

the photographs show the museum buildings and galleries, providing fascinating glimpses into changing methods and agendas in research and display over the decades. In the text, meanwhile, the decision to foreground the biographies of significant actors means that less attention is given to the influence of wider museological and scientific trends on the collection over time, even as these influences emerge so evocatively from the visual sources presented in the book. Nonetheless, one hopes that the extensive source material compiled here might aid further analysis of the historical development of natural history collecting and exhibition in Singapore in the future.

*Of Whales and Dinosaurs* provides a solid introduction to Singapore's natural history collection, and to the island-state's often fraught relationship with its heritage and environment. Although some facets of the collection's story would have benefited from further exploration, the book makes an attractive and engaging companion to the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj31-21

*For Better or For Worse: Marriage and Family in Sarawak*. Edited by Hew Cheng Sim. London: Whiting & Birch, 2015. x+218 pp.

The sociocultural diversity of Borneo offers a kaleidoscope of comparative research possibilities, and yet there is a surprising

lack of studies that consider and compare the effects of structural transformation on family and marriage relations amongst Borneo's diverse sociocultural groups. The current volume helps to fill this lacuna. Under the editorship of Hew Cheng Sim, the contributors to *For Better or for Worse: Marriage and Family in Sarawak* provide a wide-ranging discussion of the transformation experienced in the marriages and families of several of Sarawak's ethnic and religious communities — Chinese, Iban, Malay and Orang Ulu, and Buddhist, Christian and Muslim. This is not the first interdisciplinary, comparative volume that Hew has edited; in many ways, *For Better or for Worse* is a companion to her earlier edited volume, *Village Mothers, City Daughters: Women Experiencing Urbanisation in Sarawak* (2007).

As with many edited volumes, there is a patchiness in this book's coverage. Not all possible topics relating to family and marriage are covered or consistently treated for all groups studied. The contributors have been given scope to select what they see as pertinent issues, on the basis of their disciplinary backgrounds and research interests. The upside of this approach is that chapters are generally of a high standard, and there are some unexpected finds, such as chapters on the cultural implications of snack food (Baylor) and language usage in multilingual households (Ting and Sim).

In her introduction, Hew notes the dearth of recent research on the family and marriage in Borneo studies. The contemporary period has not generated research equal to that produced by an earlier generation of anthropologists, such as Derek Freeman, Jerome Rousseau and Victor King. Her review of this literature, however, highlights the critical need to revisit the themes of family and marriage in light of the far-reaching social transformation in Sarawak's urban and rural settings over the past forty to fifty years. The chapters that follow are important for charting both the breadth of social change and the adjustments within and the convergence across sociocultural groups.

There are ten principal chapters. Three discuss marriage and divorce: Aishah Edris's overview of marriage and divorce statistics; Hew Cheng Sim's and Goy Siew Ching's qualitative study of

Chinese, *bumiputera* and Indian men's and women's levels of marital satisfaction and their views on divorce and polygamy; and Lucy Sebli's account of contemporary Iban marriage and divorce practices, with particular attention to increases in rates of short-lived marriage, polygamy and divorce. The persistence of gender inequality in marriages is the theme of two chapters. The first, by Goy, considers women's continued high levels of involvement in domestic work, despite their increasing participation in the labour force. After elucidating a number of theoretical perspectives on the unequal domestic division of labour, Goy carefully dissects her data to theorize about the case of Sarawak. Lynn Wee's contribution on gender relations and money reveals women's unequal power in relation to money. The chapter makes for fascinating reading, as Wee reveals husbands' and wives' explanations for their secretiveness about finances and for concealing money from their spouse.

The experiences of young women figure in the chapters by Elena Chai and Dayang Asmah bt. Awang Hamdan. Chai presents two case studies of young brides living in a close-knit Hakka community characterized by strong family bonds, patrilineal descent and traditional values, such as the importance of sons. Dayang Asmah's chapter considers young urban Malay women's views on dating, courtship and the qualities looked for in a husband. Young women engage in a delicate balancing act between seeking greater freedom in spouse selection, dating and courtship, on the one hand, and their desire to comply with Islamic mores, on the other. Their expectations of a good husband reflect not only this religiosity, but also the demands of consumer capitalism and their own pursuit of economic autonomy.

The final three chapters focus on children, language and social mobility. Elizabeth Elliott Baylor provides a sophisticated discussion of the changing food habits of Malay children resulting from the availability of cheap manufactured snack food. Snack food is outside the symbolic performance of kinship through the eating of home-cooked food. Children's preference for snack food suggests the possible weakening of Malay cultural associations between food and blood, as well as a form of agency amongst children who use

snack food to signal their separateness from adult food-centred identities. Su-Hie Ting and Edmund Ui-Hang Sim offer a picture of the increasing homogenization of language in families, relating to intermarriage. Case studies help to explicate some of the factors that contribute to this loss of language diversity, as families increasingly favour Bahasa Malaysia, English and Mandarin. Richard E. Schatz's chapter focusses on intergenerational mobility. Schatz was a teacher in the newly opened Lawas District Government Secondary School in the 1960s, and his study compares socio-economic mobility across three generations — the original cohort of secondary school students, their children and their children's children. It is a valuable approach, one that sketches the profound economic and demographic transformations experienced in Lawas over this period, while documenting the trend in upward social mobility among Malay, Chinese and Lun Bawang families.

The volume will make a much needed contribution to the understanding of those interested in marital, familial and gender relations in Sarawak and on Borneo more generally. The combination of empirical research and theoretically informed investigation evident in several chapters is also of broader relevance to the contemporary study and theorization of marriage and the family in Southeast Asia. Other, more descriptive chapters make the book an excellent undergraduate reference for the study of social change in Southeast Asian societies. In particular, chapters employing a comparative approach usefully demonstrate how broader processes of social change can lead to diverse outcomes — even within the one society.

#### REFERENCE

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