (4) What are the relationships between the visited and the visitor, and how do the relationships affect the frequency and purpose of travel episodes? (5) How do social relationships affect travel for exchange? Dr. Reed Wadley of the University of Missouri-Columbia, detailed the movement of one Iban longhouse community by conducting a local mobility study among the thirteen households between April/May of 1993 and February/March of 1994.

The observations indicated that groups and individuals most often traveled in close proximity to the longhouse and more frequently during periods in which additional resources were necessary and at times of low labor demands. Those who traveled were generally 16 years of age or older and most often female, and the relationships between the visited and visitor were most often close kin relationships, making the exchange of resources extremely important.

This study illustrates the importance of the relationship between the mobility patterns of the Sungai Sedik community and their network of natural, economic, and social resources.