

and social solidarity that appear in many other kinds of societies only in evanescent millenarian movements or as utopian ideals.

The volume is based on a project that was conceived by Charles Macdonald and Kenneth Sillander in February 2008 during a discussion of a presentation by Macdonald at the University of Helsinki (Macdonald 2008). Most of the essays were first presented in a session entitled “Sources of Solidarity in Open-Aggregated Communities,” which was organized and chaired by Thomas Gibson at the annual meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, held in Chicago in March 2009. The concept of open aggregation, referring to the ease whereby social relations and groups in societies with anarchic solidarity characteristically are formed and dissolved, served as a key concept enabling the development of anarchic solidarity as a common analytical focus among the contributors to the volume.

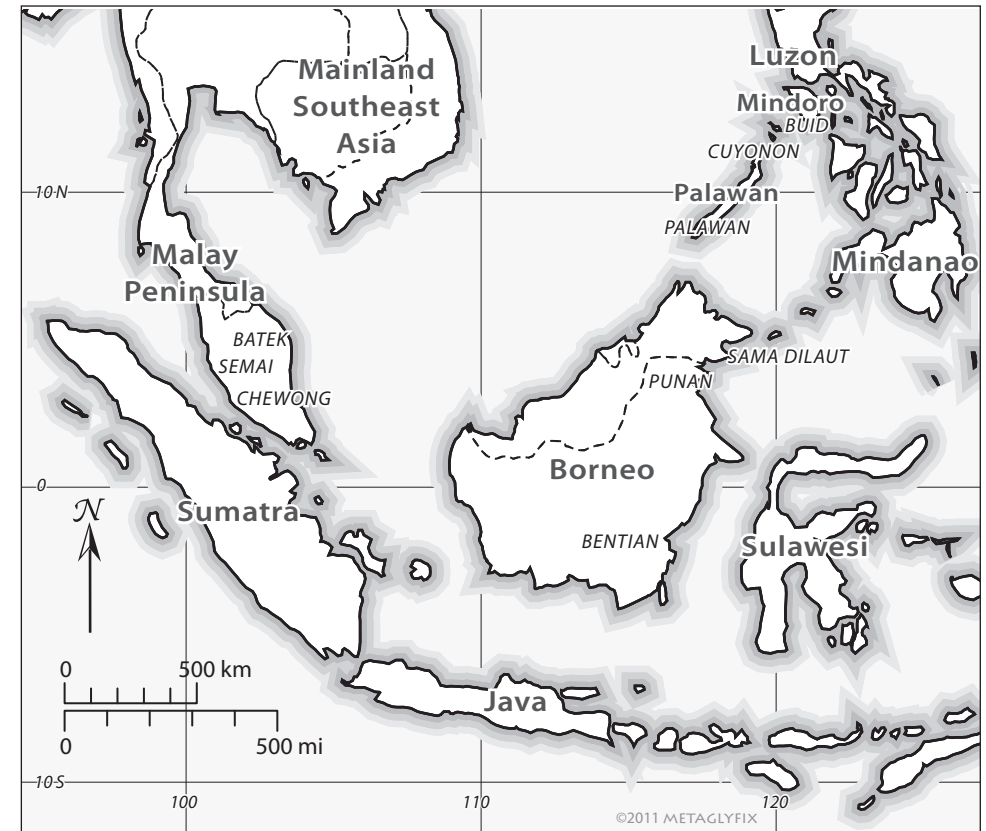
In this introduction, we will provide a summary of the contribution that each of the chapters makes to our general argument and then situate our volume in relation to other theoretical traditions that draw on the concepts of anarchy and anarchism to analyze certain forms of social organization.



The theoretical overview provided in chapter 1 by Charles Macdonald outlines the internal logic of our argument. He presents the principal sources of solidarity identified by the contributors in the different societies studied and the principal mechanisms whereby they perpetuate themselves through time. He identifies three clusters of factors accounting for this, which are centered on the concept of sharing; on kinship and child care; and on a category of values relating to ethics, ideology, and ontology. He argues that these societies lack so many of the institutions once thought to be essential to the functioning of any society—corporate groups, debt and reciprocity, authority and ranking—that it might be better not to describe them as “societies” operating according to “social” principles at all.

The next two chapters, by Signe Howell and Kirk Endicott, provide detailed ethnographic analyses of two groups of hunter-gatherers living on the Malay Peninsula who provide classic exemplars of the sort of anarchic solidarity found among “immediate-return” hunter-gatherers elsewhere in Asia and Africa. The authors stress the ways in which principles of inter-

Map 1 Location of peoples discussed in this volume



personal conduct and the cosmological beliefs and practices of the Chewong and Batek of the Malay Peninsula inculcate compassion for fellow humans and respect for the animal and spirit worlds as central social values.

In chapter 2, Signe Howell explores how Chewong personal and social interaction is predicated on their metaphysical and ontological understanding. With no formal political system and an egalitarian ethos that values autonomy, they also display a profound sense of communality—the outer boundary of which coincides with their animated forest environment in which humans and “spirits” stand in a continuous exchange relationship. Sources of solidarity may be traced to this shared perception of the universe and a number of rules that govern behavior. These have moral connotations, and the sharing of all forest produce is the paramount rule. The chapter concludes with a consideration of threats to the previous grammar of social