



MONASH University

**TÁPUN AND TOURISM:
A Case Study from the Dusun Sungai Community**

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Abstract

The Dusun Sungai is among the poorest indigenous groups in Malaysia. These people, who live in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, have lost some of their traditional lands through forestry and agriculture, and this has affected the people's livelihood. In response, the Malaysian Government encouraged tourism development in the region to broaden the base of the economy and to provide indigenous people with a source of livelihood.

Indigenous peoples' involvement in tourism is challenging. There tends to be an uneven distribution of benefits. This thesis was inspired by a vision that indigenous knowledge may contribute to tourism and at the same time to the sustainability of the environment. However, indigenous knowledge tends to be lost in tourism contexts, either because it is overlooked, or because it is misrepresented in the process of commodification. I sought to explore what occurred to Dusun Sungai knowledge in a tourism environment.

I undertook a field survey in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands over a six-week period during September and October 2012. During this period I stayed in variety of accommodation services including hostels, homestays, bed and breakfast establishments, and lodges. I also undertook several tourism activities, including river cruises, jungle trekking, and attended performances. Thirty-four people were interviewed, including service providers, and tourists. Overall, this thesis uses participant observation, interviews, archival and historical records to explore this issue.

The Dusun Sungai people of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands have been involved in tourism for a very long time. I argue that the Dusun Sungai people were rendered invisible when tourism was developed in this region. Tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has generally emphasized the natural attractions of the region, while the products emphasizing cultural attractions have been based on a different ethnic group. The emphasis on nature-based tourism and culture-based tourism do not enable the Dusun Sungai people to express their knowledge, as they must rely on Western taxonomies and categorizations to communicate in a sight-seeing context. However, I found some interesting yet ordinary spaces in which tourists and indigenous people engage with each other, and in these ordinary spaces of engagement, indigenous knowledge may be exchanged, enriching the perspective of both tourist and host through a fusion of horizons. The contextual ground for this exchange is an indigenous concept of hospitality known as *tápun*. For the Dusun Sungai people, this approach to hospitality has been the bedrock of their relationship with foreigners over hundreds of years, and provides the basis for an ethical relationship that enables indigenous knowledge to be communicated.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

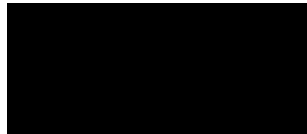
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Dedication

For as long as I can remember, communication had been a point of interest to me because it communications help form a relationship and people. My interest grew in the light that people and their relationships change for better or worse through communications. While there have been many ideas and notions about it, none acted so profoundly as the hospitality that I experienced. Hospitality had provided me the platform to know science and humanities; it had provided me the tool to understand society and its relationships. I dedicate this thesis to a few people that are close and dear to me. Firstly, I dedicate this thesis to my parents Mr. R.A Peters and Mdm. Dolly Wong @ Among were for their understanding to my endeavour to seek out the truth about hospitality and how it shapes a person and their comprehension about life. Secondly, I dedicate this thesis to my wife Nelly Tingkui for her patience. Last but not least, I dedicate this thesis to my children Wilynda Frances Peters, Wheltrina Kelly Peters and Ryan Oliver Peters for their love, in the hope that this thesis might enlighten their life.

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The focus in this thesis lies in the Kinabatangan region and on the subject of hospitality. However, support for this thesis was given to me in many places of Sabah-Malaysia and Victoria-Australia and from a number of disciplines; this project would not have existed without the support from those in Kinabatangan, Kota Kinabalu and Melbourne. Hence, I would like to thank many individuals and organizations for their support and kindness during the years it took to undertake this thesis.

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Contents

List of Figures	x
List of Tables	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xiv
Introduction.....	1
Tourism and indigeneity in Sabah	3
Indigenous identity and the Dusun Sungai in Sabah.....	11
Indigenous hospitality as a solution.....	16
The research project	20
Study method	23
Chapter outline.....	28
Chapter 1 Literature Review and Theoretical Approach.....	31
1.1 Tourism and indigenous knowledge.....	31
1.2 The study of tourism.....	31
1.2.1 Approaches to tourism research.....	34
1.3 Tourism and indigenous peoples	38
1.3.1 Indigenous tourism in Malaysia.....	40
1.3.2 Benefit sharing and indigenous peoples engagement in tourism	42
1.3.3 Limitation of cultural authenticity in tourism as an issue.....	47
1.4 Indigenous knowledge.....	51
1.4.1 Knowledge communication	57
1.5 Cross-cultural communication and its influences on indigenous tourism.....	60
1.5.1 Hospitality and its communication	64
1.6 Theoretical approach	67
Chapter 2 Dusun Sungai People	71
2.1 Introduction	71
2.2 The location of the research.....	73
2.3 The Dusun Sungai in academic literature.....	77
2.4 The origins of the Dusun Sungai	82
2.4.1 Chinese traders and their influence on Dusun Sungai culture	83
2.4.2 Outside influences on religion and political structure	84
2.5 The development of the Dusun Sungai's people contemporary socio- political identity.....	85
2.6 Cultural uniqueness of the native Dusun Sungai people	91

2.6.1	Sharing resources	93
2.6.2	Social structure of the Dusun Sungai community	94
2.6.3	Ecological knowledge.....	96
2.6.4	Beliefs of the Dusun Sungai community	97
2.6.5	Festivals	99
2.6.6	Costume	100
2.6.7	The Dusun Sungai community's economic activities revolves around the exploitation of their natural heritage	101
2.7	Current economic status of the Dusun Sungai community	108
2.8	The need to maintain the relevancy of indigenous knowledge	109
2.9	Conclusion	111
Chapter 3	Development of Tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.....	113
3.1	Introduction	113
3.2	The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands as a tourism destination	114
3.2.1	Tourists of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands	117
3.2.2	Recognition of Kinabatangan's tourism packages	120
3.3	Tourism development at Lower the Kinabatangan Wetlands	122
3.3.1	Mass tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands	129
3.3.2	Dusun Sungai involvement in mass tourism	133
3.4	New approaches to Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism	135
3.4.1	Ecotourism and the Dusun Sungai.....	136
3.4.2	Culture tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.....	142
3.5	Conclusion.....	145
Chapter 4	The Impact of Tourism on Dusun Sungai People, their Knowledge and Culture 147	
4.1	Introduction	147
4.2	Dusun Sungai attitudes towards tourism	149
4.2.1	Tourism is positively accepted when it provides better opportunities	150
4.2.2	Tourism is favourable when it improves the social status of a group	153
4.2.3	Sensitivity about the environment	154
4.3	Identity and tourism.....	155
4.3.1	Dusun Sungai could be portrayed as people belonging to the Malay ethnic group	156
4.3.2	Homestay and bed and breakfast businesses	156
4.3.3	Indigenous ecological knowledge is not used	164
4.4	A standardized tourism.....	166
4.5	Conclusion.....	171
Chapter 5	Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands Tourism's Communication and Consumption	175

5.1	Introduction	175
5.2	The materiality of indigenous knowledge	176
5.3	The communicative condition in tourism.....	180
5.3.1	Tourism information is gathered in stages.....	181
5.3.2	The program of a tourist package	185
5.3.3	The communication between a guide and a tourist	188
5.4	The communication of indigenous knowledge.....	195
5.5	The contexts of understanding: Tourism's spaces.....	199
5.6	Conclusion	204
Chapter 6	<i>Tápun</i> as an Indigenous Concept of Hospitality	207
6.1	Introduction	207
6.2	Literature on indigenous knowledge excludes a knowledge of tourism	211
6.3	Tourism, hospitality, and the concept of <i>tápun</i>	214
6.3.1	Theoretical approaches to hospitality	217
6.3.2	Dusun Sungai and hospitality	220
6.4	Authentic 'indigenous tourism' occurs within Dusun Sungai spaces	224
6.5	Conditions under which hospitality exists.....	226
6.5.1	Comfort and safety	227
6.5.2	Hospitality during introduction.....	229
6.5.3	Hospitality during a tour.....	229
6.5.4	Hospitality at the end of a trip	230
6.6	Reciprocation, homage, and vulnerability.....	231
6.6.1	Reciprocation	231
6.6.2	Homage.....	232
6.6.3	Vulnerability	232
6.7	The possibilities for a fusion of horizon.....	234
6.8	Conclusion.....	236
Chapter 7	Final remarks.....	240
Appendices	248
A.	Basic Interview Schedule	248
B.	MOCAT's Local Tourist Guide Examiner Appointment letter for the Kinabatangan region.....	249
C.	Explanatory Statement.....	250
D.	Consent Form	252
E.	Research Ethics Approval	253
F.	List of interviewees	254
Bibliography	255

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Butler's model for the tourism destination's evolution (Source: Butler 1980)	35
Figure 1.2: The different knowledge systems of indigenous knowledge compiled from Bukurura (1995), Magga (2005), Masoga (2007), and Tongkul (2002).....	56
Figure 2.1. (a) Location of the District of Kinabatangan, and (b) location of some villages along the Kinabatangan River (source: WWF-Malaysia, 2015).....	73
Figure 2.2. An illustrated map of Sabah denoting its indigenous groups (Source: Tongkul, 2002)	74
Figure 2.4. "Borneo 1937 Poster" (1937), Retrieved on August 29, 2015, from http://safarimuseum.com/gallery/#/SILVER+SCREEN+SAFARIS/borneo_reprint_poster.jpg . Copyright by Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum. Reprinted with permission.	81
Figure 2.5. Photographs of a Dusun Sungai man holding a blowpipe standing next to Osa Johnson, and Dusun Sungai children (Source: North Borneo History Society, 2013)	82
Figure 2.3. Ethnic groups in Sabah	89
Figure 2.6. Traditional costumes of native Dusun Sungai. (Source: Sabah Cultural Board, 2012)	100
Figure 2.7. (a) <i>Bubu</i> , and (b) floating empty bottles as a marker where a <i>bubu</i> is placed taken during a riverine cruise in search of elephants	104
Figure 2.8. (a) <i>Gegolog</i> , and (b) a setup inside Gomantong Cave during bird's nest harvesting (Source: Sabah Tourism Board)	105
Figure 2.9. Photograph taken during the field survey of a bird's nest farm/building located just outside of the Bilit Village.....	106
Figure 3.1. Evolution of the tourism cycle of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands; Ecotourism/Green Line, Community Tourism/Orange Line, Mass Tourism/Brown Line, Indigenous Tourism/Black Line.....	116
Figure 3.2. Uncle Tan's experience (source: http://www.uncletan.com/)	124
Figure 3.3. Popular places on tour to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. (a) feeding Platform A at Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center, (b) an illustration of Gomantong Cave, (c) Batu Tulug, and (d) An oxbow lake along the Kinabatangan River.....	126
Figure 3.4. Tour brochures for Wildlife Expeditions Pte Ltd: before 1998 (left) and 1999-2000 (right).	127

Figure 3.5. An information stone about the Gomantong Cave placed at the front of the old Sabah Wildlife Department's Gomantong Station.	129
Figure 3.6. A photograph taken from inside Agop Batu Tulug (Source: Rabini, 2006)	130
Figure 3.7. Photographs of the Agop Batu Puteh visitors' centre, facilities and burial site.	130
Figure 3.8. (a) A Borneo Eco Tours Pte Ltd Boat anchored in the city of Sandakan, with orange personal flotation devices as per required by authorities, (b) tour coach parked at the Gomantong Caves Visitor's centre denoted by the green colour strip on the body and the word <i>Bus Persiaran</i>	131
Figure 3.9. During the field survey, tourists' relationship with the environment was noted through activities such as jungle trekking and boat cruises.	136
Figure 3.10. Open spaces of a tourism facility are used as plant nurseries.	140
Figure 3.11. Signs showing the direction of several bed and breakfasts at Sukau Village.	142
Figure 3.12. A Sukau village house that participates in the Malaysian homestay program.	144
Figure 4.1. Photograph of a poster of the Malay community as migrants in Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that was taken at the Sandakan Heritage Museum.	156
Figure 4.2. Front and back cover of the Malaysia Homestay Program book	157
Figure 4.3. (a) Standardised Malaysian tourism greeting, (b) Green striped Malaysian tour buses, and (c) the official Malaysia Homestay Program logo	161
Figure 4.4. Slippers and shoes placed at the bottom of a staircase is claimed as Malay culture and promoted to tourists.....	163
Figure 4.5. Feedback form obtained from a tourism facility operating in the Bilit Village.	168
Figure 5.1. A postcard published by Borneo Ecotours Pte Ltd of elephants crossing the Kinabatangan River.....	181
Figure 5.2. A foreigner's stages of obtaining tourism information.	182
Figure 5.3. A photograph of a typical daily tourism itinerary in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that was taken from a tour operator outlet at Sukau village, Kinabatangan.	186
Figure 5.4. General grouping of tourism activities in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands ...	188

Figure 5.5. Tourists photographing a small bird resting at the end of a tree trunk known as the Oriental Darter Kingfisher.	190
Figure 5.6. Books found at the research location.....	192
Figure 5.7. Indigenous boatman.....	193
Figure 5.8. Photograph of tourists in their preferred attire and boots provided by the Dusun Sungai.	196
Figure 5.9. Popular mass tourism dishes: (a) deep fried freshwater prawn, <i>udang galah</i> ; and (b) stir-fried Sabah Vege	200
Figure 5.10. Tourism related spaces between the Dusun Sungai community and tourists of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.....	203
Figure 6.1. Sketch of what Creagh saw (Source: Creagh, 1897).....	207
Figure 6.2. Photography of people posing (a) taken by the Johnsons in 1937 (Source: http://safarimuseum.com/gallery/#/SILVER+SCREEN+SAFARIS/borneo_reprint_poster.jpg . Copyright by Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum. Reprinted with permission); and (b) taken by tourists on location in 2012 (Source: Sukau Rainforest Lodge).....	216
Figure 6.3. In this handicraft, on the left, there is a betel nut container and its cutter, tobacco rolls, a copper container with white-coloured slaked lime in the centre, and green pepper leaves.	221
Figure 6.4. Actions of sharing in the host-guest relationship in a Bilit Homestay	225
Figure 6.5. Boots and personal flotation devices (i.e., lifejackets) placed on the railing of lodges to dry.....	228

List of Tables

Table 2.1. General information about Batu Putih, Bilit, Manggaris and Sukau villages.....	76
Table 2.2. Fishing techniques of the Dusun Sungai people	103
Table 3.1. Types of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourists.....	119
Table 3.2. Evidence of Ecotourism at the Lower Kinabatangan	138
Table 3.3. Homestays at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands	144
Table 6.1. Gudykunst's typology of the host-stranger relationship (source: Gudykunst (1983)).....	218

List of Abbreviations

KiTA	Kinabatangan Corridor of Life Tourism Association
KOCP	Kinabatangan OrangUtan Conservation Project
KOPEL	Koperasi Pelancongan Mukim Batu Puteh Kinabatangan Berhad (Batu Puteh Sub-district Tourism Cooperative Ltd)
NBCC	North Borneo Chartered Company
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
Pte Ltd	Private and Limited (In Malay <i>Sendirian Berhad</i>)
STB	Sabah Tourism Board
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
UN	United Nations
WWF-Mal	World Wide Fund for Nature - Malaysia

Introduction

Danny Chew is an owner of one of the few, and longest surviving, family-business tourism companies in Sabah Malaysia - the Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd. Chew was among the first tourism operators to bring tourism to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. This was in 1982. As a non-indigenous person, that is, Chinese, and trained as an agriculturalist, he knew the necessity of engaging with indigenous individuals in a rural project; engaging indigenous people reduces certain external costs because local and traditional knowledge can be tapped. Mr. Mohamed Idrus, is a Moslem Dusun Sungai individual who acts somewhat as the Batu Puteh village headman. He is caretaker of an ancient burial site at the top of a limestone outcrop that is now under the care of the Sabah State Museum, known as Agop Batu Tulug Museum. Idrus was Chew's tourism counterpart. Idrus came on board Chew's project, and together they brought small groups of foreign tourists on environmental and cultural trips around the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Chew and Idrus' tourism project had mutual interests, and their guests took up tourism activities without any sense of expectations; to the tourists, they were with their hosts on an adventure where nothing could be anticipated or expected. Burial site visits, fishing, river cruising, wildlife spotting, jungle tracking, environmental interpretation, and living with Dusun Sungai families all came together creatively as a satisfying experience both for the guests whom are experiencing the Dusun Sungai culture and the hosts whom are sharing their knowledge and skills. This Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd product was awarded the Malaysian Tourism Gold Award for the Best Tour Package for 1991, and it laid grounds for other tourism development, including homestay activities.

Many years later, in an attempt to expand the opportunities that tourism could provide, Chew sought help from tourism authorities within the Malaysian government. The tourism authorities were convinced of the socio-economic potential that tourism could bring to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Zulkornian from Sabah's office of the Malaysia Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (currently known as the Malaysia Ministry of Tourism and Culture), supported Chew's idea by ensuring the development of tourism-related socio-economic instruments such as specialized courses for indigenous communities, new tourism packages and services. The first few outcomes of the instruments showed an increase in tourism facilities, tourists' arrivals and the involvement of the Dusun Sungai youth and adults. However, this caused problems.

There were insufficient human resources to accommodate the increase number of tourists that came with the increased popularity of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Outside staff and operators with no ties to the Dusun Sungai community were called in by regional tourism authorities to operate the tourism activities. Eventually, a tourism system was established to meet the volume of tourists and their expectations, but tourists were not always satisfied. High staff turnover at the new tourism facilities began complicating matters, and certain quarters of the Dusun Sungai community began envisioning more authentic approaches. Today, tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is more commercial and less social; the guests do not get the full spectrum of experiences that could be acquired at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands and hosts have limited Dusun Sungai experience or knowledge. By-products of this are the notion that indigenous people are only concerned about the money that tourism could bring to their village and the notion that tourists are not interested in culture but only in the natural environment where indigenous people live. As a result, tourists have begun questioning

the authenticity of indigenous-based tourism products and services and the indigenous people have begun questioning the tourists' intentions for visiting their regions.

This thesis is about the problems of authenticity and tourism intentions. It examines the problems indigenous people encounter in making relationships with tourists and the role of indigenous conceptions of sociability in that process. It inquires into indigenous conceptions that deprive tourists and tourism-providers alike of the value that indigenous tourism potentially affords if not properly incorporated into the tourism experience. The methods of this examination are briefly presented in a later part of this introduction.

Tourism and indigeneity in Sabah

I worked as a Malaysian tourist guide from 1994 to 2001 as a tour guide, and then as a tourism trainer for the Borneo Tourism Institute. While under the Institute, I helped produce the *National Occupational Skills Standard for Nature Guide* and the *Localized Nature Guide* (National Vocational Training Council, 1999), which are still in use today. I currently work as an ecologist at the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation at the University of Malaysia, Sabah. My background in tourism was brought to bear in my research and in a series of publications on the impacts of tourism on the environment. These included *The Impact of Recreational Trail Usage on Forest Ecosystem* (Peters, 2000), a history book about Kinabatangan entitled *Kinabatangan; Nadi Pembangunan Tanah Sabah* (Peters, 2001), and conference papers on indigenous knowledge and tourism e.g. “Is tourism devaluating indigenous knowledge?” (Peters, 2008) and “The modification of natural Rafflesia tourism sites in Ranau, Sabah and its influence on the functional species at those stereotyped habitat” (Peters, 2008). As an indigenous person of Sabah, from the Dusun ethnic group, I have been

interested in exploring how, through tourism, the knowledge of indigenous people might contribute to conservation scientifically and artistically.

Indigenous peoples are frequently distinguished by their ongoing habitation of isolated or geographically-specific locations. From the perspective of the aspirations to industrial development that have been given such high priority in late-developing countries like Malaysia, these regions are often characterized as underdeveloped regions. However, this perspective overlooks the lifeways and civilizations of indigenous peoples occupying such regions in ways that have achieved successful balances between the ecological and human spheres. The distinctiveness of indigenous peoples has, of course, also been characterized by a lack of material, economic and technological prosperity as compared to non-indigenous populations. Socio-economic planners and developers interpret the background differences that indigenous people have as indigenous peoples' weakness. When the regions are marked for development, disputes and clashes emerge between peoples of different socio-economic levels. Although indigenous peoples have their socio-economic concepts, these concepts cannot increase productions that equal those of other peoples. To resolve the disputes and clashes, socio-economic planners and developers believe they need to put everyone on the same socio-economic level; the indigenous peoples needed to be 'modernized' first before their regions can be developed. When trying to create opportunities for indigenous peoples, this interpretation of indigenous peoples as weak leads planners and developers to disregard indigenous peoples' opinions.

These dilemmas of indigeneity and development are encountered in the region occupied by the Dusun Sungai people, a sub-tribe of the indigenous Dusun peoples in Sabah, formally known as the British Crown Colony of North Borneo. The Dusun Sungai people have traditionally been fishers, hunters-gathers and shifting cultivators. They fish the Kinabatangan River and its

oxbow lakes.¹ Their kin groups (*idahan*) have gathered and traded prized birds' nests with Chinese merchants for centuries, and they generally carry out shifting cultivation of yam and paddy in the floodplains of the Kinabatangan River. Between 1882 and 1941, North Borneo was a British protectorate under the sovereign of the British North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC) and a prime site for resources that could be transported along the east-west trade routes. During that period, the company established the Land Proclamation Act of 1885 to regulate native customary land rights (Doolittle, 2003). The company also established schools in the eastern part of North Borneo with the aim of training indigenous people to take up jobs on estate lands. WWII broke out and halted everything. After WWII, the administration of Sabah was revitalized, including the introduction of land administration starting with the State Land Ordinance Act in 1948 which replaced the Land Proclamation Act of 1885. This ordinance divided the region into state land, country land, town land, and native lands opening up the region to alienation and exploitation. While there were some allowances for indigenous possession in the form of native titled lands, communal titles and native reserves (State of Sabah, 1948), the Sabah indigenous peoples were ignorant to the processes that were needed for such possession, which led many indigenous communities to miss out having legal rights to their land. Due to certain geographical conditions, some indigenous lands were shielded from commercial exploitation, while others became sites for conflict. Places inaccessible to loggers were categorized as native areas.

In the 1970s, recognition of indigenous rights began to grow. Today, Sabah's land administrations privilege indigenous peoples with the rights to own state land and the opportunity to claim native customary rights on certain lands. When North Borneo gained its independence in 1963, and later jointly formed the Federation of Malaysia, it depended on its

¹ An oxbow lake is a lake formed out of the natural rerouting of a river.

natural resources for its development and growth. Entrepreneurship was Sabah's approach to development and growth. Many state-linked enterprises took possession of state land, and inevitably encroached onto native customary lands, causing many disputes. While the state-linked enterprises addressed certain disputes, some indigenous communities chose to establish their own corporative enterprise movement. These indigenous communities' movements included cash crop plantations and birds' nest farming. Because some indigenous people saw the corporative enterprises as politically motivated enterprises, they opted to retain their customary approaches. An example of the Dusun Sungai people retaining their customary approaches is the management and harvesting of fish from oxbow lakes; each Dusun Sungai village has its own oxbow lake to fish from, apart from the Kinabatangan River. The choice of the customary approach was based on many factors, one being the successful revival and implementation of a customary approach of managing fish harvesting known as the *tagal*² system. As a result, today, a typical Dusun Sungai individual needs to constantly choose between regulated agricultural systems that are lucrative or customary practices that are culturally sustainable.

Being inhabitants of the famous Kinabatangan Wetlands, the Dusun Sungai community has come into contact with tourists and merchants in the past. As a way to create more opportunities that could modernize the indigenous people, tourism rates highly as a desirable socio-economic undertaking. It does not require great levels of investment, views indigenous authenticity as a valuable asset rather than an undesirable problem, and potentially brings in high returns. The Wetlands are a core asset in this regard, and for many visitors, this is the region's distinctive tourism feature. This distinctiveness is one of the subjects of this thesis. Since foreign tourists tend to seek new experiences and might find it exciting to travel in remote and underdeveloped

² In the Dusun language, *tagal* means "no fishing".

regions, it was easy for planners and developers to appeal to foreign tourists to visit places with an indigenous population. The planners and developers merely needed to increase exposure of the places using generally available narratives. One such narrative is the one that foregrounds the region's remoteness, and projects it as capable of providing unique experiences. This narrative implies an indigenous populace that is invisible in a cultural sense – the tourist visiting the natural environment can do no wrong in cultural terms.

The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is one of Sabah's popular tourism destinations, thanks to the efforts of people like Danny Chew. It is popular among ecotourists because of easy access to unique wildlife such as the endemic proboscis monkey and the Borneo pygmy elephant. In this tourism niche, there are many large-scale resorts to cater to ecotourists, and there are also many bed and breakfast businesses to cater for backpackers. Due to the conservation attention that is placed on the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, two new tourism niches are emerging. The first niche is volunteerism, whereby foreign tourists become volunteers to a cause relating to the environmental condition of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. The second niche is community-based tourism, which presently centres on homestay activities on top of existing environmental-related tourism activities. Each of these niches involves a tourist experience that takes between one to five days. However, some 30 years ago, all the three large tourism niches were once a single tourism product that took between three days to 10 days.

When travelling, tourists consume all sorts of information and experiences. At times, tourists might experience touristic activities or realities that differ from the expectations they obtained from guidebooks, and this can eventually cause tourists to express some dissatisfaction; tourists would be displeased, for example, with inauthenticity. This creates a chain of reactions amongst the tourism providers. Socio-economic planners and developers read and interpret these dissatisfactions as evidence of indigenous peoples' inability to cope with the demands of

the tourism business. To overcome tourists' dissatisfaction, standardization among indigenous-based tourism products and services has been given effect, and in many cases, the government has established policies and guidelines. These policies and guidelines set down measures concerning tourism proficiency, tourism product characteristics and new tourism programs. In Malaysia, examples of tourism proficiency based on the *National Occupational Skill Standard for Localized Nature Guide* include the Localized Tourist/Nature Guide Course (Borneo Tourism Institute Pte Ltd, 1999); while examples of tourism product character guidelines include tourism transportation policies, accommodation standards, attractions, approved scheduled activities, and remuneration. An example of a new tourism program is the Homestay Program. While these policies and guidelines were designed to improve indigenous peoples' ability to use tourism as a socio-economic tool, the policies and guidelines can also be used in adverse ways; the policies and guidelines have the ability to indoctrinate indigenous people away from their customary understanding about tourism and hospitality. They make indigenous people invisible in the touristic experience.

- a) The Malaysian National Occupational Skill Standard for Localized Nature Guide, a guide for the profession of a Localized Nature Guide, outlines duties and tasks that guide need to perform when relating with foreign tourists. The standard is a document to help training providers design appropriate training courses. The duties include host-guest relations and information dissemination that could highlight the environmental and cultural uniqueness of the indigenous people. Since all indigenous tourism destinations are unique, the quality of host-guest relations and information dissemination needs to be localized. However, because of high costs or lack of experience, some appointed training providers using the standard did not substantially localize the host-guest relations and the dissemination of information in their Localized Nature Guide Course curriculum. Instead, these providers presented more of a

Malaysianized version of the tourist guide that emphasized environmental attractions rather than the culture.

- b) Tourism authorities outline and homogenize the characteristics of tourism products and services to aid management and financial considerations. These characteristics were seen as components of tourism packages that could be used when distinguishing one product or service from others. One example is the need to use specialized tour coaches or the need to follow a standardized sight-seeing itinerary for mass tourism. However, having such characteristics and specifications confuse indigenous peoples and their tourists into obliging tourism authorities. As a result, indigenous tourism packages sometimes resemble mass tourism, something from which they ideologically and practically differ.
- c) The Malaysian Homestay Program was designed to assist indigenous communities wanting to venture into tourism businesses (Razzaq et al., 2012). Among the assistance provided was subsidized marketing costs, providing housekeeping training, and improving certain social infrastructures. Participation in the program must be community-based with a minimum of eight participants that have been certified by an appointed tourism panel. A crucial aspect of this program is that an imagined Malaysian village lifestyle must be highlighted and displayed on top of existing tourism products and services available in and around the participating community. Compliance with this image posed a cultural conflict since the image of indigenous Malaysians is largely associated with the dominant national Malay culture rather than the local Dusun culture.

Moreover, from the indigenous perspective, such policies and guidelines might be culturally inappropriate. To address this conflict, the Dusun Sungai, like indigenous people in other parts

of the world, have been confronted with the option to either take control of their tourism endeavour (Fagence, 2003; Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Johnston, 2003; Wang, 2007; Wearing & McDonald, 2002), or to segregate their cultural environment from their tourism environment. Because indigenous people generally lack the socio-economic means to take control of their tourism endeavour, the latter option is usually taken. As a result, tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands does not showcase a strong indigenous presence; there is no true indigenous tourism in the region. This research is aimed at understanding this problem.

These are not the only suggestions that point to the invisibility from which indigenous people suffer in the touristic exchange. There is also the ecological aspect. The Kinabatangan District is renowned for its wetlands. The compelling attractiveness of the wetlands conceals the presence of indigenous inhabitants, whose right to occupy the wetlands has in fact been recognized by their ongoing presence as well as by contemporary Malaysian law. The problem may be posed as a question: how does a wetland visitor know they are the guest of an indigenous group, and, should they be required to know? I refer to this invisibility, and the ways to overcome it, in the following chapters. This invisibility and the broader problem of the indigenous tourist exchange are the subjects of this thesis. It is based on two months' targeted fieldwork in the Kinabatangan district in 2012. It also reflects my experience working as a tourist guide in indigenous programs between 1995 and 2001.

I became involved with tourism in 1993 after graduating from the National University of Malaysia. My first job took me to Sabah's first ecotourism project deep in the jungles of Sabah in a tributary of the Segama River on what might have been an ancient village site. This project is the Borneo Rainforest Lodge, and I was its first naturalist. The investment arm of the Sabah Foundation spearheaded this project, but its idea originated with Danny Chew (Angkanon, 1994; Angkanon & Marsh, 1994). One of my subordinates, Palin Buluk, a member of the

Dusun Sungai community from the Segama River, had impressed many foreign tourists as a guide even though his command of English and scientific ecological knowledge was somewhat limited. From conversation with tourists, it appeared that they were impressed by the genuine relationship that they had forged with Buluk. A couple of years later, I left Borneo Rainforest Lodge and became a freelance licensed tourist guide. I was fortunate enough to work with Danny Chew on many of this Kinabatangan tour packages. From personal observations, the relationship created between Chew, Mohamed Idrus and their tourists was genuine to a point that many tourists vowed to return; and, some did. My involvement in tourism was not limited to the field of tourist guiding; I occasionally took up jobs as a tourist guide trainer and examiner (refer Appendix B). Over many years, I noted the standardization of tourism products to a point where indigenous peoples were placed in the background of tourism.

Indigenous identity and the Dusun Sungai in Sabah

The Dusun Sungai community is a sub-ethnic group of the larger Dusunic indigenous group of North Borneo; they are native to Sabah. They reside in regions of the eastern part of Sabah around two major rivers, that is, the Kinabatangan River and the Segama River. While, in the past, the Dusun Sungai largely practiced an indigenous religion, a sizeable percentage of Dusun Sungai people have adopted the Islamic faith due to their proximity to coastal dwellers, particularly along the Kinabatangan River. Islam is the majority religion of Malaysia, followed by approximately 55% of Malaysians. Dusun Sungai, as a term to depict a particular indigenous community, only came into existence after WWII. However, this term is not universally recognized by the people living at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Language, with its potential to cause confusion and oppression, is a factor (Lasimbang & Kinajil, 2000). From the Malaysia's nationalization era until the mid-1980s, the native language of the *Dusun* people regressed when the Federal government introduced policies to effect nationalization of a

Malaysian language. Using Malay language as the foundation for the formation of a Malaysia language was encouraged, while ethnic groups were discouraged from conversing in their native language when attending social activities and functions.

On 16 September 1963, four different countries, once part of the British Empire, namely, the Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore, established the Federation of Malaysia. This federation was made possible because the British Empire was poised to reverse its long-held colonial stance; a stance that was greeted most graciously by the Federation of Malaya that had experienced colonial rule for more than four centuries. But, since the conception of the Federation of Malaysia, many issues have emerged relating to the founding constitution. In Malaya's constitution, the Malay race, regarded as an indigenous race, is privileged and the definition of Malay is a person fluent in the Malay language who professes the Islamic religion. Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore were not advantaged by these provisions; indigenous peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo were not necessarily fluent in the Malay language, nor did they necessarily follow the Islamic faith (Andaya & Andaya, 2001), while Singapore's sizeable Chinese population did not appreciate the positioning of Malays as a sole, privileged race and masters over other races. To address these issues, Malaya offered to adapt and adopt the term *Bumiputera*³ to signify indigeneity, which, in effect, equated indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak as privileged races and overcame the existence of a single master race in the federation. Although a consensus was reached, the issues were never truly resolved. Singapore was ejected from the Federation of Malaysia on 9 August 1965 after it experienced race-based riots in 1964. In 1969, a number of race-based riots erupted in Malayan states, caused mainly by socio-economic disparities (Hooker, 2003). While there were many other factors to the riots, the demand for Malay privilege was at the core of the unrest. As a consequence, new policies

³ *Bumiputera* = *bumi* (Eng.: earth) + *putera* (Eng.: prince) = people of the soil; a term depicting nativity without the influence of religion that was coined by the first Prime Minister of Malaysia.

were drawn up that reflected prevailing conditions, for example, Malay as a foundation language ("Malay language becomes official to-day," 1967; Said & Abas, 2010), and it became possible to envision all indigenous peoples, particularly those professing the Islamic faith, as Malays (Ongkili, 2003).

Improving the socio-economic position of *Bumiputera* groups of peoples is considered a priority in the context of the Federation of Malaysia, and the New Economic Policy⁴ is a policy critical to the socio-economic improvement of the Federation's *Bumiputera* groups. The policy outlines the need to alter *Bumiputera* groups' economic practices in order to bring about socio-economic improvement. Under the Federation of Malaysia, traditional farmers and fishers of Sabah are among the poorest (Ong, 2008). Dusun Sungai people are traditional farmers and fishers. Because of this, public agencies strive to improve the status of the Dusun Sungai community by encouraging them to move away from the community's traditional activities.

The *Bumiputera* vision, in effect, affirmed the existence of a Malaysian privileged race and simultaneously created an identity crisis among the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak. Similarly, Dusun Sungai people of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands professing the Islamic faith, could see themselves as Malays, while those professing a faith other than Islam saw themselves largely as the Dusun race. Only Sabah 'native' entitlements, as prescribed under Sabah State Ordinances, stop Moslem Dusun from fully identifying as Malays, and this is evident in a recently concluded court case. On 15 February 2015, the Kota Kinabalu High Court declared the Tanjung Labian village, some 100 kilometres south of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, rightful owners of a native customary land totalling 650 hectares that had been

⁴ NEP was introduced in 1971 in light of many incidents including the riots of 1965 and 1969 as a solution to economic disparities in the Malaysian society (Hooker, 2003, p. 230).

alienated the by Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) for palm oil agriculture business.

The region where the Dusun Sungai people reside is rich in natural heritage. Historically, the regions had been producing timber and plants such as Jute, tobacco, and bird nests; the Dusun Sungai people's land is very fertile. Since the federation of Malaysia, the eastern part of North Borneo, now Sabah, including the Kinabatangan region, has experienced large-scale forest conversion. In fact, my own grandfather managed some of those forest conversion activities. Those conversions were within stipulated public policies and guidelines; no Dusun Sungai people's lands were encroached upon. These lands were gazetted in the 1970s as virgin jungle reserves. Nevertheless, the mass conversions drew much international attention to the Kinabatangan region because of heightened environmental awareness and the displacement of iconic Kinabatangan fauna like the orangutan (*pongo pygmaeus*), the proboscis monkey (*nasalis larvatus*) and the Borneo pygmy elephant (*elephas maximus*). In recent publications that mention the native Dusun Sungai people, such as *The Kinabatangan floodplain: An introduction* (WWF-Malaysia, 1993), and *Wild Sabah: The magnificent wildlife and rainforests of Malaysian Borneo* (Payne & Prudente, 2010), it is always in the context of environmental issues. Doolittle (2005, p. 175) argues that "knowledge about Sabah's society is constructed through discourse and practices that legitimize centralized appropriation and control over natural resources. It simultaneously constructs rural people as the subjects of rule." The circumstance confronted by the Dusun Sungai has caused them to face many challenges in maintaining their identity; Dusun Sungai people have difficulty in voicing their opposition to uses of their lands, and for that reason, may appear as a community that does not care about their own land. There are two major challenges in maintaining their identity; firstly, under the constitution of the Malaysian Federation, indigenous peoples that have embraced Islam are generally categorized as Malays. Because of such categorization, Dusun Sungai people are

sometimes referred as Malays although their culture and traditions are of Dusunic origins. In other words, their indigenous identity is obscured through their categorization as members of the Malay majority. Further complicating the challenge, the tourism offices fully support community-based tourism in the Malay context. Secondly, the Kinabatangan region is one of many environments to which global conservation groups are paying attention; these conservation groups are heavily lobbying the use of tourism as a socio-economic and environmental tool. Tourism in the Kinabatangan region is based largely on its environment and its wildlife, that is, ecotourism and wildlife tourism, in which the Dusun Sungai people are portrayed as conservationists-in-the-making. Apart from the problems of essentialism arising around this portrayal, there are other issues connected with guardianship of natural resources. Global drug companies are interested in utilizing indigenous knowledge for commercial purposes, which makes indigenous people protective of their forest resources. Furthermore, conservation programs frequently take the position that indigenous people are impediments to conservation, imperilling their continued role as guardians of their traditional lands. The ideology of conservation is not always favourable to indigenous people. We observe something that verges on a new colonization process in which indigenous people must have a critical role in conservation in order to evade oppression by foreign conservationists (Shepherd, 2015). All these problems cause difficulties in the Dusun Sungai people's task of representing themselves in ways that enable them to further their interests.

For the Dusun Sungai people to represent themselves adequately in the national arena, the people need to overcome existing narratives. They needed to transcend the image that they are residing in an environmentally sensitive area, as well as the notion that Dusun Sungai people are Malays. The Dusun Sungai people needed a new narrative to overcome existing narratives, and they achieved this through several means, especially by constructing and protecting a cultural patrimony. Firstly, historically significant Dusun Sungai sites, such as burial grounds,

were gazetted. Secondly, documentation of the Dusun Sungai peoples was carried out. The most recent documentation is the 2012 ethnic inventory of the Dusun Sungai people that was jointly conducted by the community's non-government organizations (NGOs) and the State Government of Sabah. There were also other publications such as socio-environmental research articles by researchers and my book about the historical uniqueness of Kinabatangan, but these publications were few and generally in the Malay language.

Tourism could be the third and most important way for the Dusun Sungai people to represent themselves; through the representation of their culture, and their way of life. This potential emerges because the Dusun Sungai people need to create tourism products and services that do not compete with other tourism products and services that are Malay-based or environment-based. Besides this, the necessary components of tourism are already available. What is needed, in my opinion, is the recognition of the value of indigenous hospitality in the tourist exchange.

Indigenous hospitality as a solution

Tápun (pronounced, tapaoon) is a Dusun concept about the need to understand one's vulnerability and the need to give recognition to that vulnerability. There is no equivalent English term. The term has been frequently associated with the respect that one gives to a host when invited to dine. This association gives the understanding of *tápun* as a Dusun term that relates to a form of social control. *Tápun* was first documented as "*tApun*" in 1965 by Thomas Rhys Williams in an anthropological study on Dusun people living in the interior of Sabah, it was described as the use of food or a promise as a social control (Williams, 1965). It should be noted, however, there was scepticism about this study because of Williams' lack of attention to data-handling protocols (Appell, 1968). According to Williams (1965, p. 96), the word *tápun* evokes an understanding that "a force in the universe that punishes individuals neglecting to

honour agreements or refusing the hospitality of others, and thereby changing the luck of the host.” When a guest is about to leave without taking a bite of the meal that has been prepared and the host utters the word *tápun*, the guest ought to eat a prepared meal or, at least, touch the meal before leaving (Williams, 1965). However, by touching the meal before leaving, at the very least, the guest would have evaded any unwanted incident. While the anthropological understanding of *tápun* focusses on social control, for me as a member of the Dusun people, *tápun* is a deeper, more complicated concept. The concept and value of *tápun* is able to showcase both indigenous values and western perspectives about hospitality simultaneously.

The word *tápun* can be uttered to oneself. The utterance of *tápun* to oneself serves as a spiritual reminder of the need to not be hasty; taking things as they come. Additionally, the word *tápun* has an aspect of religious belief. Williams touches on this aspect when he suggests *tápun* was about an unseen force that would punish anyone who does not pay homage to their host. This understanding of *tápun* having a religious aspect is valid, since sometimes Dusun people utter phrases such as *tudu bangat*, *bu'sada* or *kadtikopuhun* as a substitute for *tápun*. When translated into English, the utterances give the general meaning of keeping evil spirit beings at a distance.

Moving away from the antagonistic notion of good versus bad, the term *tápun* has a more subdued aspect to it, and this aspect was noted by Jeanne Whitehouse in an article entitled “Of Dusun women entertaining.” Whitehouse (1978, p. 29) brings the repetitive utterance in contact with human relationships, for she observed the utterance of *tápun* so frequently that it felt like “a sacrament, a pledge of faith.” This relationship factor is clear when she considered that North Borneo was once occupied by the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII, but after liberation, “now we reaffirm our faith in these villagers who were once poisoners. We eat and

drink all that is offered. We trust. To refuse brings bad luck. ‘*Tapun oku*,’ I say when refusing....”

As a Dusun word, *tápun* has a rich meaning that ranges from social control to matters that are associated to the spirituality of a person. As social control, it manages the host-guest relationship; and as a spiritual matter, it places a person in his or her environment. In essence, it could be related to the English understanding of hospitality. It implies that people, no matter what their origin, are in a relationship defined by their mutual vulnerability and their need to appreciate the fulfilment of the physical needs necessary for human life.

Anthropologically, “the basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship” (Selwyn, 2000, p. 19). It is a concept that allows someone to act as a host to another person who, in turn, becomes a guest. Hospitality is a highly regarded concept among many societies that it has similarities to the principle of nobility (Heal, 1984; Malpas, 2015). Because many societies consider hospitality important, it might be part of the human being’s body of knowledge. As such, indigenous people also have their form of hospitality. This understanding however does not have much traction because readers find difficulty to see it.

In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, with new specialized products and services, new information and narratives are created, added to and disseminated using current tourism media. While word-of-mouth or travel journals might have been the preferred media years ago, today hosts and guests rely on guidebooks and the internet to get their message across. In fact, we observe a kind of information overload, for the era of mass tourism has brought a flood of new representations that seem to bury the older cultural styles and repertoires of the region. This has resulted in greater invisibility of the indigenous people. As the media increases in size and

sophistication, the ‘old’ and comprehensive information is buried, and becomes inaccessible. As a result, the specialized activities and events no longer provide a comprehensive understanding of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands environment or the culture of its inhabitants. I argue that the marginalization and neglect of an indigenous concept of hospitality critically impedes the establishment of tourism products and experiences. Including the old and comprehensive information in the development of tourism products and services could enable the Dusun Sungai community, and indigenous peoples in similar situations elsewhere, to overcome the problems discussed above.

I argue that *tápun* is relevant to the problems facing indigenous tourism in Kinabatangan. In tourism development and management, both the hosts and guests appreciate the initial tourism products and services and find them very rewarding. As time goes on, expectations build up and changes are made to the products and services to make them more efficient. As a result, the hosts develop products and services that are more specialized and the guests issue a demand for authenticity. Tourism experiences have moved from something wholesome to something specialized, and hospitality has been replaced with professionalism. In the process, indigenous knowledge of the environment cannot be communicated as the mediums of communication are also standardized through the use of an alien language, English, and through western categorizations of knowledge. Guests take up only the specialized products and services, and sense that the engagement is no longer an authentic one because of the mediums used for communication. I argue that an indigenous conception of hospitality is marginalized and neglected in the touristic experience. *Tápun*, the relationship between host and guest, is the grounds upon which indigenous knowledge is communicated. When *tápun* is absent from the exchange of information, the opportunity to bring authenticity to the exchange is lost.

My research puts the focus on the cultural assets of indigenous peoples that are neglected in the touristic exchange. I argue that indigenous knowledge of the environment, culture and conceptions of hospitality are marginalized and neglected in the tourism experience, as evidenced in the Kinabatangan district. I further argue that this marginalization is a critical impediment to the establishment of tourist products and experiences that will enable the Dusun Sungai community, and indigenous peoples in similar situations elsewhere, to overcome the problems discussed above. In doing so, it should become evident that indigenous hospitality is a reality of tourism, particularly indigenous-based tourism.

The research project

Usually, the enterprise of tourism exploits indigenous peoples as attractions or as products. In context of the core aspect of tourism i.e. hospitality, indigenous people are not an attraction or a product. Indigenous people, such as the Dusun Sungai, have been engaging with tourists, that is, travellers, such as traders in their land, for hundreds of years. In addition to their knowledge of how to engage with the environment, they have knowledge of tourism and the provision of hospitality that pre-exists the current industry. This hospitality has not been fully explored and understood, and the role that indigenous hospitality play in the host-guest relationship is not clear. And yet, tourism planners and developers involved in specializing tourism products and services might not recognize indigenous expertise, or hospitality's importance to the relationship between hosts and guests. We observe this marginalization at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, much like other tourism destinations that have an indigenous population: although the presence of the indigenous people is obvious, it is insufficient for indigenous hospitality and knowledge to be recognized amidst the specialized tourism products and services. Because of hospitality, indigenous people have every opportunity to be more than just attractions or products.

In the era of mass tourism and mass communication, indigenous concepts are vulnerable, for they are easily overlooked by tourism operators concerned with activities involving large numbers of people. This research project began with a concern about ‘authenticity’ in indigenous tourism. In particular, I was concerned about how indigenous culture and knowledge might be misrepresented in tourism products, and whether tourism offered an opportunity for indigenous people to communicate indigenous knowledge. Hence, my central question at the start of this study concerned the conditions under which indigenous concepts and knowledge are communicated: *What happens to indigenous knowledge within an indigenous community when tourism is applied to their area?* Tourism studies indicate that, through the experience of tourism, a person’s knowledge may expand. I sought to explore how tourists’ understanding of indigenous knowledge expanded as they toured to places designated as being culturally sensitive. This central question led me to ask the following subsidiary questions:

1. Do tourism developers have the ability to pass on indigenous knowledge?
2. Bearing in mind that no one can claim to put indigenous knowledge on a page successfully and that it must be experienced, how is indigenous knowledge communicated?
3. How do tourism stakeholders project an image of themselves? How do they communicate their knowledge?

While undertaking the research, it became evident that there was little exchange of indigenous knowledge between tourists and indigenous people except under certain conditions. During my fieldwork, I noted that indigenous knowledge was not even presented to tourists, and that indigenous people were not recognized as hosts. I argue here that the tourism changes due to

outside intervention that occurred at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands created specialized products and services from existing indigenous products and services. During the changes, indigenous hospitality was neglected, and replaced with a representation of Malay identity and hospitality. Apart from this, the tourism changes also impeded the recognition of indigenous knowledge of the environment, because these specialized products and services highlighted flora and fauna from a Western perspective. Indigenous people, and their knowledge, “disappeared”. These problems called for the study of the conditions under which indigenous knowledge and culture is marginalized, and how indigenous people may reassert themselves within the context of tourism.

The importance of indigenous hospitality cannot be emphasized enough. By exploring the process of communication between tourists and indigenous people, it became evident that it was in particular situations that indigenous knowledge was exchanged with tourists. These conditions emphasized ordinary, or every day spaces, and situations in which the Dusun Sungai can be themselves and express their own forms of hospitality. If a research that draws on statistics was carried out, we would most likely find ourselves accepting null hypothesis (H_0) and rejecting any alternative hypothesis (H_a): hospitality does not have a significant impact on indigenous-based tourism. Yet, in the context of providing hospitality, indigenous knowledge is exchanged between indigenous hosts and foreign guests, and tourism products and services can be planned and developed without sacrificing indigenous concepts of human sociability, thus satisfying both the hosts’ and the guests’ desire for authenticity. Although the act of hospitality is known to indigenous people, it has not been explored by tourism researchers. It might have eluded tourism scholars even more so since all aspects of indigeneity is highly localized. As a result, I was tasked to question indigenous hospitality’s parameters and influences hermeneutically rather than scientifically. This led to a series of additional questions:

1. What impact has the development of tourism had on the indigenous host-guest relationship of the Dusun Sungai?
2. What are the ways in which existing tourism procedures and guidelines have enabled or restrained tourism developers from using indigenous knowledge?
3. How do the mediums of communication affect the exchange of information about indigenous knowledge in the context of tourism?
4. What potential does the concept of *tápun*, as an indigenous concept of hospitality, have in terms of developing and maintaining relationships between the Dusun Sungai community and tourists to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands?

On its own, scientific studies and artistic studies are challenging enough. Each has its own aspirations and boundaries. But, as I will show in the next chapter, indigenous knowledge is a subject that has a fluid boundary. The employment of multiple observation techniques and analytical methods would be beneficial to this study, and this approach is described in the following section.

Study method

The complexity of tourism research depends on the subject to be investigated. Researching a tourism product or service is straightforward since it relates to the characteristic of the product or service; it is easy to research discrete characteristics of a product or a service. However, when humanistic aspects are involved, the research is no longer straightforward. Moreover, in humanistic studies, there is a possibility that the phenomena studied could play more than one role (Giddens, 1984). “Human social activities, like some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive” (Giddens, 1984, p. 2); a scholar cannot truly believe that his or her presence does not affect a study outcome. Fortunately, the meaning of people’s action can come from a multitude of evidence, which makes such study less rigid. The investigation of the meaning of

people's action constitute a qualitative research approach (Berg, 1998). In qualitative research, "the task is to create a picture that is comprehensible and takes into account the evidence in some logical way" since we "can only talk a story, not the truth" (Leki, 1999, p. 17). As a result, qualitative research records, retells and comments upon both the experiences and interpretations of the researcher.

Kinabatangan-Segama Wetlands, Sabah, Malaysia is chosen as the research preferred study location. The place is chosen because it has several unique geographical features, pre-nineteen century trading history, rich flora-fauna diversity, and is populated by Dusun indigenous ethnic group. It has been a popular tourist destination since mid-1980s for historical, ecological, and cultural themed tourism. Besides this, its tourism history is traceable; and with its recent recognition as an international RAMSAR site; a wetland site recognized for its significant to humanity and the environment, the place will evermore continue to be popular. But the unit of analysis is not the place itself. A tourism network displays the knowledge that is used in tourism. The movement of that knowledge can be observed in the relations that make up the tourism network. This network includes the guest-host relation, tourism developer's association, and tourist's social group are three relations in a tourism network. Hence, this study set the relations in a tourism network as its unit of analysis.

In this thesis I used qualitative research methods and methodological triangulation to explore the exchange of indigenous knowledge in tourism. Because of this focus, I have adopted a theoretical frame of cross-cultural communication hermeneutics from beyond tourism studies to explore these questions. The theoretical framework of this study sets forth several key criteria. First and foremost, the study about indigenous hospitality needs to be carried out at a tourism destination. Secondly, the destination must have indigenous people as a tourism stakeholder. As such, the study site must be within an indigenous community's domain. More

importantly, the study's criteria must recognize a place where history is accounted for. However, I must also borrow from anthropological approaches. This borrowing originates from the understanding that there are some similarities in anthropology and tourism as noted by Amanda Stronza; similarities that scholars do not study enough (Stronza, 2001), particularly the indigenous host-guest relationship. Anthropology generally focuses on indigenous people, while tourism studies focuses on the concept of the guest rather than the concept of the host. However, these studies are not completely isolated from each other, because anthropological aspects are sometimes used as a stepping-stone to study tourism particularly, the host-guest relationship. Anthropological methods may enhance tourism studies because tourism studies are improved when both quantitative and qualitative researches are carried out instead of just the quantitative ones (Walle, 1997). Ethnological approaches and, in particular, the case study, therefore supplement statistical tourism research by providing a richer picture of the impacts of tourism.

There are many events and actions that contribute to the overall experience of tourism and hospitality and to indigenous hospitality. A case study approach provides an idiographic picture or understanding of the issues from many perspectives; an ideograph being a "complete, in-depth understanding of a single case" (Babbie, 2010, p. 94). The case study method involves the systematic gathering of information about a particular person, group or event (Berg, 1998; Yin, 1994). The method involves the use of different kinds of resources and approaches to deepen the perspective of human behaviour (Berg, 1998; Yin, 1994). This approach effectively allows the understanding of complex social phenomena (Berg, 1998; Yin, 1994), while being a way of validating qualitative data originating from various sources through methodological triangulation (Puczkó, Bárd & Füzi, 2010). Methodological triangulation is an approach that uses more than one method in order to provide different perspectives; it makes connections between different sets of data to enable appropriate conclusions to be drawn (Puczkó, Bárd &

Füzi, 2010). Research for this thesis included participant observation, interviews, archival and historical research, collection of tourism promotional materials, and analysis of official reports, policies and legislation.

Participant observation is a method that relies on observing interactions while the researcher is an active participant in the situation (Punch, 1998; Yin, 1994). A high involvement on the part of the researcher and a low number of respondents are features of the participant observation approach. Data collection involves the researcher taking detailed notes of their encounters, while interviews are useful to reveal peoples' social relationships and preferences (Yin, 1994). I undertook fieldwork in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands over a six-week period during September and October 2012. During this period, I stayed in a variety of accommodation services including hostels, homestays, bed and breakfast establishments, and lodges. Alongside other tourists, I also undertook several tourism activities, including river cruises, jungle trekking, and attended performances. Thirty-three people were interviewed, including service providers and tourists.

Types of indigenous knowledge, content presentation and the technology used in content presentation are the independent variables of the study. The independent variables relate to the level of indigenous involvement in tourism product management and its offering (Liao, Chen, & Deng, 2009). Based on the understanding that tourism barriers hinder the involvement of indigenous people in the industry (Liu, 2006; Razzaq et al., 2012), background variables used in the study included the level of tourism understanding and English literacy among the tourism stakeholders. These background variables have been proposed by Byrd *et al.*, (2008) and structure the analysis in terms of authenticity, feedback, and complaints.

In this study, I used interviews to determine the perspectives of tourism operators and indigenous people (refer to Appendix A: Basic Interview Schedule, and Appendix B for a full list of interviewees). The interview schedule contained questions about the interviewee's demographic background, their interests and expectations, beliefs, their understanding of tourism protocols and practices, and their communication preferences and approaches. Volunteering individuals were taken as interviewees, and the interviews were conducted anonymously in order to protect the identities of individuals in a small community with strong industry networks. While the English language was used as the main communicating language throughout the study, the Malay language was used in accordance to the preference of the interviewees. Both the participant observation and interviews were conducted in compliance with the Monash University Human Research Ethics guidelines and approval process (see Appendix C for the explanatory statement, D for the consent form, and E for the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee approval). These data were supplemented by archival and historical records, in this case, visitor books, at the Gomantong Wildlife Reserve Office, Bilit Heritage Bed and Breakfast, Borneo Nature Lodge (Bilit), and Green View Sukau Lodge (Sukau). These provided information concerning the impressions and preferences of visitors identified by their nationality. I also collected brochures, location maps, photographs (as physical objects and the from internet searches), and postcards. In addition, government reports and plans provided statistical information and an explanation why tourism was highlighted as a development focus for the region.

The strategy to analyse the research data is divided into three stages. Each stage involves materials that are used in tourism communication. The first stage involves the tourism imagery and portrait achievement, which would be explored in a chapter about the tourism development of the research location. The second stage relates to the analysis of social artefacts and transcripts, and this is described in a chapter about the impact of tourism. The last stage is an

analysis on the realities of the site that is described in the ways the location is communicated or consumed. Further clarifications are respectively given at the beginning of Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5.

In order to answer the first question, ‘What impact has the development of tourism had on the indigenous host-guest relationship of the Dusun Sungai?’ I conducted archival research on the history of tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, and conducted interviews with the participants of this early phase of tourism. I also interviewed people involved with contemporary providers of tourism services. In answering the second question, ‘What are the ways in which existing tourism procedures and guidelines have enabled or restrained tourism developers from using indigenous knowledge?’ I referred to the laws, policies and guidelines developed by governments and tourism authorities, and explored how these were interpreted and implemented in the location through participant observation and interviews. My findings in response to the third question, ‘How do the mediums of communication affect the exchange of information about indigenous knowledge in the context of tourism?’, concerning the quality of communication between producers of tourism products, and what was communicated, are based on participant observation, as well as the tourism brochures, postcards and guidebooks that I collected.

Chapter outline

As stated previously, I used qualitative research methods and methodological triangulation to explore the exchange of indigenous knowledge in tourism. I also adopted a theoretical frame of cross-cultural communication hermeneutics from beyond tourism studies to explore these questions. Because of the method and framework, this thesis is not sectioned in a conventional manner. In addition to an introduction, this dissertation comprises seven chapters. In Chapter

1, I present the relevant literature about tourism, hospitality and indigenous knowledge. From this, I developed the model of indigenous knowledge that I used to inform my participant observation of the communicative context. There is no specific chapter on methodology because this aspect has been incorporated into many of the other chapters. Chapter 2 introduces the Dusun Sungai community, their economy, and the need for development. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the tourism industry in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the government policies and programs for development through tourism, and the history of tourism's development. This chapter shows that indigenous people were engaged in tourism prior to the emergence of a major industry in the region. In Chapter 4, I explore the impact of the tourism industry that has grown and the networks that have been established in support of tourism development. This research shows that indigenous people and their culture have been systematically marginalized by the emphasis on nature tourism and the Malay homestay program. Interviews were conducted to explore how Dusun Sungai experienced these developments. These showed that while they appreciated the opportunities for economic development, they also needed to adopt a Malay identity in order to succeed. Chapter 5 explores how tourists obtain information for their tourism planning and generate knowledge of their visit, as well as the exchange of knowledge between indigenous people and tourists on location. It shows that, in contrast to many other indigenous communities engaged in tourism, the main problem for Dusun Sungai is not the authenticity of the representation of their culture; the problem is one of marginalization. Indigenous knowledge is not highlighted within the contexts and spaces in which Dusun Sungai and tourists met. This led to an analysis of the space in which deeper exchanges and learning occurred. I argue that the conversational space allows for what might be called a 'fusion of horizons' between hosts and guests. Chapter 6 then elaborates on this process, by exploring how indigenous hospitality enables an enrichment of communication. In this context, the knowledge of the host, and their identity, is made visible.

The process of a fusion of horizons means that both host and guest inevitably evolve through their exchange. Neither side remains as they were. Accordingly, issues of authenticity do not arise, as ‘authenticity’ is not a feature of representations of past practices, but is what people do. The potential of *tápun* in indigenous tourism in the Kinabatangan District is that it provides a way for reducing indigenous invisibility while enabling the tourist to obtain an authentic encounter with the other. In the last chapter, the conclusion, I draw these observations together to answer the question with which I began with my research. *What happens to indigenous knowledge in tourism?* It is the case that in some situations, indigenous knowledge and culture may be commodified and exploited in tourism products and services. This, however, is not the situation that occurs in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. As tourism has developed in this region, the Dusun Sungai have been rendered invisible. The emphasis on nature tourism does not enable them to express their knowledge, as they must rely on Western taxonomies and categorizations to communicate in a sight-seeing context. However, in ordinary spaces of engagement, indigenous knowledge may be exchanged, enriching the perspective of both tourist and host through a fusion of horizons. The context that is the ground for this exchange is indigenous hospitality, or *tápun*.

Chapter 1 Literature Review and Theoretical Approach

1.1 Tourism and indigenous knowledge

In this thesis, I explore the question: *What happens to indigenous knowledge within an indigenous community when tourism is applied to their area?* A review of the literature for such an endeavour is necessarily broad in order to explore the nature of tourism and tourism studies, issues related to indigenous tourism, and the nature of indigenous knowledge. However, a central element that I claim is missing from a great deal of literature on this problem of the exchange of knowledge concerns the context of the exchange within tourism, this requires additional sections to explore the literature of cross cultural communication and indigenous hospitality. This approach is fundamental to explaining the approach I have taken to the problem in the thesis, and the ways I have gone about answering the question.

1.2 The study of tourism

Under the guise of mass tourism, tourism is closely associated with leisure. It is also mixed with a bit of education and recreation (Enzensberger, 1996, p. 123). Tourists dream up this through romantic projections of something in a distant land (Enzensberger, 1996, p. 125). To scholars involved in the study the sustainability of tourism, it has a negative connotation because mass tourism is “based on the desire for the pursuit of happiness” and freedom (Enzensberger, 1996, p. 135); mass tourism does not seem sustainable if desires are endless. Nevertheless, there are as many ways of defining tourism as there are reasons for people to travel.

The word “tourism” is derived from the Latin “*tornare*” and the Greek “*tornos*”, meaning “the movement around a central point or axis” (Theobald, 2005, p. 9). In the sixteenth century, the

French army introduced the term “tour” in its masculine form, which meant ‘an outing’. Armies travelled when empires and nations went to war; they went on a ‘tour of duty’. If the historical meaning of ‘tourism’ was associated with a social change that was forced upon a person, (e.g., a military movement to establish a new order in the region), clearly, its meaning has, over time, changed considerably. Apart from travelling to resolve a chaotic situation, the act of travelling for change may involve the act of travelling for socialization (D'Amore, 1988; Sigaux, 1966), consumption (McKercher, 1993), or education (Theobald, 2005). Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s association of education with tourism is also connected to the etymology of the word ‘tour’.

According to Enzensberger (1996), the action of movement around a circle allows the traveller to freely discover him or herself. Robert Shepherd studied how tourism scholars read Martin Heidegger’s perspective about the fulfilment of one’s inner needs. According to Shepherd (2015), when describing tourism using the concept of authenticity, some tourism scholars drew from *Being and time* and *The question concerning technology*, two works by Martin Heidegger about being human. Accordingly, the perception relates to a person needing a different and authentic experience to better oneself. Shepherd (2015) argued that this is not an accurate reading of Heidegger, never-the-less many tourists seek an ‘authentic’ cultural experience. This understanding of tourism as educational is both relative to a historic period and from a romantic perspective. But, it is not for that reason without merit, or untrue; tourists do learn something about themselves when, on tour, they encounter a condition that tests their limits.

Tourism is also educational because it offers a promise for cross-cultural understanding. In 1988, Canada hosted the first global conference on tourism. The organizers envisaged tourism as a force for creating respect for cultural difference, where all peoples and cultures are considered equal. In direct contrast with the historical association of tourism with war, at that

conference, Louis D'Amore suggested tourism was a force for peace as it allows people from different groups to create a relationship. D'Amore (1988, p. 36) emphasized the “growing realization of the role of international travel in promoting understanding and trust among people of different cultures.” Tourism is also an important tool for socio-economic development that tourism is recognized as an activity “essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations” (World Tourism Organization, 1995, p. 1). Tourism is defined as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment . . . for leisure, business and other purposes” (World Tourism Organization, 1995, p. 1).

The definition of tourism places it in association with the process of socialization, consumption, education, or a combination of these aspects. The many possible associations result from the introduction of many newer theories and definitions that aid understanding about people and the way they organize themselves. This chapter provides an overview of the ways in which tourism research is carried out, and it focuses on the implications of the research for indigenous people. Accordingly, I begin with an overview of the various approaches to tourism research and a discussion of indigenous tourism as a means of improving the conditions of indigenous peoples before considering the nature of indigenous knowledge and the problems of cultural authenticity in tourism. I re-conceptualize debates concerning authenticity and indigenous tourism within the frame of cross cultural communication before explaining how the concept of indigenous knowledge informs my theoretical approach in which hospitality may create a ‘fusion of horizons’ between the indigenous host and their guests. I argue that the study of hospitality is essential within tourism and cross-cultural communication between tourists and indigenous people.

1.2.1 Approaches to tourism research

There are several approaches to analysing tourism's impact and addressing the needs of tourism players. The institutional approach is the most common, and has been studied since the early 1920s. The institutional approach looks at the business of tourism using what was then termed the theory of *Fremdenverkehr*, a theory that “dealt mainly with business and economic problems” (Gyr, 2010). A similar approach to the institutional approach is the stakeholder approach using what is termed as the stakeholder theory. This approach is goal driven, and seeks to ensure tourism planning is sustainable through the inclusion of key stakeholders in the development process (Freeman, 1984). Both approaches largely govern the development of tourism and, thus, its impact. However, “the discourse of tourism as an ‘industry’ has overshadowed other conceptualizations of the tourism phenomenon” (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2004, p. 1192).

Tourism research generally revolves around the host-guest relationship and the factors that affect the relationship. Fully accounting for the impact of such travel, and addressing the needs of tourists and host societies, is complicated. Because of this, a tourism research approach cannot go far without an understanding how a destination evolves.

A tourism destination is a dynamic area; it evolves because the host and guest of the tourism destination change. First forwarded by Richard Butler, the evolution of a tourism destination follows an asymptotic curve of the number of visitors over time, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

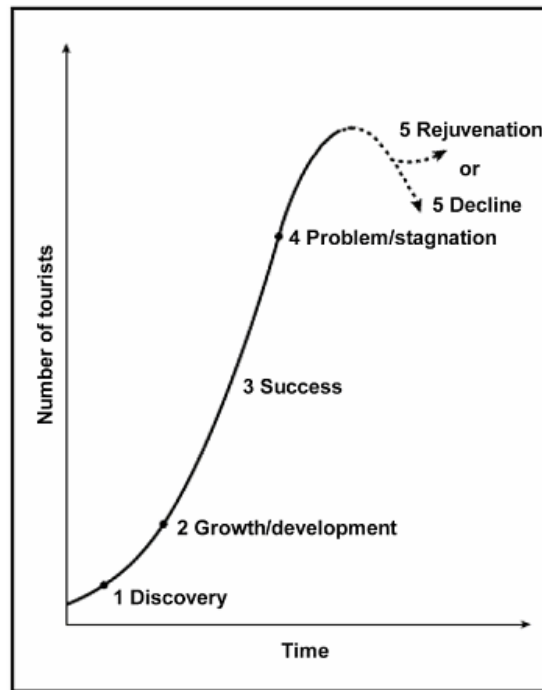


Figure 1.1. Butler's model for the tourism destination's evolution (Source: Butler 1980)

Figure 1.1 shows a four-stage evolution to a tourism destination (Butler, 1980). The first stage is where its popularity proceeds slowly, where visitors come to a destination in small numbers initially, restricted by lack of access, facilities, and local knowledge. The second stage is where the destination experiences a rapid rate of growth as tourism facilities are made available and awareness about the destination grows which then translates into an increase in visitor numbers. After this, the destination evolves into a stable condition when every social, environmental and economic aspect has reached its capacity. This capacity may be identified in terms of environmental capacity (e.g., land scarcity, water quality, air quality), physical capacity (e.g., accommodation, other services), and social capacity (e.g., crowding, resentment by the local population).

Philip Pearce and Gianna Moscardo (1999) undertook the task of analysing tourism studies and the formation of community. They could not find a theoretical perspective to use; without a dominating theoretical perspective, many scholars are propelled to establish their own pragmatic theories (Pearce & Moscardo, 1999). Pearce and Moscardo suggested that tourism

and community relationships were generally examined via two methods that roughly corresponded to two theoretical frames. The predominant method was the case study using an ethnographic approach, and drawing on a stage-model theory associated with Butler's (1980) *Tourism Area Life Cycle*, or Doxey's (1975) *Irritation Index*. The second major method used social survey research methods to examine host community attitudes. This method uses a social exchange theoretical frame that suggests individuals adopt a cost-benefit analysis in informing their attitude towards tourism. However, as Pearce and Moscardo observed, this has led to a body of evidence that is inconsistent, largely due to differences in definitions concerning tourists, tourism and community, the lack of an emic approach to understanding the scale or importance of the impacts of tourism, and, most significantly, the lack of a satisfactory theory explaining these changes. To overcome these complications, Pearce and Moscardo (1999) suggested grounding tourism studies in social representation theory as the theory could explain how a community creates social objects to help the community communicate.

The social representation theory is not the only theory that scholars suggested as a grounding theory. Bill Bramwell and Bernard Lane (2004) suggested structuration theory because it focused on the way people actively construct their world. The suggestion of grounding tourism in the social representation theory or the structuration theory highlights that tourism is about social engagement and the creation of a meaningful existence. Assessing/responding to both suggestions to the revision of tourism studies, a scholar needs to take into consideration the process by which people improve themselves, regardless if it is through socialization, consumption, or education.

Due to the economic importance of tourism to society and its impact on host communities, the sustainability of tourism is now an important matter. The World Tourism Organization first defined sustainable tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future

economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (1996). Tourism consumption is a group factor that involves the production of goods and services by the host and the consumption of goods and services by the visitors. This factor relates to the changes that hosts and guests undergo, and it is being revisited because the distinction between host and guest is blurring (Sherlock, 2001).

The notion that tourism is nothing more than an industry is a powerful idea that can draw the focus of tourism studies away from the understanding that tourism relates to society. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles described how tourism was focused on as an industry. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2004), tourism has contributed in many areas. Among these contributions, many had already been described, including the preservation of culture (Smith, 1980), the conservation of the environment (Boo, 1990), and, more importantly, peace (D'Amore, 1988). Higgins-Desbiolles (2004) argued that these benefits had been overshadowed by the efforts of private enterprise and the effects of commercialization. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2004, p. 1194), because tourists' consumption has been a key factor to the growth of many economies, the “hegemony of the market” changed how tourism was perceived from an association with society to an association with economy. Tourism actually has many aspects, among them, the environmental aspect and the social aspect (Peters, 1998). While tourism has many others aspects, apart from economy, that would continue to be explored, Higgins-Desbiolles (2004) stated that the understanding of tourism as an industry will remain. As for other aspects of tourism, Higgins-Desbiolles (2004) believes that they will eventually emerge over time because there is already the move to foster the idea that tourism is ‘obligatory’ through instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The view of indigenous people as a ‘tourism asset’ coincides with the consumerist paradigm that one has the human right to travel (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009). Since some tourism

stakeholders have exerted pressure on indigenous communities (Fuller et al., 2005; Liu, 2006; Moscardo, 2008), the rights paradigm reinforces the belief that the tourism industry in general should be more sympathetic towards indigenous people and their rights (Johnston, 2000, 2003, 2006).

1.3 Tourism and indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples are peoples who have developed their traditions and culture based on prevailing conditions of a particular place, and lived in the place for hundreds of years. This specialized knowledge had been passed down from one generation to another generation through oral practices including folklore, performance and legends. Since the United Nations' publication of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2008, the study of indigenous people in tourism has become more significant. The important role of indigenous people in tourism has become apparent in studies of how indigenous people guided travellers, and ported their goods in great expeditions. For example, these guides included Gunting Lagadan, an indigenous person of Sabah who led a British expedition up Mount Kinabalu in the nineteenth century, and Pocahontas, a Native American who guided European settlers around North America in the eighteenth century. Without these people, some expeditions might not have achieved their objectives.

One of the first publications that seriously looked at the involvement of indigenous people in tourism was *Ecotourism; The potentials and pitfalls*. Authored by Elizabeth Boo in 1990, it presents case studies of developing countries that utilize tourism as a conservation tool. According to Boo (1990), ecotourism promises to provide a fair opportunity to indigenous peoples. Besides this, ecotourism can help preserve indigenous cultural heritage and environmental relationships. However, as developing countries began developing their tourism

industries, it became evident that ecotourism does not guarantee anything (Cater, 2006); ecotourism has limitations in terms of the level of indigenous participation, control and management (Zeppel, 2003).

Studies about tourism and indigenous people began gaining attention after Richard Butler and Tom Hinch published their book in 1997, *Tourism and indigenous peoples*. In it, four key concepts (i.e., the habitat, the heritage, the history and the handicrafts of indigenous people) structure the relationship of indigenous peoples with tourism (Smith & Butler, 1996). Indigenous tourism is a tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction (Butler & Hinch, 1997). This definition portrays indigenous people as having a leading role in tourism. Under this form of tourism, indigenous practices and activities are essential components in tourism products or services and indigenous people are the largest workforce. In a decade, this definition has been refined to highlight the people, their spirituality, skills, cultural practices and artefacts (Ryan & Huyton, 2002, p. 632).

Following the publication of Butler and Hinch's book, many tourism researchers contributed to an understanding of tourism and indigenous peoples, which could be located in the field of ecotourism (Fuller, Buultjens, & Cumming, 2005), mass tourism, community-based tourism, and indigenous tourism. Although indigenous peoples and their cultures are related to tourism in many ways, important to all of these ways is the fact that there is no universal definition of indigenous peoples' relationship with tourism, but there are two broad definitions (Hinch & Butler, 2007). The first definition is about the understanding of tourism as an agent for indigenous economic independence, while the second understanding of indigenous tourism is of cultural revitalization as opposed to hegemonic subjugation and cultural degradation.

Indigenous tourism is about indigenous people and their culture. What differentiates the earlier definitions of indigenous tourism from the later definitions of indigenous tourism is the level of indigenous peoples' control, which some scholars argue could be determined by the level of successful sharing of tourism benefits (Cater, 1987; Sinclair, 2002).

1.3.1 Indigenous tourism in Malaysia

In 2009, the Malaysia Department of Statistics released its household income survey findings showing that Sabah's poverty rate is at 19.7%, while the Federation of Malaysia's average poverty rate is at 3.8% (*Household Income and Basic Amenities Survey Report 2009*, 2012). In 2009, Sabah's poverty level was almost five times higher above the nation's average. The predicament of Sabah is not hard to grasp since Sabah does not have many secondary industries e.g. manufacturing, or tertiary industries e.g. telecommunication-related, 70% of its economy comes from the export of crude palm oil and petroleum (Sabah Chief Minister and Finance Minister, 2012). Low domestic demand is a reason for the lack in Sabah's industrial development. Besides this, Sabah could not develop industries to fulfil international demands because it lacks skilled labourers, and has high transportation costs. These circumstances compelled Sabah to consider seriously the development of the industries that surround tourism, and developing these industries is the task of tourism developers. With Sabah's economy depending on only a handful of industries, what becomes more important to these developers is the need to make those industries sustainable. The sustainability of the management is dependent on the balance of social, economic and environmental aspects (Peters, 1998).

Malaysian indigenous peoples generally reside in rural, remote and sometimes ecologically sensitive regions of the country. In these regions, there are a number of tourism forms, and the reason for tourism here is either to improve the socio-economic positions of its residents or to

improve the conservation management of those places. Ecotourism, nature tourism and rural tourism are some of the tourism forms employed in those regions. In context of indigeneity, indigenous tourism would operate under the guises of ecotourism, culture tourism, rural tourism, and community-based tourism in Malaysia. The reason for the guise is largely economic, i.e. to improve the economic position of the indigenous people, and Sabah presents a situation that requires the use of tourism for economy. Because of economic demands, tourism studies that relate to indigenous people in Malaysia are more about the economic impact of tourism.

Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is a region rich in biological diversity. Because this recognition, which is worldwide, the region was identified as one of the regions identified in the Malaysia National Ecotourism Plan (WWF-Malaysia, 1997), a plan that outlined the development of ecotourism to bring about social, economic and environmental development. As a result, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, tourism had sharply specialized into something that is associated with the concept of environmental protection and conservation. This was confirmed in a study entitled *Perceptions of Local Communities on Nature Tourism Activities* at Lower Kinabatangan by Zulhamzan Hamzah, Maryatii Mohamed and Noriani Nasaruddin 2003 that was carried out during the 2002 Lower Kinabatangan Scientific Expedition. According to Hamzah et al. (2003), the indigenous peoples of Kinabatangan see tourism as a tool to protect their land which was undergoing tremendous ecological change as a result for deforestation.

Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourism studies focused on the impact of tourism on the economy and the environment. One study that focused on conservation and the people of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands was carried out by Normah Abdul Latip, Marzuki A, Pimid, M and Mohad Umzarulazijo Umar. Using SWOT⁵ analysis, Latip et al. (2015) was studied the

⁵ A quadrate analysis based on Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats of a particular matter

involvement of the Kinabatangan people in conservation. According to Latip et al. (2015), Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has three problems. The problems relate to the attitudes of all stakeholders, impaired planning of forest management and policy enforcement hindering conservation and tourism development. In relation to the economy and the sustainability of tourism-related businesses, another tourism study looked at the tourist's motivations and tourist's satisfactions. Jennifer Chan and Tom Baum presented findings about the motivations and satisfactions of tourists. According to Chan & Baum (2007a), tourists perceive Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands as a form of tourism that focuses on environment related activities. As a result, the region has a number of potential tourism attractions and motivation variables (Chan & Baum, 2007a, 2007b). It includes wildlife and eco-activities. Local lifestyles and the possibility to create a relationship with the indigenous community also motivate tourists to visit the region (Chan & Baum, 2007b). However, this is secondary to their wildlife related interest (Chan & Baum, 2007a, 2007b). Research studies determined that typical tourism media concentrated too specifically on certain tourist attractions, such as wildlife, encourages tourists to move away from indigenous populations and cultural contact (Adams, 1984; Bhattacharyya, 1997; Buck, 1977).

1.3.2 Benefit sharing and indigenous peoples engagement in tourism

The recognition that certain forms of tourism do not always guarantee positive benefits to indigenous people is a reason for the popularity of visualizing indigenous-based tourism as a good form of tourism because of its approach to benefit-sharing.

While there may be many kinds of benefit-sharing mechanisms, the preferred approach is the community-based tourism, and this is because a socialistic approach has always been the backbone of any indigenous community survival. This approach is largely driven by the public sector (Buultjens, Waller, Graham, & Carson, 2005). As such, definitions and contexts

relationship between tourism and indigenous people is based on broad public sector practices. An example is the use of the term 'rural tourism', which implies a comparison with urbanized prosperity. The relationship between indigenous peoples and tourism in the context of culture tourism is from the socio-economic perspective. Through this perspective, tourism developers hope to elevate the position of indigenous peoples (Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2010).

Indigenous people are generally described as oppressed or underprivileged peoples. The notion that indigenous peoples should benefit from tourism is a noble aspiration. By comparison to other 'modern' groups of peoples, the described oppressed position or underprivileged position is not completely correct; it is important not to consider the experiences of indigenous people everywhere as the same (Higgins-Desboilles, 2004).

The main reason for the lack of indigenous participation in tourism is the notion that tourism is based on western-controlled understandings, resulting in it being a western construct (Cater, 2006). For ecotourism, the understanding that it is a western construct is rooted in the concept of conservation that has become the foundation of ecotourism. Conservation is a concept where a resource needs to be used sparingly so as not to reduce the future generation's opportunity to use it. This concept emerged in the midst of uncontrolled exploitation of resources by local communities trying to be on par with western societies.

In a case study of the Mayan people in Palenque, Mexico, Adrian Mendoza Ramos and Bruce Prideaux examined issues of empowerment in relation to the involvement of indigenous communities in tourism. Ramos and Prideaux (2014) argued that indigenous communities are confronted with empowerment issues when participating in the tourism economy. Using an analytical tool known as the Wheel of Empowerment, Ramos and Prideaux were able to determine the level of empowerment/disempowerment of the Mayan people, and they found

that there is lack of understanding of ecotourism and its benefits among community leadership. Ramos and Prideaux concluded that the community leadership's failure to understand the requisite power to become involved in tourism affected the involvement of indigenous people in tourism. An approach that empowers indigenous people could bring about better distribution of tourism benefits. However, other research suggests partnership as a solution has its limits because, there is no guarantee of evenly distributed benefits (Johnston, 2006; Scantlebury, 2008), which is the central issue of sustainable tourism.

Jennifer Strickland-Munro and Susan Moore investigated the involvement of indigenous communities in tourism and the benefits that they receive from tourism. According to Strickland-Munro and Moore (2013), tourism benefit-sharing is not a panacea, nor is it free from complications since it is regarded as a foreign activity to the indigenous people. In a case study about the involvement of the Warman community in tourism at Purnululu National Park, they argued that the culture of the community determined how the members perceived tourism benefits, and noted that economic benefits are not what the community is looking for. Rather, the community is seeking both physical and spiritual reconnection with their environment through tourism.

As for culture tourism, community-based tourism and rural tourism, the western construct is rooted in the concept of 'otherness' where the utilization and commodification of culture is undertaken in an inappropriate manner (Bunten, 2010; Macleod, 2006). According to Macleod (2006), improper commodification causes tourists to remain in a 'bubble' of their own and have minimal contact with indigenous people; the indigenous peoples have difficulty in occupying a space in the tourists' bubble. Of course, there is also appropriate utilization of culture for tourism, and this has encouraged indigenous peoples' relationship with tourism.

Tourism scholars generally see tourism bringing positive benefits to the indigenous peoples of Malaysia. Through tourism, the human assets, financial assets, physical and social assets of indigenous people of Malaysia are stated to have increased (Salleh et al., 2013). This finding was presented in a paper titled *The effects of tourism development towards livelihood sustainability of the Orang Asli⁶ at the Kg Sg. Ruil, Cameron Highlands* by Norlida Salleh, Redzuan Othman, Siti Hajar Idris, Ahmad Jaafar and Doris Selvaratnam. In 2008, I took part in a scientific expedition at Lojing Highlands, about 12 kilometres from the Cameron Highlands, co-organized by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan and Universiti Malaysia Sabah. At Lojing Highlands, the government applied the concept of Fortress Conservation⁷ and the *Orang Asli* community was relocated. The community's new location is equipped with many types of infrastructures and amenities. Such condition would no doubt influence the findings of Salleh et al. (2013), but tourism literature contains many findings where indigenous people are seen only as tourism suppliers (Richards, 1990). For the indigenous people to be more involved in tourism than just being tourism suppliers, I suggested the development of an integrated nature tourism belt between Lojing and Gua Musang where culture and nature are gradually incorporated into mass tourism (Peters, 2010).

Another approach to relate indigenous people of Malaysia in tourism is through homestay. As a tourism project, homestay allows home-owners to prepare accommodation to visitors. Tourism activities could then be offered. In *Homestay Programme as a Malaysian Tourism Product* published in 2011, Kalsom Kayat documented the pros and cons of rural tourism to indigenous communities. According to Kayat (2011, p.152), although Malaysia had established

⁶ *Orang Asli* is a generic term that described the indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia

⁷ Fortress Conservation is a conservation model based on the belief that biodiversity protection is best achieved by creating protected areas in isolation from human disturbance.

guidelines for homestays that involved indigenous peoples, problems still persisted. Kayat attributes problems originating from ineffective guidelines.

The economic and cultural definitions of indigenous tourism and their purposes may come into conflict. In 1993, Valda Blundell conducted a study into the empowerment of Canada's indigenous people in the trade of souvenirs. According to Blundell (1993), the Canadian state responded to the empowerment of its indigenous people in a contradictory way with policies for indigenous economic development; in these policies, indigenous economic development is in tension with policies promoting cultural tourism.

This is now a common occurrence in the development of indigenous-based tourism in Malaysia. This is exemplified by Abby Liu in her findings about tourism policy and guidelines problem in her 2006 article entitled *Tourism in rural area: Kedah, Malaysia*. Tourism developers and indigenous people have different development objectives that eventually lead to a lack of participation by indigenous people in tourism and the maintenance of indigenous knowledge as essential for tourism (Liu, 2006). According to Liu (2006), indigenous people do not really gain sufficient benefits from tourism. Misunderstandings emerged during many tourism stakeholders' negotiations. As a result, these misunderstandings made indigenous people unwilling tourism stakeholder

In 2010, David Weaver developed a model to facilitate an understanding of the positions that indigenous peoples occupy when involved with tourism. According to Weaver (2010), indigenous peoples' positions depend on the stage of tourism evolution. Weaver proposed a six-stage evolution with the stages based on the level of indigenous control and the presence of an indigenous theme. These stages range from one that is western-controlled to the one that is indigenous-controlled, and emerged out of the need to evaluate and monitor tourism

dimensions such as the control over, and authenticity of, a product. Weaver's model begins with (1) pre-European *in situ* control, characterized by high local control and indigenous theme; (2) *in situ* exposure occurs in the early stages of colonialism and is followed by (3) *ex situ* exhibitionism and exploitation as native artefacts are displayed in museums and exhibitions. The opening of remnant indigenous spaces to tourist visits marks (4) *in situ* exhibitionism and exploitation, which represents the nadir of indigenous control but fosters strategies of resistance. Reassertions of indigenous control give rise to what Weaver understood as (5) *in situ* quasi-empowerment, while the extension of this control to previously occupied territory characterizes (6) *ex situ* quasi-empowerment and the presence of "shadow indigenous tourism". The model shows that there are a number of stages to the involvement of indigenous people in tourism. These stages seemed sequential but, in reality, they are not. While Weaver provided a description of the relationship that indigenous people could have with tourism, he did not provide a comprehensive explanation of the dynamics involved when moving from one stage to another stage, although he believes that such development would involve resistance and adaptation between indigenous peoples and tourists. The value of Weaver's model is that contextualizes some of the different responses indigenous communities have had in relation to benefit sharing initiatives, as well as highlighting the relationship between cultural authenticity and issues of control. The concept of authenticity has been described in literature so often that it has become a yardstick for indigenous tourism.

1.3.3 Limitation of cultural authenticity in tourism as an issue

Problems relating to indigenous-based tourism studies often revolve around the representation of indigenous people through tourism. Misunderstanding is one of Malaysia's core tourism problems. While misunderstanding exist under any place and condition, it is more serious when it appears in tourism policies and guidelines. Liu's (2006) finding fed into the general narrative

that “in past centuries [indigenous people] were seen as adversaries, heathens to be proselytized, savages to be civilized, but most importantly, they were cheap labour. Now they are performers on a tourism stage” (Whittaker, 1999, p.33). Although indigenous tourism was introduced to overcome indigenous peoples’ challenges, it is merely a redressing position of indigenous peoples as oppressed people (Whittaker, 1999).

Alison Johnston captured this problem in her 2006 book, *Is the sacred for sale? Tourism and indigenous peoples*. In her book, Johnston (2006) states that tourism has the ability to take away tourism players rights, leaving them with nothing to gain. In order to address concerns about the authenticity of an indigenous tourism destination, it is important to use indigenous products that are embedded within the culture, and authorized for use in this fashion (Butler & Hinch, 1997).

Management of a tourism destination can draw from any source of knowledge, including knowledge of the indigenous people. Tourism developers operating between tourists and indigenous people, may need to transform indigenous peoples’ knowledge and tourists’ knowledge into something they can understand before deciding how best to transmit that knowledge to members the other group. Perceptions of indigenous people are crucial to the way in which tourists become involved at a tourism destination that is evolving.

A danger of this process is that commodification of indigenous culture within tourism may lead to a perception of the product’s inauthenticity: “Commodification and commercialization of culture, and subsequent loss of authenticity have increasingly worried cultural commentators, and critics of tourism have often blamed tourism for causing these problems” (Butler & Hinch, 1997, p. 160). This is a concern that has been expressed by guests and hosts alike (Ryan & Aicken, 2010).

The first issue facing indigenous tourism concerns the need for tourism products and services to display indigeneity. The study of indigenous knowledge in tourism that is most similar to my own research was conducted by Alexis Celeste Bunten and presented in an article entitled *More like ourselves: Indigenous capitalism through tourism*. Like me, Bunten is an indigenous person who has worked extensively in the tourism industry. Bunten is specifically interested in the representation of indigenous knowledge in tourism. According to Bunten, tourism players' values could set apart indigenous-owned tourism from its mainstream counterparts. Indigenous communities are always looking for "frameworks to create ethically sound businesses that are responsive to local value systems" (Bunten, 2010, p. 287). This is no easy task because the commoditization of living culture gives birth to an acute paradox of representation where tourism players seek the 'otherness' in the midst of stereotyped representations. For Bunten (2010), the fundamental problem is that indigenous people are easily disfranchised and unable to capitalize upon their cultural patrimony. While studies are underway and steps are being developed, based on personal and professional experiences, those studies and steps have yet to reach the multi-disciplinary level needed for the engagement of indigenous peoples. Bunten summed up her perspective by quoting from the Maori-owned Wakatu Incorporation's project manager's speech delivered at the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association 2007 Conference – "We know we don't want to commercialize our cultures. We are to culturize our commerce!"

To culturize commerce and achieve ethical, culturally appropriate and successful indigenous participation in the tourism economy, Bunten introduced the concept of "indigenous capitalism". This concept is expressed in a model that Bunten called the "Culture Tourism Formula". The model for creating an ethically sound business that is responsive to local values comprises a greeting, a guide, a heritage language usage demonstration, traditional architecture, a cultural performance, a handicraft demonstration, a gift shop, and a westernized native feast

to be made readily available at a tourism site. While the formula does not allow for a deeply personalized encounter with indigenous people, it would help indigenous people control their representation in tourism (Bunten, 2010). More importantly, Bunten's model encourages the development of tourism businesses that differ to the standardized approach of producing a product and a service.

Bunten believes that by considering tourism from a viewpoint that privileges an understanding of local values in business capacity building, the analytical focus moves away from tourism as a means of alleviating poverty to one that potentially provide economic gains for transmuting cultural and spiritual capital. For Bunten (2010, p. 306), "hospitality is inherently indigenous." But her concept of hospitality is left unexplored. Bunten's model, that is, the Culture Tourism Formula, may be viewed as a continuation of the ideological drift towards an indigenous form of hospitality (Bunten, 2010).

Bunten's perspective about tourism development has similarities to my own penned perspective in some ways. Based on a personal and professional understanding of tourism, we believe the contemporary approach to tourism development could use some improvements. The difference in our perspectives lies in the path to which we chose to contribute. Bunten aims at improving the mechanism of development in the context of commerce, while I choose to look at the mechanism in the context of the formation of a host-guest relationship. In other words, while Bunten looks at the exchange of goods and services, I look at the supplier-customer relationship. With such approaches, the concept of authenticity would be an issue that Bunten needed to address, while the concepts of communication and hospitality would be my issues to address.

Studies show that the amount of appropriate indigenous based information exchanged is crucial to the success of a tourism activity (Kayat, 2011; Liu, 2006; Notzke, 1999). In the literature, there is evidence that tourists have more meaningful experiences when they are guided by indigenous guides or when they are able to be close to the indigenous people (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2004; Ingram, 2005, p. 32). These observations have led to a number of suggestions that indigenous people should own tourism and its space (Fagence, 2003; Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Johnston, 2003; Wang, 2007; Wearing & McDonald, 2002). The suggestions also allowed the tourism space to expand so that both indigenous people and tourists can be included simultaneously. Much tourism activity research is technical with the objective of determining the existence of a critical point that would change the host-guest relationship (Bruner, 1991; Ryan & Aicken, 2010; Snepenger et al., 2007). The need to subscribe to the concept of authenticity relates to the understanding that indigenous empowerment is crucial to indigenous tourism.

1.4 Indigenous knowledge

In *Returning the sacred: Indigenous ontologies in perilous times* published in 2012, Makera Stewart-Harawira, an indigenous researcher with a First Nations heritage, makes a distinction between division between non-indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge. According to Stewart-Harawira, the difference lays in the way indigenous people and non-indigenous people view nature and the crisis associated to it. The differences are in the way environmental management is carried out, and the similarities that exist is about the perception of human being “dominant over creation or that creation exists for humankind to exploit” (2012, p. 81). The explanation of this difference is their ontological basis. If Indigenous and Western world-views were to be entwined, Stewart-Harawira acknowledges its difficulty since these worlds are very different. She believes that there is a “lack of political will to reconsider the ontological basis

of our systems of governance and their inextricable inter-relationship with our environment” (Stewart-Harawira, 2012, p. 74) in policy contexts sustained the difference. Nevertheless, she feels similarities between ontologies and epistemologies could be expressed in core sets of principles, beliefs, and ways of knowing that are held in common and that had been conveyed through ritual, customs and social structures. These similarities could be the bridge between Indigenous and Western world-views. Stewart-Harawira identified four principles that bridge the two world-views. The first principle is about ontologies that time is spiralling. This principle relates to the interrelationships of past, present and future, of time and space, of spirit and matter (Stewart-Harawira 2012, p. 77). The second principle is about the sense of sacredness of nature that appeared in both western traditions and indigenous traditions. The third principle is about the process of alienation and sacralisation (Stewart-Harawira, 2012, p. 79), a process within the human-nature relationship where there is the assumption of the entitlement of nature’s commodification; we believe that we are all entitled to commodify nature. The fourth principle is about crisis studies and social sciences (Stewart-Harawira, 2012, p. 79), and it is about human ecology paying more attention on the development of pragmatic solutions rather than the mitigation of a crisis. Stewart-Harawira (2012) calls for the recognition of the efficacy of traditional worldviews and knowledge systems in recovering the lost environmental balance, and more importantly, that central to this recovery is the entwining of the spiritual with the material world.

The perception of knowledge of the indigenous people changes with time. The book entitled *Shamans through time* (2004) is a compilation by Jeremy Narby and Francis Huxley of archived documents of changes spanning some 500 years. In that compilation, the perception of shamans’ knowledge, and its synonyms, has changed over time. According to Narby and Huxley (2004), where once society thought indigenous knowledge amounted to nothing more than just information; today, it is regarded as a valid form of knowledge. They claimed that

society's acceptance of the notion of self-interpretation as part of knowledge formation is the reason for indigenous knowledge having a positive value. Indigenous knowledge has more to offer than just being a product.

Indigenous knowledge arises from the relationship between indigenous communities and their environment. Indigenous knowledge is seen as knowledge generated by indigenous people from that specific environment to illustrate the best manner in which an organism can function in an optimum manner in such an environment; it is a purposeful knowledge for causality with a local environment. This knowledge includes the knowledge of utilizing materials readily found in that environment to aid one's needs to adapt to that environment, and the knowledge allows a person to occupy a niche in that particular environment. It encompasses traditional practices and culture and the knowledge of plants, animals and of their methods of propagation, and it includes the expressions of cultural values, beliefs, rituals and communities laws (Joranson, 2008; Rinkevich, 2008; Sexton, 2008). It is passed down between generations in song, in story, and in genealogies, kept alive by knowledge holders. The indigenous knowledge is unique because it brings about efficiency in an underdeveloped environment or rural environment to its user; in an underdeveloped environment or rural environment, other types of knowledge might fail. This knowledge is a defining characteristic of indigenous peoples. However, to appreciate indigenous knowledge, it would "requires partnership, connectivity and knowledge-sharing at the deepest level" (Stewart-Harawira, 2012, p. 88). Because of this, the global community recognizes the important of indigenous knowledge. This recognition is inscribed in the 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.' According to the declaration, indigenous knowledge is important because it could provide lessons in managing the earth's environment; it is for "sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment" (UN, 2008, p. 2). Although the United Nations

acknowledged the importance of indigenous knowledge, it had never subscribed to one universal definition.

Different people in different places had their own understandings and meanings of indigenous knowledge (Viergever, 1999, p. 333; Nakata, 2007, p. 185). This has resulted in a number of definitions of indigenous knowledge to appear in literature. One definition was given by Paul Mundy through an article entitled *Indigenous knowledge and communication: current approaches*. According to Mundy (1993, p. 1), indigenous knowledge is “knowledge developed by local people and passed down over generations”. Another definition of indigenous knowledge came from Kate Joranson in her article entitled *Indigenous knowledge and the knowledge commons*. To Joranson (2008, p. 64), indigenous knowledge is defined as knowledge “held *in common* among members of a local communities, and in many cases functions as a knowledge common”. A third definition comes from Ole Magga, who defines indigenous knowledge as “knowledge developed and hold by the original inhabitants of an area and their use of it in daily life” (2005, p. 2).

All three definitions share a similar weakness. Indigenous knowledge may be lost. The practical knowledge e.g. traditional ecological knowledge about medicinal plants may not be used in the daily life of people when there is modern medicine. Moreover, whether this knowledge is passed down through generations will depend on educational contexts, and finally, this knowledge may not be held in common, for instance, if there are different rights to knowledge within a society - such as in Australian Aboriginal societies. Nevertheless, the most promising definition is that by Magga. It is promising because it emphasizes the people’s locality and their engagement with its environment and because it extends the definition beyond simple knowledge of facts.

In this project, the definition of indigenous knowledge is taken as a knowledge generated by indigenous people of a specific environment that illustrates the best manner for a human being to function in that environment. The ability to occupy the environment or space is drawn from personal understanding and/or the understanding of the community that he or she belongs to. This definition of indigenous knowledge takes indigenous knowledge as a form of dynamic knowledge integral to both the physical environment and the social environment of communities, and which benefits the communities. This suggests something is still indigenous knowledge even if it is not common knowledge, if transmission of the knowledge has been broken, or the practice has been superseded.

To allow cross-disciplinary studies, many scholars conveniently compartmentalized indigenous knowledge and described it based on systems of knowing; indigenous knowledge had been “objectivized and commodified” (Pumpa, Wyeld & Adkins, 2006, p. 1). As a result, indigenous knowledge could be seen based on its knowledge systems. These systems include traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous educational systems and indigenous health systems. To date, we have 11 different types of indigenous knowledge systems that were drawn from scholars like Sufian Bukurura (1995), Ole Magga (2005), Mogomme Masoga (2007), and Felix Tongkul (2002). Figure 1.2 shows all of the knowledge systems currently in the literature.



Figure 1.2: The different knowledge systems of indigenous knowledge compiled from Bukurura (1995), Magga (2005), Masoga (2007), and Tongkul (2002)

Figure 1.2 shows indigenous knowledge being built on at least 11 different knowledge systems. These knowledge systems do not have distinct boundaries and sometimes the systems overlap each with other. For example, the resource management system comprises information about herbs, like wild yam, that could be used in the making of a traditional medicine. Some of those herbs require special planting practices that might have been described under the indigenous agriculture system. The way a young indigenous person acquires such knowledge is through observation of older indigenous people working is called the indigenous education system (Tongkul, 2002). Although indigenous knowledge systems have no clear boundaries, there is not one system of indigenous knowledge that governs the relationship between an indigenous host and his or her guest; indigenous hospitality as a system of knowing has yet to be fully appreciated.

1.4.1 Knowledge communication

Knowledge itself does not have a form; it appears visible through our actions. Because of this, Martin Eppler argued that the best way of describing knowledge is through the way it is communicated. According to Eppler (2006), the communication of knowledge involves exchanges of know-what, know-how, know-why and know-who. Know-what relates to the results of that task; know-how refers to manner by which a task is to be accomplished; know-who is the association of experiences with others people who have performed the task; and know-why is the cause-effect relationship associated with that task. Eppler (2006) believes that the attributes of knowledge and the communication of knowledge resolve opinion differences regarding what knowledge is. The communication of knowledge allows us to know what indigenous knowledge is. According to Eppler (2006), when an individual makes some communicative actions that another individual successfully constructs into an insight, experience, or skill, knowledge has been communicated. From Eppler's perspective, know-what and know-how are usually discussed when describing indigenous knowledge. Knowledge about plants and animals forms the part of indigenous knowledge that many refer as the know-what attribute of indigenous knowledge. Methods of propagation, usages, and consumption are grouped in the know-how attribute of indigenous knowledge. Although these attributes are different, in the context of indigenous knowledge, scholars tend to describe and discuss both of them as traditional ecological knowledge. The final attribute of indigenous knowledge is 'know-why' or the purpose of expression. This purpose is always in the context of maturity and in the context of diligence. In the context of maturity, since know-what and know-how allow a person to appreciate their surroundings better, the purpose of expressing indigenous knowledge is according to a tradition (i.e., guidelines and rules associated with that environment). The 'know-why' aspect of indigenous knowledge will allow that person not just to survive but to also grow in that surrounding. In the context of diligence, the application of

guidelines and rules matches the stage of maturity a person has attained. Since know-why includes concepts that increase with experience, an older person, or well-established agency is usually accorded as an authoritative voice. Although Eppler (2006) did not elaborate on what constitutes these attributes, his examples can lead us to understand further what indigenous knowledge is. Hence, it would be easier to describe knowledge through the actions that are associated with it.

Due to the complexity of indigenous knowledge systems, their communication provides a convenient way of understanding them. Many fundamental studies about indigenous communication were carried out subjectively on aspects such as indigenous etiquette, and body languages (Davidson, Hansford, & Moriarty, 1983; Mundy, Compton, & Warren, 1995). These fundamental studies suggest indigenous communication is about someone gaining or drawing knowledge directly from the environment (Damarin, 1996). Hence, in general, indigenous communication revolves around hands-on demonstrations (Tongkul, 2002), but the use of communication as an avenue to understanding indigenous knowledge has its own set of problems. According to Aaron Mushengyezi (2003), most communication studies are about modern media and because of this do not represent the communication of indigenous people. Indigenous communication involves stories and demonstrations (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999). Within these stories and demonstrations, information is passed along using mediums such as plants, animals and natural materials. Engagement with the environment may therefore be considered a medium for the transmission of indigenous knowledge as “traditional education processes were carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plant and animal world, and using natural materials to make their tools and implements” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999, p. 1). This point will be shown to be important in Chapter 4, where I explore what happens to indigenous knowledge in tourism. The conception of indigenous knowledge as embedded in experience and

communicated within practical situations influenced how I analysed and interpreted the exchange of knowledge between indigenous hosts and tourists.

Communication is a complicating group factor to the indigenous host-guest relationship. This factor usually relates to the processing of a relationship, and there are two ways to look at it. It could be seen in the context of the type of information exchanged between host and guest that is capable of driving the relationship towards collectivism or towards individualism (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), or in the context of the applied technology that eventually determines the use of a technology as the basis for the relationship (Adler, 1989). One example of the second kind is shown in a study carried out by Kevin Markwell. Markwell (1997) investigated tourists' photographic behaviour in the East of the Malaysian federation. The research showed tourists take fewer photographs once they become involved in the local surroundings. In Chapter 4, I show how western books about species and images take this role in relation to the relationship between indigenous guides and visitors to the region.

The second complicating factor is the type of knowledge that is to be the foundation of indigenous tourism development. According to Gerberich (2005), many tourism scholars have assumed indigenous people are not familiar with tourism routines and tourism spaces. This assumption meant that scholars overlooked the possibility that indigenous people have an understanding of tourism. This assumption suggests indigenous people do not have the necessary knowledge to operate tourism businesses (Fuller et al., 2005; Johnston, 2000; Liu, 2006; Razzaq et al., 2012). As a result, some stakeholders tend to use western knowledge for tourism to manage indigenous people (Liu, 2006). Although there are some discussions about the indigenous concept of hospitality, the current literature about the understanding of hospitality among indigenous peoples is still limited both ontologically and epistemologically.

This limitation is the basis for the belief among tourism scholars that tourism is alien to indigenous people (see, for example, Strickland-Munro & Moore (2013).

1.5 Cross-cultural communication and its influences on indigenous tourism

As Higgins-Desbiolles notes, “The contemporary, ‘western’ understanding of tourism comes from a rather narrow set of experiences and philosophies, which results in its emphasis on a highly individualistic and marketised tourism. In mainstream tourism literature, it is difficult to find academic contributions to the critique of tourism that approach the topic from a ‘non-western’ perspective” (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2004, p. 1202). This thesis addresses the literature’s gap by studying how indigenous knowledge is shared within a tourism context.

Studies of tourism communications have largely focused on three main dimensions including guest and host relations, tourism networks, and a tourist’s social network. The host-guest relationship is an old but important subject in the field of tourism and hospitality studies; it forms the basis for tourism and the practice of hospitality. This is particularly important in cross-cultural communications.

The Coorong Wilderness Lodge is a tourism enterprise project adjacent to the Australian Coorong National Park that was established by the indigenous Ngarrindjeri community to affirm the community's role in tourism. Founded in 1997 by the late George Trevorrow, the brainchild of the Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre, this project aimed at improving the indigenous peoples’ tourism participation and image (Higgins-Desbiolles, Trevorrow, & Sparrow, 2014). The project received support from both the indigenous Ngarrindjeri community and the South Australian tourism authority. Although the project received adequate support, it failed to achieve its tourism targets.

A study was carried out by Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, George Trevorrow and Syd Sparrow to explain this failure. In their study, they uncovered several different views of tourism development. Using social construction theory, Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2014) described several stories of the development of the Coorong Wilderness Lodge tourism project. From those stories, they argued that the tourism project did not account for the context of the tourism development. According to Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2014), the various different views of tourism impacted on the project by creating barriers. These barriers emerged when both the indigenous community and the tourism authority could not agree on the negotiation process of the project's design (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2014). As a result, the project did not conform to common business project development norms, and the tourism authority delayed their support. The decade-long delay since establishment caused the indigenous community to lose focus. Resolution of the Coorong tourism project only came through the intervention of a broker who possessed both indigenous and business understanding (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2014). Based on the historical development of the lodge, Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2014) claimed that "poor communication and poor understanding that arises from a lack of cultural understanding has led to poor outcomes and suspicions on both sides of the exchange" (p. 54). The Coorong Wilderness Lodge project showed that communications play a crucial part to the success of an indigenous tourism project since its players were all coming into the project with different backgrounds.

The type of communication that has received the most focus is that establishing a relationship between guest and host. Scholars such as David Snepenger, Mary Snepenger, Matt Dalbey and Amanda Wessol (2007), and Chris Ryan and Michele Aicken (2010) became interested in this relationship because they found that having similar views could ensure tolerance. According to Snepenger et al. (2007), a relationship is forged at places where both guest and host are present and, at such place, a new communication system is formed. According to Snepenger et

al. (2007), the new communication system is established based upon a series of factors. Among the factors include the uniqueness of the information and its communication processes, the usability of the exchanged information, and the pleasures that the communication provides (Snepenger et al., 2007). These factors influence the conditions that exist at a tourism destination by making the destination's characteristics new and thrilling and socially important. These conditions are also practical, in that the characteristics become a talking point among tourism players. This is because hosts would not share places of low social importance with their guests where a genuine relationship has been formed (Snepenger et al., 2007). When hosts and guests have similar views as a result of sharing, they might be more tolerant towards each other (Ryan & Aicken, 2010). However, since tourism does not necessarily promote tolerance among tourism players (Bruner, 1991; Ryan & Aicken, 2010), the factors identified by Snepenger et al. (2007) do not necessarily promote communications or establish a communication system. Issues derived from the learned factors help maintain the indigenous host-guest relationship by overcoming unwanted interferences to the relationship (Hinch & Butler, 2007). The relationship between indigenous peoples and tourists is either a positive relationship or a negative relationship. In a positive relationship, tourists feel welcomed and the indigenous peoples' positions improves (Ioannides, 1992); in a negative relationship, tourists feel unwelcomed and the indigenous population becomes marginalized (Sofield, 1996).

Studies about tourism communication are plentiful, and one can find those studies either under cross-cultural communication studies or in mass communication studies. In many cross-cultural communication studies, the central issues are misunderstanding and miscommunication. The aims of those studies are to identify the factors involved and to determine the mechanisms that hinder communication. In relation to indigenous-based tourism, among many factors leading to failures of communication, the formation and communication of a stereotyped image of people is a factor most discussed. In general, when individuals cross

cultural boundaries through face-to-face encounters, they naturally tend to rely on stereotypical conceptions of each other to frame and structure the interactions (Evans-Pritchard, 1989). Of course, Evans-Pritchard (1989) argued that people tend to translate messages using frames of references most beneficial to themselves when conceptualizing interactions. According to Evans-Pritchard (1989), the outcome of the conception is either the majority oppressing minorities or the minority being empowered. Because of the general negative impact of stereotyping, cultural stereotyping has been well-documented (Echtner, 2010; Nepal, 2005; Ong, 2008). Most of these studies addressing the problem in cross-cultural communication suggest that either the visitor or the host needs to adapt to the culture and language of the other (e.g., the host becomes more adaptive and hospitable) and tourism players have to be more empathic about each other (Ryan & Aicken, 2010). But not all documentation of cultural stereotyping shows negative impacts. Beside the drawbacks of image stereotyping, Evans-Pritchard (1989) found that stereotype images have their usefulness in the formation of the host-guest relationship. According to Evans-Pritchard (1989), the practice of stereotyping images is a negotiation technique to overcome the negative attitudes of hosts or guests. Accordingly, stereotyped images help protect the privacy of the host. Hence, stereotype images depend on and protect a culture; but at the same time, stereotype images may also lead to cultural discrimination. These studies highlight the significance of cultural mechanisms, such as institutions, to the sustainability of tourism.

Intercultural communications studies have yielded results that provide a better understanding of the indigenous host-guest relationship. In these studies, hosts and guests, it is argued, operate on different sets of cultural norms; indigenous hosts are always seen as better off operating as a community, while guests are always individualistic (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001). The writing of Mehmet Mehmetoglu suggests differently. According to Mehmetoglu (2007), tourists' motivations and preparedness to visit indigenous tourism destinations imply

the existence of prior knowledge, that is, being considerate to the 'shortcomings' of the indigenous people. This prior knowledge may also exist among indigenous people since these people also consider the 'shortcomings' of tourists in terms of non-western hospitality where knowledge exchange readily occurs in a close-spaced relationship (Teo, 2008) includes reciprocating acts (Heuman, 2005).

Although communication studies are able to identify factors of miscommunication and determine its mechanisms, the sustainability of tourism is still questionable. To explore further the sustainability of tourism, there is a growing interest among non-western societies to explore the influence of other forms of hospitality. Because of the limited exploration into the indigenous concept of hospitality, there is a huge research opportunity for research on the subject.

1.5.1 Hospitality and its communication

As a concept, hospitality is not fully understood by all those who involve themselves in the enterprise of tourism. Tourism operators generally see hospitality as part of service and different from the human condition. However, this concept is central to reciprocation in social life, and cross cultural communication.

One of the earliest presentations of the philosophy of hospitality was by Jacques Derrida. According to Derrida (2000), when a foreigner seeks hospitality from a host, the foreigner firstly needs to appreciate the host's language, which places the foreigner in a lesser position. In such a position, the host has the power and opportunity to share knowledge, while the foreigner has the opportunity to receive knowledge. However, this is possible when both host and guest speak the same language. The formation of a relationship and the offering of hospitality is part of speaking the same language (Derrida, 2000).

Hospitality is a driver in the host-guest relationship. It is defined as an act of sharing (Telfer, 2013). People's engagement and awareness are crucial to the generation of hospitality (Tregua, Russo-Spena, & Casbarra, 2015); even simple but frequent conversation generates hospitality and lessens the gap between two individuals (Garzaniti, Pearce, & Stanton, 2011). Hosts and guests equally influence their relationship, which in turn influences tourism (Gnoth, Andreu, & Kozak, 2009). The two factors that help form a relationship are the host's positive attitude towards the guest and the intention of the guest merely visit a destination (Gudykunst, 1983).

So far in the tourism literature, there are only a few studies about hospitality among non-western societies. Both those that address the topics I explore in this thesis concern the Māori in New Zealand.

In 2001, Shirley Barnett highlighted the need to recognize a guest relationship as a specific Māori experience. Barnett's case relates to a group of accommodation business providers that had difficulty in gaining more support from local New Zealand tourism authorities. According to Barnett, the standardized indigenous tourism of New Zealand does not acknowledge certain kinds of tourism businesses. The Aotearoa Maori Tourism Federation (AMTF) has taken upon itself to support the aspirations and needs of Maori tourism operators by creating an environment conducive for the success of the operators. In general, AMTF accord recognition when a tourism businesses was able to fulfil tourists' demands of having contacts with Māori culture through the commodification of the culture into certain tourism crafts, arts and spaces and the marketing it as indigenous-based tourism. Barnett's research noted that many the tourism operators subscribed to this approach. These operators had incorporated Māori traditions, such as greetings, into their operations, employed Māori or made show pieces, such as traditional costume, a part of their brand. But she also uncovered some operators who were offering additional Māori experiences that could have an impact on the communication of

culture in tourism and its marketing. Among the experiences that Barnett noted was the *marae* stay experience.

The *marae* is a traditional home of Māori. It is a place where family events like weddings and birthdays are carried out. In Barnett's case study, some *marae* operators provide guided tours and interpretation for their guests. According to Barnett, a *marae* stay can be an in-depth cultural experience for some tourists beginning with a *powhiri* (welcoming ceremony) and concluding a few days later with a *poroporoaki* (leave taking speeches). Although the study was exploratory, Barnett argued that the *marae* experience should be recognized as part of New Zealand's indigenous tourism landscape. By having it recognized, the country's marketing efforts would reflect its social uniqueness besides just the icons or attractions. Once recognized by tourism authorities, this indigenous experience would be another essential feature of Māori tourism, and the Māori accommodation providers would be seen as part of New Zealand's indigenous tourism industry (Barnett, 2001, pp. 83-92).

In 2012, Ana Maria Pineda, a theologian, carried out a study of Māori hospitality. Pineda explored the group's concept of hospitality as depicted by their word *mannakitanga*⁸. According to Pineda (2012), *mannakitanga* is linked to a system and practice of gift-giving whereby the roles of guest and host are reversible and interchangeable over time, and circumstances whereby it is held in "a privileged, even sacred, place," so much so that the English word 'hospitality' is unable to fully account for its meaning (Pineda, 2012, p. 317). Other understandings of indigenous hospitality, equally important to mention, include the

⁸ This is a Māori word that carries the meaning of hospitality, kindness, generosity and support. (Retrieved from <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&keywords=manaakitanga> on October 09, 2015)

cordial conversation with guests, information exchange between people, and communications with foreign worlds (Chakyroglu & Suiyerkul, 2014).

No doubt the Maori people are different from other indigenous groups. But Barnett's case study is an important indigenous tourism case study because it highlights a type of indigenous experience that many tourism players do not recognize. The *marae* homestay is like a Malaysian homestay business that provided guided tours and interpretation for their guests. Moreover, it is the context within which this communication takes place. This experience enriches indigenous tourism. It could strengthen the host-guest relationship, and on this ground the Barnett's case is similar with my thesis.

1.6 Theoretical approach

While Makera Stewart-Harawira discusses the principles of associating different knowledge together according to what which she argues that western and indigenous ontological world-views can be made compatible, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) has focused on the issue of methods for researching indigenous people. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* presents an approach to indigenous research methods through which indigenous peoples and their culture may become the subject rather than the object of the research project. She begins by providing a brief history of the study of indigenous peoples, which, she points out, has largely been from a foreigner's perspective; it is now gearing towards an indigenous perspective. This process of change has been slow, and has involved two critical periods. In the eighteenth century, the first critical period, the separation of religion from academic research meant that the research was characterized by discrete scientific methods and findings. The second critical period was during the nineteenth century where the research was characterized by social sciences. Currently, with the possibility of discovering

fundamental systems of social organizations, indigenous-based studies becoming crucial. More recently, indigenous people argued “the validity of indigenous knowledge” and the authenticity of commodified knowledge (Smith 2012, p. 104).

In general, there are three issues that govern indigenous research. The first issue is the research agenda. While indigenous based research has a number of agendas, its central agenda is self-determination. The second issue concerns how the research agenda is constructed in terms of a project. Smith offered three approaches to the process of construction based on the size of the population i.e. community research, tribal research, and insider/outsider research. Community research looks at the nested identity of indigenous people that have emerged as a result boundaries being created around a particular community (Smith 2012, p. 126), and this leads to the research process taking precedent over the research outcome (Smith 2012, p. 128). As for the tribal research, a larger population size makes this type of research focusing on specific indigenous activities with consultation, collective meetings, open debate and shared decision-making processes becoming are crucial to this approach (Smith 2012, p. 129). Insider/outsider research is an approach that has two sides (Smith 2012, p. 137). An outsider’s perspective related to positivism and notions of objectivity and neutrality. In contrast, an insider’s standpoint is based on an ethics of care. The final issue of indigenous research is about the methods used in the research, which may include story-telling, testimonies, representing, reframing, restoring, and connecting.

Both Smith and Stewart-Harawira emphasize the difference between insider perspectives and outsider perspectives i.e. westerners perspectives as a difference between positivist or objectifying research and the opposite. The truth of this is that indigenous people have been objects of research, rather than in control of the research questions and process. However, not all outsider perspectives involve adopting positivist methods. For instance, ethnographic

documentations and interview techniques are not associated with positivism. What is important in the indigenous research project is that it stamps a difference between indigenous people being an object of research and indigenous people controlling what questions are asked or the processes that are used. As an insider (indigenous person), I view the world in a different way, and because of this, I ask different questions and acknowledge different kinds of knowledge construction.

A positivist perspective is associated with a world view that emphasizes modern scientific empirical method, and it is important not to demonize positivism or empiricism. According to the theory of positivism, “all knowledge is ultimately based on sense experience”, and “all genuine inquiry is concerned with description and explanation of empirical facts” (Mautner 1996, p. 331). As a trained ecologist, I find myself conceding some value in an empirical research method. However, as an indigenous person of Sabah, I am aware that there are different ways of knowing that are beyond empirical means. Moreover, positivism does not allow some questions to be asked and thus may hide different aspects of the world.

To understand the process of cross-cultural communication in hospitality, and what occurs to indigenous knowledge in tourism, I draw on Hans-Georg Gadamer’s perspective on the formation of truth. According to Gadamer (1985), when observing other people, it is impossible for us to remove ourselves from our history, culture, language or education and make an unbiased observation. Gadamer (1985) added that we necessarily interpret other cultures based on our own past experiences and our prejudices. Accordingly, it is through reflection that a person can become conscious of their historical limitations of understanding; during discourse, a fusion of horizons takes place between the perspectives of listener and speaker.

In asking what happens to indigenous knowledge in tourism, I am necessarily asking how this knowledge is transmitted. As hospitality is a situation whereby people share information and formulate knowledge, I argue that the situation of hospitality is the condition under which a “fusion of horizons” may occur between the host and guest. Using Gadamer’s perspective, we can learn about hospitality. This approach to indigenous knowledge explains my approach to the study of communication in this thesis.

Tourism studies concerning indigenous peoples are complex. How a tourism destination changes is crucial to a host-guest relationship study. It is crucial because any relationship formed in that destination would inversely change the destination accordingly. Moreover, in many studies about host-guest relationship, historical elements are generally overlooked; the history of tourism at a particular tourism location is generally undocumented. As an attempt to understand the impact of appreciation of knowledge, we must see what knowledge is used and how it is used within the tourism network. In the next four chapters, I present background material introducing the Dusun Sungai people, the history of tourism in their region, the impact of tourism, and the associated factors.

Chapter 2 Dusun Sungai People

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the research location and the Dusun Sungai people. To begin understanding the Dusun Sungai people, I provide a brief history of Sabah, the Dusun group, the history and culture of the Dusun Sungai people. The current economic status of the Dusun Sungai people concludes this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the identity of the Dusun Sungai people that is supposedly to be the basis for indigenous tourism and how that identity is recognized (or lack of) in the Malaysian constitution, and in academia.

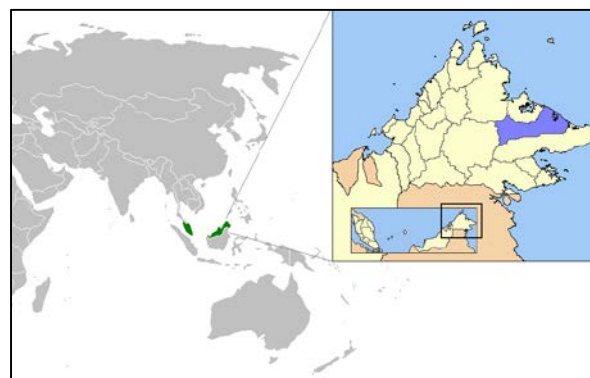
Sabah is located on the northern part of the Borneo Island. It is a state to the Federation of Malaysia. Based on the latest population findings released by the Malaysian Department of Statistics (2011), Sabah has a population of 3.21 million people, of which 60% are indigenous people (Tongkul, 2002). There are four major ethnic groups of indigenous people in Sabah, namely, the Dusun ethnic group, the Murut ethnic group, the Paitan ethnic group, and Bajau ethnic group, and a number of smaller ethnic groups such as the Bugis ethnic group and the Suluk ethnic group. The largest indigenous ethnic group is the Orang Dusun or simply the Dusun ethnic group. “Orang” means “people” in the Brunei language, and “Dusun” means “orchard”. As the name suggest, they work the land either as traditional farmers or as pickers/foragers. Besides the words Orang and Dusun, the Brunei word for river is “Sungai”, and the term “Orang Sungai” or “Dusun Sungai” is used to represent a sub-ethnic group of indigenous people living around Sabah’s river systems, particularly on the eastern part of Sabah. A long time ago, the Dusun Sungai people’s settlements were seasonal because of the flooding of the river systems; they used to be nomadic fishers and forest foragers. Today, those

settlements have been established as stable villages, and the Dusun Sungai people are experiencing socio-economic changes.

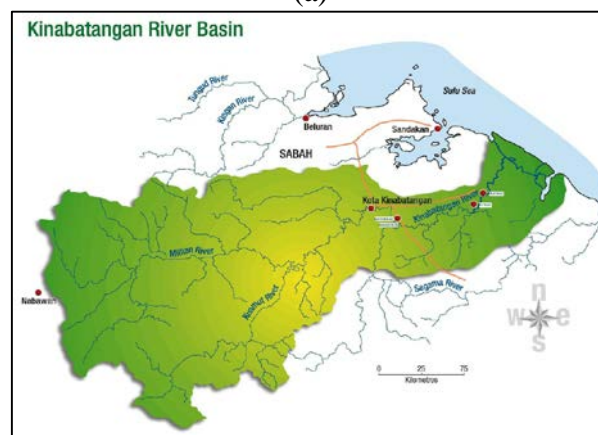
The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands was chosen to investigate indigenous hospitality because it has a traceable history and its people are indigenous (Peters, 2001). This research will concentrate on four villages where tourism activities are available, namely a) Sukau Village, b) Bilit Village, c) Batu Puteh Village, and d) Menggaris Village. All villages have their respective histories (Peters, 2001). With traceable aspects of history, ecology, tourism, and culture, any influences a researcher might have towards the research would be reduced (Giddens, 1984). A researcher's understanding about a particular group of people and place is the most important condition when studying the interpretation of indigenous hospitality. The researcher must demonstrate his or her familiarity of the people and place before studying indigenous hospitality. The *Kinabatangan; Nadi Pembangunan Sabah* demonstrates a familiarity of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands and the people that occupy the place. Published in 2001, the *Kinabatangan; Nadi Pembangunan Sabah* entails historical, ecological, tourism, and cultural aspect of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. At the wetlands, the major river is the Kinabatangan River, and it is surrounded by natural vegetation populated with an array of flora and fauna. Indigenous villages populate sporadically along the river, and some of these villages have a long history of natural forest products trading that dates back hundreds of years. The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is a popular destination for ecotourists and nature lovers keen on witnessing first hand wildlife in its natural habitat because it provides all the necessities that a tourist will need e.g. convenient access, affordable accommodation, and a variety of activities (Peters, 2001).

2.2 The location of the research

The Dusun Sungai community is one of the 32 ethnics groups found in Sabah (Sabah Tourism Board, 2013). The people occupy three river systems, namely the Labuk River, the Kinabatangan River, and the Segama River systems, which extend from the interior of Sabah to the east coast into the Sulu Sea. Although the river systems spread out into half of Sabah, and heavily influence their lives. These people are concentrated in the district of Kinabatangan. This concentration is due to concession logging activities being carried out on the western region, and large scale agriculture activities being carried out on the north and southern region of the district of Kinabatangan. The figure below illustrates the location of the district of Kinabatangan.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2.1. (a) Location of the District of Kinabatangan, and (b) location of some villages along the Kinabatangan River (source: WWF-Malaysia, 2015)

The district of Kinabatangan, shown in Figure 2.1(a) with the colour purple, is world renowned for having many treasures. The most prized treasures are its nature. Not only does the district have the second longest river in Malaysia (i.e., Kinabatangan River), it also has a very high concentration of wildlife. In fact, Kinabatangan is world renowned as the premiere tourist destination of Sabah. While there about 60 villages in the district of Kinabatangan, only five villages are directly involved in tourism (Hamzah, Mohamed, & Nasaruddin, 2003; "Pelancongan," 2012). The villages are Abai Village, Batu Puteh-Manggaris Villages, Bilit Village, Sukau Village, and Sungai Lokan Village.

The Dusun Sungai people reside mainly on four river systems: the Kinabatangan River system, the Labuk River system, the Segama River System, and the Sugut River System. These four systems start in the interior of Sabah, and lead out to the east into the Sulu Sea. The figure below illustrates where the Dusun people live.

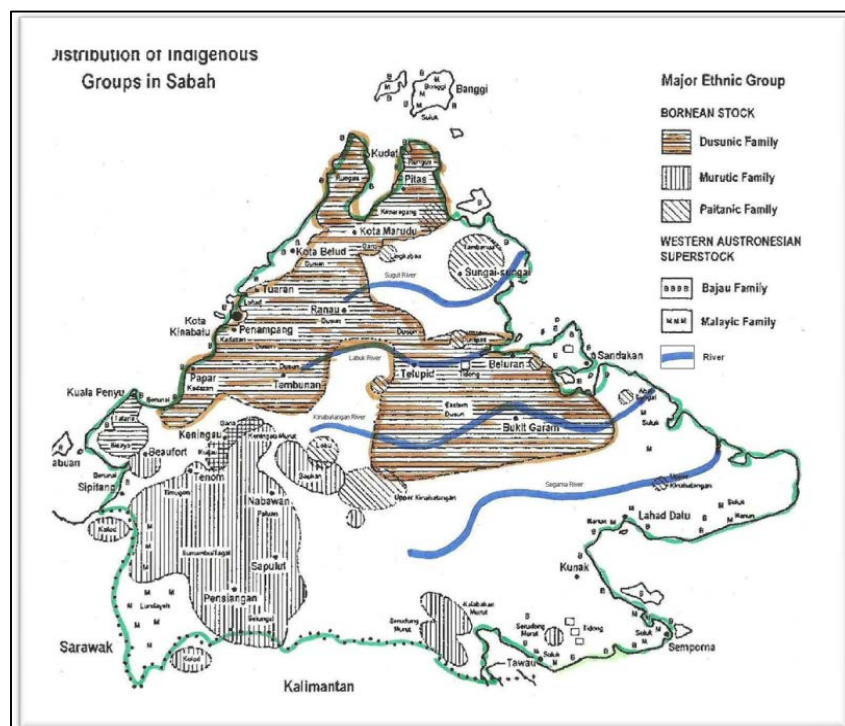


Figure 2.2. An illustrated map of Sabah denoting its indigenous groups (Source: Tongkul, 2002)

Figure 2.2 shows a map of Sabah and the area where indigenous groups are located. The brown coloured area shows where the Dusun people live. The figure also shows the whereabouts of the Kinabatangan River, Labuk River, Segama River, and Sugut River. The following figures show some of the villages visited during my field survey.



Figure 2.3: Photographs of (a) the Bilit Village and (b) the Menggaris Village taken during the field survey

Figure 2.3 shows two of the four villages that were visited during the field survey. The photograph of the Bilit Village was taken from a boat on the Kinabatangan River, while the photograph of the Menggaris was taken near a bridge that crosses the Kinabatangan River.

In the following section, I provide information about those villages, their residents, and their socio-economic activities. I will focus on information about four villages where this research was undertaken, namely Batu Puteh Village, Bilit Village, Manggaris Village, Sukau Village. The following table presents general information about the four villages.

Table 2.1. General information about Batu Putih, Bilit, Manggaris and Sukau villages

Village	Batu Putih	Bilit	Manggaris	Sukau
Population	510	270	500	2200
Village size	1600 hectare	n.a.	270 acre	1,386 acre
Religion	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam, Christian
Transport structure	Sealed road	Sealed road	Sealed road	Sealed road
Utility	Electricity, telecom, water	Electricity, telecom, water	Electricity, telecom, water	Electricity, telecom, water
Economy	Farming, Fishing, Homestay	Farming, fishing, retailing, tourist guiding, homestay, civil services, private service	Farming, Fishing civil services, private services	Farming, fishing, retailing, tourist guiding, property rental, homestay, civil services, private service
Tourism activity	Homestay, Agup Tulug Museum, Supu Cave, Wildlife, and Danau Biandong	Lodging, homestay, B&B, guiding, wildlife, and Danau Bilit	KOPEL, homestay. Supu Cave guide, wildlife, and cultural activity	Lodging, homestay, B&B, orangutan research, handicraft workshop, wildlife, and Danau Buaya

(Source: www.sab.gov.my/pd.kbtg)

Of the four villages listed in Table 2.1, Sukau is the largest village, while the smallest village is the Bilit Village.

The combined Batu Putih and Manggaris villages could have been a sizable village. However, when the Sabah government upgraded the road connecting Sandakan and Lahad Datu, it created a physical boundary that split the Batu Putih-Manggaris villages into Batu Putih Village and Manggaris Village. The least populated village in Table 2.1 is the Bilit Village. It is small because it lacked proper infrastructure up until the late 1990s.

Malaysia has certainly progressed since 1963. Due to reasons such as logistics and politics, the four villages only enjoyed the fruits of Malaysia's development in the late 1980s. Today, these villages have sealed roads, piped water, electricity, and schools. The constitution of the Federation of Malaysia gives privileges to the Dusun Sungai people as indigenous people. Largely Muslims, for those living in the Kinabatangan River system, they converse in two

languages - the Malaysian official language, and the Dusun language - and they draw their livelihood from civil services, agriculture, and tourism. The people are adopting new ways of living, and these changes present both opportunities and challenges. The following section traces the historical origins of the Dusun Sungai as well as exploring their social, political and religious structures.

2.3 The Dusun Sungai in academic literature

The changing of the Dusun Sungai people's identity is a disruption to proper scholarship. To overcome the disruption, historical accounting is needed. In the western literature, the earliest recording of the Dusun Sungai people was from an expedition led by Sir William Pryer, the first British Resident⁹ of Sandakan, along the Kinabatangan River in 1881 (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). In that expedition, the explorers were said to have stumbled on what appeared to be a cultured community comprising long-haired people with reddish skin (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). Due to communication problems, these people were simply called "the river people," and the term stuck as an easy way of describing the *Orang Sungai* people (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011, p. 4). Interchangeable with Dusun Sungai, such generic terms were used to describe other different communities living around the Labuk River system, Kinabatangan River system, and Segama River system. These communities include the Buludupi, Idahan, Kuamut, Subpan, Sukang and 25 other communities.

In relation to the present study about indigenous knowledge in tourism, the identity of the Dusun Sungai people have been misunderstood. The first researcher to mistake the identity of the Dusun Sungai people was an environmental scientist, with little anthropological

⁹ A North Borneo British Resident is the official District Administrator to the North Borneo Chartered Company

understanding, named Reza Azmi. In his article “Protected Areas and Local Communities in the Lower Kinabatangan Region, Sabah: Natural Resource Use by Local Communities and its Implications for Managing Protected Areas”, Azmi (1996) described Dusun Sungai people as Dayak people because of their similar living environment. Other tourism researchers (Fletcher, 2009; Hussin, 2006; Zeppel, 2006) who quoted Azmi did not provide any correction of that mistake and, thus, created a misconception of Dusun Sungai people (i.e., Orang Sungai) as being associated with the Dayak people of Sarawak. However, such misconceptions are not limited to scholarly works.

Historically, pseudo-anthropologists made similar misconceptions. In 1905, Dorothy Cator authored *Everyday life among the head-hunters: And other experiences from East to West*. This book captured her travel from Cairo to Singapore to Sandakan. At Sandakan, Cator (1905, p. 26) came across natives living in stilted huts along coastal and river banks whom she described simply as “Dyaks” i.e. Dayak. Cator, herself, had not been to Sarawak, but being the wife of an officer of the British North Borneo Government - a government that brought in Sikhs from India and Dyaks from Sarawak into its police force - she would have certainly heard of Dyaks. Cator’s (1905, p. 35) actual encounters and correct description of native Dusun Sungai people were only noted in descriptions of her experiences travelling up the Kinabatangan River; she called them “Budulupes.” Budulupi people is possibly more accurate as the identity of the native Dusun Sungai people (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011), however, from Cator’s perspective, along the river, everyone was a Dyak.

Past academic studies of the people of Sabah have concentrated on the area’s ethnic groups rather than sub-ethnic groups. Due mainly to logistic-related reasons, anthropological studies of the Dusun ethnic group concentrated on the western and interior parts of Sabah; the study of the native Dusun Sungai community as an anthropological subject has not received as much

attention. Among the studies include *The Dusun of the Penampang Plains in North Borneo* by Monica Glyn-Jones, published in 1953, and *The Dusun: A North Borneo society* by Thomas Rhys Williams, published in 1965. These studies had serious limitations. For example, many scholars (Appell, 1968; Goethals, 1967; Morris, 1966) found that the studies carried out by Williams in 1965 lacked the interpretative analysis needed to comprehend the Dusun people.

In recent decades, there have been several more studies (Lasimbang & Kinajil, 2000) that have progressed the understanding of the Dusun people. Nevertheless, these studies still concentrated on the western and interior parts of Sabah, thus, leaving gaps in understanding of the Dusun Sungai people. According to Interviewee R34, the Sabah Cultural Board (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah [LKS]*) attempted to close this gap. In 2010, LKS undertook research into the culture of the native Dusun Sungai people. The LKS's main role was to assist with maintaining the richness of Sabah's diverse culture. This government agency, under the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Environment, collaborated with the *Orang Sungai* Kinabatangan Association to produce a cultural inventory of the native *Dusun Sungai* people. This resulted in the publication of *Inventori Budaya Etnik Negeri Sabah; Etnik Orang Sungai Buludupi* in the following year. Interviewee R34 was involved in its publication. This effort provides an understanding the native *Dusun Sungai* people; however, this effort does not place much emphasis on the concepts of *tápun* or *gotong-royong* that are important in this thesis. Being written in the Malaysian language, the concepts are in the background of the LKS's effort. Besides this, there have been other publications which mention the native Dusun Sungai people. Among them are *The Kinabatangan Floodplain: An introduction* (WWF-Malaysia, 1993), and *Wild Sabah: The magnificent wildlife and rainforests of Malaysian Borneo* (Payne & Prudente, 2010). However, these publications were written in the context of environmental issues.

Western society, in particular English speaking societies, formed an understanding about the people of Borneo from two main sources. *North Borneo* and *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* created a perception about the people of Borneo. In the book *North Borneo*, published in 1882, Borneo is described as a sparsely populated country that gives up a great part of its fertile land to the orangutan (2014). *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* book, published in 1896, carved the image of the people of Borneo from a native legend about natives turning into orangutan (Roth, 1896). Both historical documents give the impression that peoples of Borneo were primitive and that the region was largely populated by what could be called humans and humanoids, that is, ape-men. In mass communications, indigenous people are generally presented as lacking in technology and knowledge in comparison to western visitors.

Popular depictions of the Dusun Sungai were produced by Osa and Martin Johnson, an American couple whose travelogues of East and Central Africa, the South Pacific Islands and what was then known as British North Borneo, provided popular stories of adventures among “savage people and wild animals” (Pratt, 1979, p. 21). The western notion of the people of Borneo being wild and primitive has been played out in the imagination of people in a number of ways. For instance, this wild and primitive image is portrayed in a film entitled *Borneo* that was first screened in 1937. Figure 2.4 shows one of the few film posters that were created for the film.



Figure 2.3. "Borneo 1937 Poster" (1937), Retrieved on August 29, 2015, from http://safari-museum.com/gallery/#/SILVER+SCREEN+SAFARIS/borneo_reprint_poster.jpg. Copyright by Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum. Reprinted with permission.

The *Borneo* documentary was based on the Johnsons' trip to North Borneo and along the Kinabatangan River in 1935 and 1936 (Talley, 1937). In the poster, the central image is the orangutan, while the natives are placed in the background.

Apart from the *Borneo* documentary, the Johnsons also took many photographs of Kinabatangan. Some of those photographs showed who the Dusun Sungai people were. The following figure shows two of the photographs from their travel in the region.



Figure 2.4. Photographs of a Dusun Sungai man holding a blowpipe standing next to Osa Johnson, and Dusun Sungai children (Source: North Borneo History Society, 2013)

Figure 2.5 shows photographs of the Dusun Sungai people in the early 20th century. In that century, the Dusun Sungai people were hunter-gathers as illustrated by the man with the blowpipe, while the women were half-dressed farmers familiar with tobacco and the art of smoking. The placement of the Dusun Sungai people at the background of the *Borneo* documentary poster, and the many photographs of the natives, gave the impression that the peoples of Borneo were a primitive group of people, and this impression has influenced western society's view to this day; an impression which is entirely different from reality. In the next sections, I provide information about the origins of the Dusun Sungai people and their contemporary culture.

2.4 The origins of the Dusun Sungai

There is no definitive conclusion about the origin of the people of Sabah. Similar to the Malay people of West Malaysia, many believed that the Dusun people of Sabah migrated from China some 3000 years ago in successive waves (Whelan, 1970). While Malay people were said to

have migrated by land through Indo-China, the Dusun ethnic group is said to have travelled from Southern China by sea through Taiwan and the islands of the Philippines. Although these migrations theories could explain the differences between Malay people, and Proto-Malay people, or Orang Asli (i.e., indigenous people of Malaya), these theories do not explain the linguistic similarities of the Dusun people and other groups of people from the Austronesian stock that inhabit Borneo.

Linguistically, Dusun people of Sabah are descendants of the Austronesian stock that inhabited the Borneo island some 30,000 years ago (Peters, 2001). They are part of what Robert Blust calls the “Greater North Borneo” group (Blust, 2010). In addition, there are indications that the Malay people originated from this Greater North Borneo stock (Adelaar, 2004). This warrants further investigation, which is currently being undertaken through genetic studies (Tan, 1978). Such studies aim at complementing linguistic and ethnographic studies to provide a clear understanding of the origins of the peoples in South East Asia. At present, some Dusun people of Sabah possess genetic markers unique to the mongoloid stock, and while others possess genetic markers unique to the Australasia stock. This comes as no surprise since intermarriage between these two stocks might have occurred several millennia ago, since they retain both farming and nomadic skills (Peters, 2001).

2.4.1 Chinese traders and their influence on Dusun Sungai culture

Chinese merchants have been travelling between China and Borneo since the 14th century to trade valuable forest resources with the Kinabatangan inhabitants, leaving the indelible stamp of cross-cultural exchange. The significance of the Chinese in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is scattered throughout its history. Historically, the Sultan of Brunei granted Admiral Ong Sum Peng rights to establish a Chinese settlement there, and the Ida’an people, another community of the Dusun Sungai, has been harvesting bird nests and trading them with the

Chinese for more than half a millennium (Peters, 2001). Even in names there is a Chinese presence in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. For example, the name “Kinabatangan” is supposedly derived from two words that depict the significance of China; “*kina*” supposedly came from the word “*Cina*” that means Chinese, and the Malay word “*batang*” supposedly carrying the meaning of a timber-built fortress (Peters, 2001). A village along the Kinabatangan River, the Mumiang Village, got its name from the Chinese word “*mo miang*,” which has the meaning of a place without name (Peters, 2001). Although China seems to influence the history of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, it is not an important matter to the native Dusun Sungai people.

2.4.2 Outside influences on religion and political structure

Dusun Sungai society, like other Dusun societies, was also influenced by the rule of the Sulu and Brunei Sultanates. This had a dramatic impact on the political structure of the society. This influence came when the Brunei Sultanate introduced an institutionalized leadership in the 13th century. At that time, the Brunei Sultan appointed prominent people as territory lords, which on ceremonial occasions returned taxes to the Brunei palace, and reported on the status of their respective territories. To manage these territories, the lords in turn appointed individuals to be village chiefs.

The Dusun Sungai people were believed to have adopted Islam through intermarriages with the Suluk people of Philippines (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011), though no one can precisely say when the intermarriages occurred. Hence, intermarriages might have occurred earlier than the 18th century; since in that century, the Suluk people already had settlements in eastern Sabah, away from their Spanish colonizers.

In the 18th century, the British Empire wanted to expand its trade to compete with the Spanish. Because Portugal and Spain had already established a trade and military presence in West Malaysia (known previously as Malaya) and Indonesia, Britain established the North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC), which in turn acquired certain parts of the Borneo Island to establish trading activities. As a result, apart from Islam, Dusun Sungai people were introduced to Christianity (Yusoff, 1997). However, the change that was brought about by the Westerners was not limited to religion. To further support NBCC's exploitation, a localized institution was established, and, in 1935, NBCC re-established the native leadership institution by introducing the Native Chiefs' Advisory Council (NCAC). With a few variations, this council is still functioning. Today, the head chief of the Dusun Sungai people is Datuk Seri Panglima Musa Haji Aman, Sabah's Chief Minister (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011), while village chiefs are appointed by the Sabah Ministry of Rural Development.

2.5 The development of the Dusun Sungai's people contemporary socio-political identity

In 1957, Malaya and Singapore gained independence from the British Empire, and for the first time since colonisation in the 15th century, Malays were once again masters of their own fate. However, because of the strong presence of communism that emerged out of WWII, the Malay people felt that they could once again come under the threat of colonisation through Singapore, with its major Chinese population (Ongkili, 2003), prompting the Malay leaders to take actions towards maintaining a strong "indigenous" or rather, "Malay" presence. To maintain the racial composition between Malaya and Singapore according to the composition in Malaya, the Malay leaders invited Brunei, North Borneo, and Sarawak to form the federated Malaysia. This invitation was based on the similarity of the indigenous people in those nations to the Malay people (Andaya & Andaya, 2001; Ongkili, 2003).

When the idea of a federated Malaysia was developed, it was forwarded using the constitution of Malaya (which included Singapore at that time) as its template. The constitution of Malaya accorded privileges to the Malay people¹⁰ and Proto-Malays (i.e., indigenous peoples of Malaya). During this period, North Borneo and Sarawak had no interest in the idea of federation because the proposed constitution of the Federation gave privileges based on race and religion. The indigenous peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak are not necessarily Malays or practitioners of the Islamic faith. North Borneo was not keen because it has its own device for recognizing and privileging indigenous people, namely, The Interpretation (Definition of Native) Ordinance (State of Sabah, 1952). This ordinance defines a native by race, locality, and character. To overcome the limitation in the constitution of Malaya, the Malay leaders introduced a Malay term “*Bumiputera*,” a term that carried the meaning of “son of the soil,” and this eventually led to the federation of Malaysia in 1963. The federation of Malaysia was formed on September 16, 1963. North Borneo was renamed as Sabah – a former native name (Wu, Wall, & Tsou, 2014, p. 169) - and it became a state of the Federation.

The *Bumiputera* concept did not remain the same; it changed when Singapore exited the Federation of Malaysia (Ongkili, 2003). The concept later aligned with the identity of the Malay people, and by the 1980s, it had become evident that indigenous people could not gain their promised privileges. The concept changed because of an issue regarding religion. Ismail Yusoff’s description of the political and religious aspects in Sabah, drawn from Father J. Staal’s article *The Dusuns of North Borneo*, outlines the issue. In that article, Yusoff (1997, p. 67) states that missionaries introduced the term “kadazan,” which he felt was used to uphold the importance of Christianity. Yusoff (1997) claimed that missionaries perceived Dusun as a word

¹⁰ In the constitution of Malaysia a Malay is defined as ‘one who speaks the Malay language, professes Islam and habitually follows Malay customs’ (Andaya & Andaya, 2001, p. 341). Under the Ethnic community to the Malay race include the Bajau community, Bugis community, and Suluk community

introduced by Muslims. Of course, this was far from being true. Upon reading the article authored by Staal, it became apparent that Staal (1924) merely stated that Dusun is a Malay word for farm, and Idahan is an *Irranun* word for Dusun. Staal (1924) states this because he claimed Dusun people of the west coast of Sabah preferred to call themselves “Kadazan.”

The description that Yusoff (1997) gave of the role that religion played in Sabah’s politics affected how the concept of *Bumiputera* was to be perceived. This led to a situation in the 1990s where a *Bumiputera* became categorized by his or her religion; namely a Muslim *Bumiputera* and a non-Muslim *Bumiputera*.

Changes to the *Bumiputera* concept have influenced racial tolerance. The most dramatic influence on the people of Sabah occurred when the Malay people equated the Dusun people with themselves rather than with the indigenous people of West Malaysia. According to Ongkili (2003), this equation had two consequences. First, it reduced the cultural distinctiveness between the Dusun people and some of the other Malay subgroups, such as the Bajau people or the Suluk people. Second, it implied that Dusun people who profess a religion other than Islam are ‘lower’ than the Malay people. To overcome such representation, Kadazan Dusun became a term coined and assigned to unify the various classifications of indigenous groups in Sabah, in contrast to what had been inscribed the Constitution of Malaysia. In this context, Dusun Sungai people, referred to as Labuk-Kinabatangan Kadazan people (Combrink, Soderberg, Boutin, & Boutin, 2008), are thus Kadazan Dusun.

Besides the term Kadazan-Dusun, the people of Sabah, namely the Dusun people, revived the concept of ‘native’ to complement the *Bumiputera* concept (Ongkili, 2003) where needed, which subsequently created confusion, particularly in the federal government. This confusion is even noted in the population census categorizations of Malaysia. In 2010, the Malaysian

Department of Statistics conducted its 10-year census of the Malaysian population. In that census (Department of Statistics, 2011), there are five sub-class of the *Bumiputera* category; there are Malay, Kadazan-Dusun, Murut, Bajau, and other *Bumiputera*. The Dusun Sungai people's classification is different from the Kadazan-Dusun people; the Dusun Sungai people are placed under the category "other *Bumiputera*".

Regardless of the concept of *Bumiputera* to which the federal government of Malaysia subscribes, an individual in Sabah is either an *anak negeri* or a non-*anak negeri*. An *anak negeri* is a legal definition of a native (i.e., indigenous person) or a person (i.e., local person from another culture who has been naturalized). Within this definition, a Chinese person or other person of another race that has lived in a village or district, and has contributed significantly to that place, can be naturalized through a level process that calls for the endorsement of native village or district community leaders. All other groups of people in Sabah that do not fall under the category of *anak negeri* are thus seen as immigrants, foreigners, or refugees.

The definition of an *anak negeri* in Sabah has caused conflict at the national level. This conflict arose because the federal government does not recognize Chinese and Indian people as *Bumiputera* (i.e., indigenous), although the government recognizes *anak negeri* as *Bumiputera*. Steps were taken to reduce this conflict, but today, still the task has not been completed. To support the task, more cultural studies are needed. The following figure illustrates the nativity of people in Sabah.

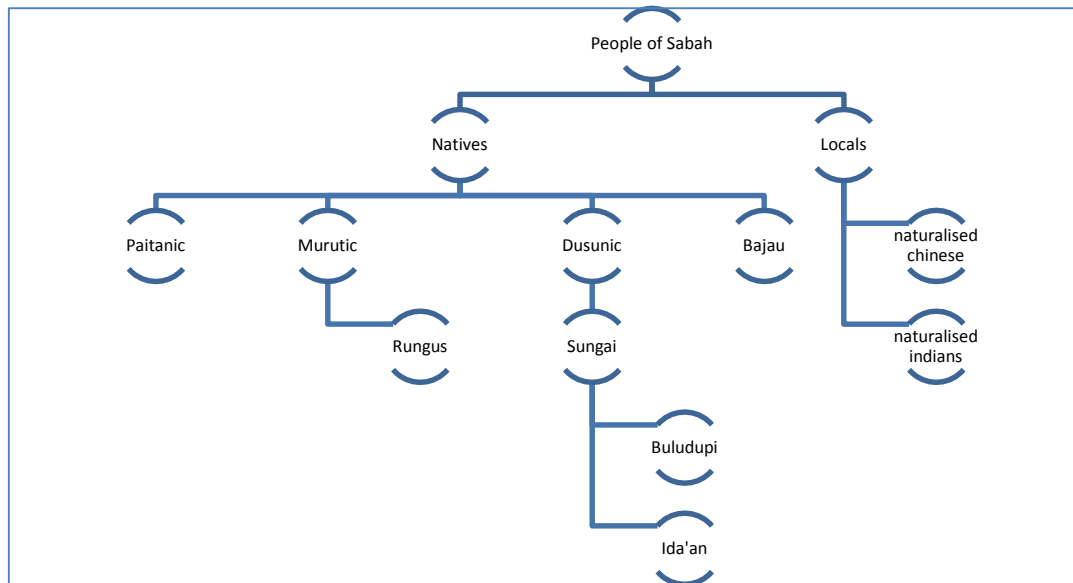


Figure 2.5. Ethnic groups in Sabah

Figure 2.3 shows some of the cultural groups in Sabah. In general, Sabah comprises natives (i.e., indigenous peoples) and people from other races who have adapted their way of life to the conditions in Sabah. The largest cultural group in Sabah is the Dusun people. Linguistically, the native Dusun Sungai community is a sub-ethnic community of Dusun. However, mainly due to logistic-related factors, the study of the native Dusun Sungai community as an anthropological subject has not received as much attention. Instead, many anthropological studies concentrate on the Dusun ethnic group that acted as an umbrella to native communities. Among these studies include *The Dusun of the Penampang Plains in North Borneo* by Monica Glyn-Jones, published in 1953, and *The Dusun, A North Borneo society* by Thomas Rhys Williams, published in 1965. However, these studies concentrated on the Dusun people residing in the western and interior parts of Sabah.

In summary, to a certain extent, confusion surrounds the origins of the Dusun Sungai people. The official stance of the Sabah State Tourism Authority is that Dusun Sungai people are a sub-ethnic group of the Dusun group because they converse in the Dusun language, but use a Sungai dialect (Sabah Tourism Board, 2013). Linguistically, the Dusun Sungai community is

argued to be part of the Paitan ethnic group (Combrink et al., 2008) and it is believed that the migration of the Dusun Sungai people up the Kinabatangan River allowed them to be in close contact with communities from other Dusun ethnic groups (Hussin, 2012b). Because of the implementation of Malaysia's nationalization, the identity of natives in Sabah has changed. It came to a stage where many natives in Sabah, particularly Muslim natives, confuse themselves with Malay people (Ongkili, 2003).

In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, an interview with interviewee, R02, a Muslim Dusun Sungai that understands several dialects of the Dusun people, revealed this identity issue. According to Interviewee R02, when engaging with other local people, he introduces and refers himself as "Orang Sungai". When encountering people outside of Sabah, he refers himself as a Malay person. While the choice to interchange Sungai, and Malay was meant to suit the communication engagement accordingly, the choice showed identity confusion; and Interviewee R02 was fully aware of this matter. This situation would never occur to a Christian Dusun. A Christian Dusun would never claim to be Malay to people outside of Sabah. To this day, identity issues in Sabah persist and, thus, their socio-political uncertainties endure. Nevertheless, culturally, the Dusun Sungai people have more related to the Dusun ethnic group as compared to the Paitan ethnic group. This is evident not only in of the Dusun Sungai people's celebrations but also ethno-biologically. Studies conducted by ecologists showed that many of the plants and animals that the Dusun Sungai people use are those common to the Dusun ethnic group (Ajik, 1990; Mohamed, Yusoff, & Jamlee, 2003).

2.6 Cultural uniqueness of the native Dusun Sungai people

While all Dusun communities might have some basic similarities, they all have some cultural differences. In this section, I will describe some of the cultural aspects of Dusun people to aid the understanding of the Dusun Sungai people.

The Sabah Cultural Board's role is to assist in the maintenance of the cultural richness of Sabah. With the assistance of the Sabah Association of Bangsa Sungai, the Sabah Cultural Board documented the culture of the Dusun Sungai people. Published in 2011, the *Inventori Budaya Etnik Negeri Sabah; Etnik Orang Sungai Buludupi* contains information about the instruments, social structures, rituals, activities, taboos, and language of the Dusun Sungai people. While there are many points in this publication, two points stand out in relation to this study. The first point is that the publication highlights the Dusun Sungai people's respect of all forms of religion. Among them, we find Muslims, Christians, and Pagans. Their Islamic belief originated from intermarriages with native Suluk people from the republic of Philippines. As for the second point of the publication, it highlights how the Dusun Sungai people followed the Suluks and took fishing as their traditional activity in accordance to the environmental conditions of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, which is different from other Dusuns, who are generally farmers. As introduced, the Dusun Sungai people is a sub-group of the Dusun ethnic group living in settlements around the Kinabatangan, Labuk, Segama, and Segama river systems as nomadic fishers and forest foragers.

Many indigenous or local people in South East Asia have a tendency to own or build their houses on stilts. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, flooding occur almost every two years, and coincides the El Niño – La Niña phenomena. Because of this, native Dusun Sungai people living along the river need to build their house on stilts, with toilet and washing areas on the river itself. A native Dusun Sungai person's house on stilts is not just cultural; it is a necessity.

This is given the fact that the waters from the Kinabatangan River overflow into the surrounding plains periodically.

The occasional flooding of the Kinabatangan River puts certain regularities in the lives of the native Dusun Sungai people. Settlements are developed according to this environmental circumstance, for example, the Buang Sayang Village. The Malay term *buang sayang* carries the meaning of something that was thrown, but taken back again later. In the district of Kinabatangan, people from Sabagan Village usually take refuge in Buang Sayang Village when the Kinabatangan River floods. After the flood subsides, those people will go back to their village until the next flood when, once again, they will return to Buang Sayang Village. Because of the flooding, people in both the Sabagan Village and Buang Sayang Village had formed a very strong bond.

Being “family”, there is hardly a need to compete and, as such, native Dusun people are generally ‘laid-back’. Dorothy Cator noted this attitude when she toured up the Kinabatangan River. According to Cator (1905), natives do not appreciate money or its value. Because of this lack of appreciation, the natives do not see themselves being poor or rich; they have a simple life (Cator, 1905). Of course, today’s lifestyle is not as simple as it was a century ago or at least several decades ago. A native Dusun Sungai person’s lifestyle today is surrounded by affordable satellite television programs, and cheap cellular telephone services. Youths are moving to larger cities in the hope of attaining a better socio-economic standing. Nevertheless, these people still have a chance for a simple life. As a Malay saying goes “*balik kampong tanam sayur*”, meaning that a person can always return to his or her village of origin, plant vegetables, and live off the land. Returning to one’s village is made possible and convenient by two factors. First is the close relationship that an individual has with members of his or her community. Second, there is the possibility of building a house in a village without spending a

huge amount of money; certain building materials can be sourced from adjacent forest, a native can have the basic structure of a house built through the application of the *gotong-royong* concept, and certain village lands are held communally.

2.6.1 Sharing resources

Gotong-royong is a Malay phrase that illustrates the concept of reciprocity or mutual aid; volunteerism (Hahn, 1999). It is familiar a concept in many parts of South East Asia (Geertz, 1983) and is promoted as a cultural value. *Gotong-royong* has long functioned as the measure of the village, as a moral conception of the political economy. However, as the political economy has become more privatized, capitalistic, and individualistic, *gotong-royong* has become equated to the concept of networking.

Land such as village land, and lakes such as oxbow lakes, are resources held in common. Since these resources are held in common, Dusun Sungai people have devised a particular way of managing them. Dusun Sungai people have several ways of fishing. Many of the fishing methods are illustrated in Table 2.2. Of those fishing methods, *baliungan* is the only method based on the concept of *gotong-royong* (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). *Baliungan* is usually initiated and led by a respected and seasoned fisher. This person usually will discuss the particular of such fishing activity and invite other to join. These activities are usually carried in the morning. After the catch, usually close to noon time, the group allocates the catch for a simple group feast, and divides the rest based on the role, capability, and effort that a person puts into the activity. After concluding the activity with a meal, they will part to their respective homes.

A central concept for Dusun Sungai is *gotong-royong* or social fellowship. Every native in Sabah pays great importance to the family and the extended family structure; a typical native's

circle of relationships is layered. A native's first layer, or immediate circle, is his or her family and relatives. This circle is forged out of the bond that the native experiences with other people when growing up. During such period, that native might share a roof or meal with his or her relative. Such a relationship is crucial when considering the fact that Kinabatangan's periodical floods force people to move about. The first circle is followed by an outer layer circle comprising their respective village community. In the second circle, regardless of blood relation, everyone is either referred to as cousin, uncle, auntie, grandfather, or grandmother. This relationship is based on the relationship that a native's parents or siblings make with other people. For example, when the native's parents receive an outsider in their home, and they drink and joke together, those outsiders are immediately referred as uncles or aunties. As a Malay word, the term *gotong-royong* illustrates the concept of reciprocity, mutual aid or volunteerism (Hahn, 1999). One example of this mutual aid is during traditional fishing, called *baliungan*, (refer Table 2.2) in oxbow lakes by the Dusun Sungai community. However, among the Dusun people, *gotong-royong* means more than just the Malay concept of reciprocity or mutual aid.

Gotong-royong, sometimes simply referred as *royong*, "stems out from a deep appreciation of the cultural integrity of a community" (Tongkul, 2002, p. 20). This appreciation is noted when a community comes together to help construct a community facility such as a jetty, or a personal property such as a house. In this section, I describe the socio-economic aspects of the Dusun Sungai community structure. I also describe the beliefs and knowledge of the Dusun Sungai community.

2.6.2 Social structure of the Dusun Sungai community

A typical Dusun Sungai village society is based on kinship (Tuck-Po & Wong, 1999). The basic social unit is the nuclear family household. Dusun people used to live in small separated

family dwellings constructed out of wood, bamboo, and palm leaves. A typical community would generally consist of between 10 to 200 closely packed, wooden-based dwellings adjacent to crop fields or a river bend (Williams, 1969), constituting a village. Dusun people, in general, orientate themselves to “the past as a guide for judgments regarding present or future behaviour, and they usually believe that the ties which unite persons in a nuclear-family household are primary in all situations involving inheritance of land, personal property, and authority” (Williams, 1969, p. 13). Hence, while no longer necessarily living in an extended family, this unit can expand to an extended family structure. A family unit or extended family structure is forged from the bond that the native experiences with other people when growing up.

Like many other indigenous Dusun communities throughout Sabah, the social structure of the Dusun Sungai community comprises an institutionalized leadership, spiritual leadership institution and the family institution. Hunters and warriors sometimes associate themselves with the institutionalized leadership, while gathers associate themselves with the spiritual leadership institution. The Dusun Sungai pagan beliefs derive from their association to the Dusun ethnic group. Among the Dusuns, the spiritual leader of their pagan belief is called a “*Bobohizan*” (Tongkul, 2002). A *Bobohizan* could be placed under the same category as a high priest, priestess and shaman. “*Bobohizan*” (Abdullah, 2006) and “*Bobolian*” are synonyms. Among the Dusun Sungai people, they call such as person a “*Bomoh*” and not a “*Bobohizan*”. *Bomoh* is a Brunei word, and can be translated as ‘spiritual leader’ in English. The *Bobolian* is now a dying breed of people; many have renounced their practices and embraced Christianity or Islam. In the district of Kinabatangan, a spiritual leader is called a *Bomoh*. Being, usually, an imam or *ustaz* (i.e., Islamic scholar), a *Bomoh* is knowledge keeper, and practitioner of traditional medicine.

Such a structure not only influences the community's leadership, it also influences the way people carry out the teaching their young. Prior to the NBCC's introduction of formalized education, children were educated through informal means (Tongkul, 2002; Williams, 1969), thus, social roles such as the village chief and *Bomoh* would remain within a particular family. When the NBCC introduced a formalized education system, it popularized this system through the NCAC, which it help revive (Osman, 1989). Primarily, the formalized education was designed to equip people who wanted to work in the many NBCC Labuk agriculture estates. Besides this, there was also formalized education conducted by missionaries. However, in areas where missionaries established schools, the education broke the continuity between Dusun culture and the educational experiences of Dusun children (Williams, 1969).

2.6.3 Ecological knowledge

In 2002, Universiti Malaysia Sabah led a scientific expedition to explore Lower Kinabatangan. Findings of this expedition were published in the *Lower Kinabatangan Scientific Expedition 2002*. Among the usual ecological researches, several researches of the Dusun Sungai people. Mashitah Mohd. Yusoff, Avelinah Julius, and Maryati Mohamed carried out documentation of the plants that the natives used for healthcare. In that research, Yusoff, Julius and Mohamed (2003) logged a total of 178 plant species that the native Dusun Sungai people use. About 16% of the plant species logged were used for the production of tonics to revitalize one's physical strength. Besides this, some of the plants were used for treating fractures, headaches, measles, post-natal illness, and diabetes. Their findings also show the native Dusun Sungai people's know-how to identify the medicinal properties in plants based on the taste test, that is, to distinguish whether the plant is bitter, tart, sour or tasteless. Although there is potential to further research these plants, Yusoff et al. (2003) were alarmed to find that middle-aged people were less knowledgeable and inexperienced about plants used in traditional healthcare

compared to the elder native Dusun Sungai people. In other research, Maryati Mohamed, Mashitah Yusoff, and Hainidah Jamlee documented the animals with which native Dusun Sungai people have association. Mohamed et al. (2003) listed 59 different species of animals that the natives use; some of these animals were for food, others, including several fish species, were for healthcare purposes, while the rest were used in handicrafts.

2.6.4 Beliefs of the Dusun Sungai community

Many Dusun Sungai along the Kinabatangan River systems are Muslims, while the Dusun Sungai people who are living along the Segama River systems and the Labuk River systems have adopted Christianity. Nevertheless, among the Dusun Sungai of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, there are also Christians and Pagans (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011).

Over the past decades, Dusun Sungai people were able to subscribe to a number of beliefs and religions without difficulty. However, due to political and religious tensions in Sabah from 1969 to 1975, Sabah's Chief Minister, the late Tun Mustapha, a Suluk, accused foreign missionaries of disloyalty, and ordered all of them to leave Sabah (Ong, 2008). At the same time, under the presumption that indigenous peoples are Malays and, therefore, constitutionally of Islamic religion (Ongkili, 2003), the late Tun Mustapha carried out mass conversions into the Islamic religion and claimed it was necessary to "unify the various ethnic groups" (Ong, 2008, p. 72). While this might be the most visible change that the Dusun Sungai people experienced (Hussin, 2012a), it is certainly not the most influential change. This is because it is common, in Sabah, to find the practices of a number of beliefs and religions within a single family (e.g., brothers and sisters having different religious orientations). Moreover, the Dusun Sungai people have not completely left behind their pagan way of life, and this is seen in some of their festivals.

Every religious movement in Sabah has its history, but Dusun Sungai people are traditionally pagan; they believed in the spirited world. As mentioned earlier, the spiritual leader was a kind of *Bobohizan*. “The abilities and knowledge of ritual specialists make them symbols of normality and stability in a community. When the ritual specialist is healthy, prospers in food and property, and displays good cheer, then it is felt by others that all is in order in the universe” (Williams, 1965, p. 22). Besides being a spiritual leader, a *Bobohizan*’s role is to act as knowledge keeper (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011), practitioner of traditional medicine, chanter, spiritual guide and spirit communicator. *Bobohizans* provide more than spiritual healing; they also provide physical healing since they are knowledge keepers and practitioners of traditional medicine.

To a Dusun community, particularly one in the western parts of Sabah, a *Bobohizan* is usually a female that has undergone a tremendous amount of spiritual training, so much so that the profession is often kept within the family. The expense of training, family pride, and tradition are factors for this (Phelan, 1983). On the other hand, eastern parts of Sabah usually have males as *Bobohizans* (Phelan, 1983).

Tanda is a term with many meanings. From Malay to English, it literally means “sign”. However, among the natives of Sabah, the term has several meanings (Mongulud Boros Dusun Kadazan, 1994). The other meanings of *tanda* include the opening up or unveiling of a plan; giving form to a belief. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, among native Dusun Sungai people, *tiparot* is a traditional symbol that applies the concept of *tanda*. Physically, *tiparot* is a bowl of rice with a piece of coin on it, prepared by a whole family that has been blessed by the village *imam*. The person in need of a symbol looks after it. The purpose of a *tiparot* is to allow its holder to gain good luck from God when he or she is leaving home, or to gain an insight through dreams, or to pay back a thought (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011).

2.6.5 Festivals

In terms of practices, thanks-giving is part of the Dusun Sungai way of life. The Dusun ethnic group of Sabah, those residing inland, are traditionally farmers as compared to those living along the coastal or rivers, and they give thanks for a bountiful harvest through a celebration. The most widely practiced celebration is known as “Kaamatan”. This festival stems from a legend regarding the creation of mankind. To a Dusun, Kinoringan is caretaker entity (i.e., God), and Hominodun is Kinoringan’s daughter. Dusun legend has it that a very long time ago, the Dusun people did not have anything to eat. Hominodun sacrificed her life and changed into paddy seeds. Eventually, the Dusuns cultivated those seeds and had a bountiful rice harvest. The Kaamatan is a celebration in memory of Hominodun’s sacrifice.

The Kaamatan is a festival held in the month of May. During Kaamatan, tribal priestesses (i.e., *Bobohizans*) carry out rituals in appreciation of Hominodun’s sacrifice. The *Bobohizans* chant for a bountiful harvest and pray for a good planting season ahead. As for all Dusun people, the festivals of the Dusun Sungai revolve largely around harvests. Although the Dusun Sungai community are traditionally fishers, they are also known to do some planting and, like every other Dusun community, they celebrate Kaamatan, although on a less grand scale (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). The significant festivals include the “*Menugal Parai*”, which is a paddy-planting celebration, and the “*Begani Parai*”, which is a paddy-harvesting celebration (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011).

In summary, the majority of native Dusun Sungai people are Muslims, the religion which many inherit from intermarriages with native Suluk people from the republic of Philippines (Alliston, 1966; Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). Nevertheless, there is still a cultural connection with paganism and a connection with the spiritual world through the role of *Bomohs* and *Bobohizans* since these *Bomohs* and *Bobohizans* are not simply spiritual leaders, but are

the gatekeepers of environmental knowledge and knowledge of healing, and these practices and knowledge continue to be passed down within families.

2.6.6 Costume

Today's Dusun Sungai people are not represented as the half-naked forest dwellers or fishers shown in Figure 2.5. The Dusun Sungai people of today are more colourful and this is depicted in their costumes shown in the following figure.



Figure 2.6. Traditional costumes of native Dusun Sungai. (Source: Sabah Cultural Board, 2012)

Figure 2.6 shows the traditional costume of a female native Dusun Sungai person. This costume comprises a skirt, blouse, headgear, glittering ornaments, and necklace. The shirt and blouse are made of black cloth, and are fitted with gold trimming, which is a typical costume design of the native Dusun people. The headgear, glittering ornaments, and necklace are typical to the

Suluk people. The native Dusun Sungai people are largely Muslims, a religion many inherited from intermarriages with native Suluk people from the republic of Philippines (Alliston, 1966; Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). The costume in Figure 2.6 is quite elaborate as it could reflect the Dusun Sungai's history, and the establishment of their Malay-like identity. This is a traditional wedding costume, and it is a 'far cry' from the normal attire of the Dusun Sungai people as noted previously in Figure 2.5.

2.6.7 The Dusun Sungai community's economic activities revolves around the exploitation of their natural heritage


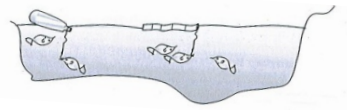

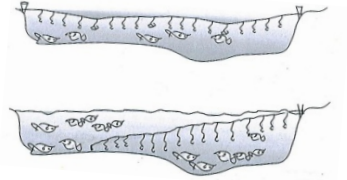
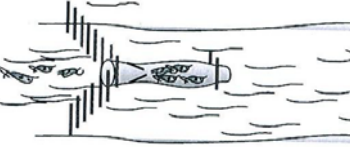
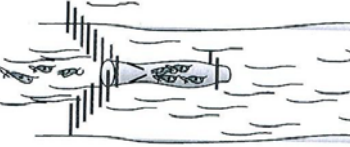
In *Everyday life among the Head-hunters: And other experiences from East to West*, Cator (1905) wrote about the indigenous communities residing along the Kinabatangan River not appreciating money. Because of this lack of appreciation, she believed that the Kinabatangan's indigenous communities did not see themselves as being poor or being rich and living a simple life (Cator, 1905). According to Cator (1905), the Dusun Sungai community's economy revolved more around personal consumption rather than trade. She wrote that to meet their needs, Dusun Sungai people hunted deer and wild boar using hunting dogs and spears, arboreal animals, such as squirrels, using blowpipes, caught mousedeer and barking deer using bamboo traps, and amphibians and reptiles using lights.

As a result of many procedural restrictions set up by the Sabah State Wildlife Department around the Kinabatangan forests, the community seldom carry out hunting these days. The purpose of the Lower Kinabatangan expedition was to gain a better insight of the area. This insight is important since there have been many conflicts between different groups of people, and a better management practice was called for. Among actions taken to achieve this was to actively involve native people in the development and management process. This best practice eventually resulted in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands being declared as a site of

international importance according to the Ramsar Convention (the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance). The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands. This declaration means that the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands subscribes to a management practice that stems the loss of wetlands, recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

Because fishing involves traditional methods, it has not been affected much. Known as *baliungan*, this traditional fishing practice calls for at least three fishing boats to work together to drive fish into a spot where fishing nets can be cast simultaneously, thus ensuring a bountiful fish harvest. The following table shows the various native fishing techniques according to circumstances, which the native Dusun Sungai people use.

Table 2.2. Fishing techniques of the Dusun Sungai people

	Location	
	Oxbow Lake	Kinabatangan River
With a boat	In groups using traditional <i>Baliungan</i> activity 	N.A. in groups
	Using the <i>pelantang</i> method. 	Alone using <i>Geradu Lais</i> 
Without a boat	In a group using <i>rawai</i> 	N.A. in groups
	Alone using hook, line and rod 	Alone <i>Mengelat Lung</i> 

(Source: Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah (2011))

Table 2.2 shows all of the Dusun Sungai people's fishing methods. Besides fish, the Dusun Sungai people also catch prawns. While a number of the fishing methods listed in Table 2.2 can be used, Dusun Sungai people prefer to use a bamboo trap called *bubu* in the Malay language (see Figure 2.7 (a)). The following illustrations relates to fishing prawns using *bubu*.

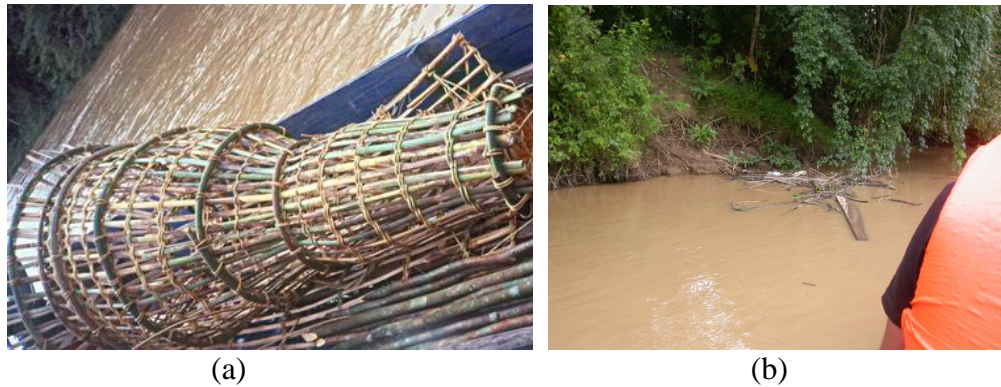


Figure 2.7. (a) *Bubu*, and (b) floating empty bottles as a marker where a *bubu* is placed taken during a riverine cruise in search of elephants

Figure 2.7(a) shows the prawn trap *bubu*, and Figure 2.7(b) shows the likely spot such a trap would be placed along the Kinabatangan River. From an interview with a prawn seller, Interviewee R20, prawn-catching is usually an individualistic activity. According to Interviewee R20, a catcher will bait the trap with tapioca, sink the trap in the river by the riverbank, and wait. A buoy marker is used to mark the spot (see Figure 2.8(b)). This method of catching is a favourite because the trap can house a number of prawns and the quality of the catch is not reduced.

Of the many harvests, bird's nest harvesting, as an activity, is almost a synonymous with the Dusun Sungai people. Bird's nest harvesting in Borneo began as early as the 13th century. Harvesting might have taken place in Sabah since a Chinese emissary, Admiral Ong Sum Peng, requested, of the Sultan of Brunei, the establishment of a Chinese settlement along the Kinabatangan River in the 14th century to facilitate the trade of bird's nests (Peters, 2001). Nevertheless, bird's nest harvesting was certainly also carried out in Sarawak (Koon, 2000). Regardless, Europeans understood that the Dusun Sungai people from the Idahan community started harvesting bird's nests in Gomantong Cave in 1882, which is located about 20 kilometres from Sukau Village (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). The harvesting method requires the use of bamboo ladders called *gegolog*, and the following figures illustrate how this method is implemented.



Figure 2.8. (a) *Gegolog*, and (b) a setup inside Gomantong Cave during bird's nest harvesting (Source: Sabah Tourism Board)

The figure above show photographs of bird's nest harvesting at Gomantong Cave. Historically, in the nineteenth century, harvesting was the sole right of a particular Dusun Sungai family, but this changed after World War II when the last descendant of that family died. At that time, British colonial administration took over the management of all bird's nest harvesting in Sabah, and established the North Borneo bird's nest ordinance. Wildlife authorities made the harvesting seasonal in the months from March to April, and from August to September. Harvesters were permitted to pick bird's nest in those months if they complied with certain regulations including the use of traditional harvesting methods that aimed at minimising disturbance to the bird population. To this day, the practices and management of bird's nest harvesting has changed little, and the Dusun Sungai people continue to harvest bird's nests since they generally subscribe to a traditional method of harvesting. In Figure 2.8(a), the photograph shows rolls of bamboo ladders called *gegolog* placed outside of the Gomantong Cave. Figure 2.8(b) shows how a *gegolog* is anchored to the cave walls, which a Dusun Sungai person will then climb, pick the nests, place them in a basket that is then lowered. The *gegolong* is later re-tied to shift it elsewhere.

With the demand for bird's nest on the rise, and the development of farming techniques, several bird's nest farms were built in Bilit Village, and Sukau Village. The following figure shows what a typical bird's nest farm looks like.



Figure 2.9. Photograph taken during the field survey of a bird's nest farm/building located just outside of the Bilit Village.

Figure 2.9 shows the modern way of farming bird's nest. The farm is a two-story warehouse without windows. For a bird to fly in and out, it will use one of the many holes that were built into the walls. To attract the birds, a loud recording of the bird's call is played in an endless loop. Such calls might be heard by the human ears up to 100 metres away. This technique was first introduced in Peninsular Malaysia before being used in Sabah.¹¹

During the NBCC's administration of Sabah, Dusun Sungai people practiced shifting cultivation (Doolittle, 2003) and they normally planted rice paddy. Although shifting cultivation had its positive aspects, Doolittle (2003) stated that NBCC officers viewed this

¹¹ Wildlife authorities in Sabah, and the other states in Peninsular Malaysia abides by different sets of legislations.

cultivation as damaging because it disrupted tobacco plantation development in the Labuk area at a time when North Borneo's tobacco could almost beat the world renowned tobaccos of Ceylon. Besides rice, Dusun Sungai people also planted fruit trees, such as the Snake-skinned palm tree (Yusdi Yussof, personal communication, September 18, 2012). These fruit trees were planted because of their resilience to flood waters.

Farming is not an iconic socio-economic activity of the native Dusun Sungai people. This is largely due to the effects of the occasional flooding of the Kinabatangan River. Most farm activities in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands provide for personal consumption. As mentioned above, there are several cultural activities that accompany the cultivation of paddy. Other farming activities not accompanied with cultural activities are those that can be carried individually. These include fruit trees such as Durian, Snake-skinned palm tree, and mango. These fruit trees are preferred over others because of their resilience to flooding impact. In recent decades, native Dusun Sungai people have also begun small scale rubber, cocoa, and palm oil farming. This is carried out on their property after gaining land titles from local government.

The role of any government is to improve the social and economic condition of its citizens, and I have arranged the information about native Dusun Sungai socio-economic activities as above to indicate the shift towards more commerce-like activity. These days, traditional practices are slowly being over-shadowed by larger and more lucrative activities such as tourism and cash cropping. However, the activities that Cator (1905) mentioned as the basis of this community's economy - hunting, fishing, harvesting birds' nests and farming -are still conducted today.

2.7 Current economic status of the Dusun Sungai community

The Federation of Malaysia materialized in 1963 from a union of Malaya, Sabah, Singapore, and Sarawak. Less than a decade later, only Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak remained in that union. Singapore exited the Federation due to socio-economic disparity between major ethnic groups, which later erupted into a racial tension. The Federation vowed never to allow socio-economic disparity between ethnic groups to exist.

Despite a close federal-state relationship, a significant number of Sabah people remain underprivileged. Sabah has been among the least-developed and poorest states in the federation of Malaysia (Ong, 2008). In a special 2002 Household Income Survey (HIS) of indigenous minorities in Sabah, Ong (2008, p. 74) states that “the incidence of poverty was the highest among the Rungus, Sulu/Suluk and Orang Sungai.” Further, the interior of Sabah, where the Orang Sungai reside, is one of the few poor areas, and the population consists mainly of paddy farmers, shifting cultivators, fishing communities, and industrial manual labourers. In the Chief Minister of Sabah’s 2005 budget speech, a development agenda gave priority to the development of agriculture, tourism and manufacturing sectors (Sabah Chief Minister and Finance Minister, 2004). To begin improving the status of the Dusun Sungai community, a number of projects were put in place. In an interview with a male Dusun Sungai government officer – Interviewee R01 - the interviewee explained that the current physical development prepares the Dusun Sungai community to venture into tourism businesses, as it will eventually eradicate poverty. Because of governmental encouragement and support of new business structures, traditional practices are slowly being over-shadowed, and fading away.

Over the years, these projects have produced tremendous improvement in the socio-economic position of indigenous peoples. However, there is no denying that the projects also have a number of negative impacts on the people’s culture and traditions. While agricultural projects

tend to negatively influence the culture and traditions of indigenous peoples, tourism projects tend to influence the indigenous peoples' knowledge.

A tourism product has a different impact on the image of indigenous people. In "Packaging myths for tourism: The Rungus of Kudat", Puay Liu Ong provided an explanation. According to Ong (2008), some tourists wish to see how indigenous people live in remote areas before it "disappears" as a result of technological improvement. This curiosity fuelled a public-driven tourism project in Kudat Sabah to establish a destination that showcases the primitive Rungus lifestyle at Kudat. Central to this project is tourism developers' developing a "myth" about the Rungus people exercising their knowledge by living in a remote area. In my study, both public and private tourism development created tourism attractions that implied the exercising of Dusun Sungai's indigenous knowledge by their close proximity to their environment. Observations of this study and Ong's (2008), shows that tourism developers use their understanding about indigenous people to create contemporary stories to reiterate indigenous knowledge, which do more harm than good. As a result, indigenous people, and the supposed simplicity of their lives and customs, become an exotic product to be consumed by the tourist. Contrary to Johnson's images of the Dusun Sungai as "savages", however, the Dusun Sungai people were never the mythically isolated and untouched culture of a popular or anthropological imagination, fit for tourism consumption.

2.8 The need to maintain the relevancy of indigenous knowledge

When managing its resources, a country with an indigenous population can draw some of its laws from the indigenous knowledge and practices of that population. However, as a society progresses, it generally abandons old traditions. A society has every possibility of progressing while still maintaining its indigenous knowledge and traditions. A few approaches are

available. Some countries chose to maintain their indigenous knowledge and traditions by developing intellectual property laws, while others chose to integrate old and new laws together. Sabah's history and laws show how indigenous knowledge is relevant to the State and its people. Michael Baker (1965) stated that laws in North Borneo (now known as Sabah) originated from native laws and customs, and some applicable common laws of England. Native laws and customs were mostly unwritten except for the ones that have their origin in the Holy book of Koran (Baker, 1965). Some of the laws were established to manage resources of importance to natives. For instance, *Sabah Bird's Nest Ordinance* was created mainly to manage resources at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. The law gave the Ida'an people, a native Dusun Sungai community, the privilege of harvesting the bird's nest in season at the Gomantong Cave, Kinabatangan. When Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore formed the federation of Malaysia, some of those laws remained or were incorporated into other laws. For example, *Sabah's Bird's Nest Ordinance* and the *Sabah Fauna Conservation Ordinance* were incorporated and replaced by the *Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment* 1997. Other laws that were more explicit in managing indigenous knowledge included the *Sabah Native Court Ordinance*, 1952; the *Sabah Antiquities and Treasure Trove Enactment*, 1977; and the *Sabah Biodiversity Enactment*, 2010. Tourism developers are not obliged to maintain the relevancy of indigenous knowledge when they develop indigenous-based tourism products and services. This matter was noted in an interview with Interviewee R27 who is a public servant involved in tourism marketing. According to Interviewee R27, his tourism marketing unit merely produces popular marketing representations upon the request of higher governmental offices. Hence, maintaining the relevance of indigenous knowledge is the responsibility of its owner (i.e., indigenous peoples).

The need to maintain the relevancy of indigenous knowledge had always been the responsibility of its owner. While indigenous peoples are interested in promoting their culture

and traditions and, thus, their indigenous knowledge, this does not readily happen. Indigenous people cannot carry this out, largely because they are not empowered. In such situations, the definer of traditional knowledge could well be the tourists by their actions, which may show a preference towards commodified representations of indigenous peoples' essence or indigenous peoples' actual lives (Blundell, 1993).

2.9 Conclusion

The Dusun Sungai community of Sabah is indigenous to the eastern parts of Sabah. They are a sub-group as the Dusun ethnic group. As oppose to certain Malaysian narratives or the views of some researchers e.g. Reza Azmi and Heather Zeppel, they are not Dayaks or Malays. They settled around four river systems, namely the Kinabatangan River system, Labuk River system, Sugut River system, and the Segama River system, for centuries. The Dusun Sungai people used to lead a nomadic way of life, and they were never forcefully colonized. Their knowledge, which had been cultivated over centuries, afforded them the ability to thrive in flood prone areas filled with wild animals. The community members subscribe to the Islamic belief, while others subscribe to Christianity and a pagan belief. While they never fully lost their traditional practices, global changes are affecting the way the Dusun Sungai people see themselves.

By comparison to other ethnic groups in Malaysia, namely the Malay ethnic group, the Dusun Sungai people are underprivileged. To improve their perceived underprivileged position, they gave up their nomadic way of life and capitalized on the resources around them. In their book *A history of Malaysia*, cited earlier, Barbara Andaya and Leonard Andaya questioned the future of the Sabah people at large. They stated,

“Given Borneo’s highly pluralistic religious and linguistic environment, it remains to be seen how far local attitudes towards ‘Malaysia’ are affected by the increasing

influence of Peninsular interests, the declining status of vernacular languages, the prominence given to Islam as a national religion, and the homogenizing tendencies of the Bumiputera categorization.” (Andaya & Andaya, 2001, p. 338)

Questions about the origins and identities of the many indigenous communities of the Federation of Malaysia emerged because there is a constant struggle to distinguish indigenous peoples as non-Malays or, at the very least, Proto-Malays. The *Bumiputera* terminology, a political project, did little to address the struggle. This struggle confuses both the local people and the visitors to the region. But, provided history is properly traced, tourism could present act as an approach to address the struggle. The following chapter provides a history of tourism development at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

Chapter 3 Development of Tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan

Wetlands

3.1 Introduction

Mumiang is the name of a village on the Kinabatangan River, which is located at the delta of the Kinabatangan River. In the folktales and legends of the Dusun Sungai community residing in the village, the village's name originates from the struggles of ancient Chinese merchants faced when sailing their junks up to the Kinabatangan River during the Northeast monsoon season, which was not easy. The monsoon brought winds that allowed Chinese merchants to sail to Borneo, but it also brought rain that swelled the river; the Chinese merchants struggled to sail upriver. In need of rest and supplies, the merchants rested at a spot where they could do trade with indigenous people, and that spot is now the Mumiang Village. Folklore details the village's name to derive from a Chinese word "*momiang*," which means "without energy" in English (Peters, 2001).

Ever since outsiders came to know about the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, these outsiders have painted the Wetlands as a place rich in raw materials for human consumption. At Kinabatangan, Ancient Chinese merchants found lucrative trade opportunities in edible birds' nests, tree resin called Damar, rattan and other forest products (Peters, 2001). Over the past decades i.e. 1970s-1990s, that had been tremendous forestry and agriculture development within the Kinabatangan region. As a result, the understanding about Kinabatangan is one that focuses on the Wetlands' wildlife. Mumiang is not within my research focus, but as introduced, my background and connection with the Lower Kinabatangan Wetland is unique that it affects my understanding of the place. To me, Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism activities have been going on for centuries, and it is not solely about Kinabatangan as a wildlife haven. By

charting the changes, we do not just create a scientific baseline, we also create an artistic baseline.

In this chapter, I introduce the tourism industry of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. I explain the history of the growth of the industry, and the place of indigenous tourism within it. I also explain how the Dusun Sungai became secondary players in a context that focuses on conservation of the wildlife and the environment. I argue that, as tourism has developed in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, it has evolved from a form of tourism that relied heavily on the Dusun Sungai and their ecological knowledge of the forests and wetlands into an industry that focuses on the natural environment. This argument is based on the social artefacts findings that were methodologically triangulated. The findings show that tourists who visit the research location are primarily nature lovers, participating in a mass market that excludes indigenous people from most positions. While certain social organizations e.g. tourism networks promoting indigenous ecotourism and businesses have sprung up since the 2000s, in this chapter and the next, I show how throughout this process, increasing bureaucratization of the industry has led to the exclusion of Dusun Sungai culture and knowledge as valuable within it. Here, I provide an overview of the tourism industry in the region, the history of its development, and introduce the tourists who visit the region, for whom the industry must cater.

3.2 The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands as a tourism destination

Mass media has always been known to have a far-reaching impact of the way we see a particular object. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, mass media affirms the wildlife image; and this is evident in an investigation of the mass media's approach to portraying the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. One such media is film, besides the usual printed media such as books and brochures. These media are further affirmed through awards and special recognition. As a

result, many tourism players use the strength of the wildlife's richness to bring about development in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands (Fletcher, 2009).

Years of exploitation have left the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands forest in a very fragile state. Awareness of the Wetlands' condition is one of the many steps needed to improve the situation. To create awareness, Junaidi Payne, a long-time advocate of the environmental protection of Sabah, suggested the use of tourism as a conservation tool. According to Payne (1989), the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has many natural unique characteristics and should be promoted as a tourism destination for nature lovers. Payne believed that the awareness of the Wetlands' natural uniqueness, seen through tourism, would inculcate managed exploitation.

In a heartbeat, tourism players would claim, and stand by their claims, that the essences of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands are its wildlife and its diminishing habitat. These claims are substantiated by volumes of scientific findings regarding the area's population and ecological conditions. The *Lower Kinabatangan Scientific Expedition 2002* is a volume of scientific findings that support claims about the importance of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands flora and fauna and their role in tourism. From the expedition of 2002, people's perception of tourism is a positive one and is closely associated with wildlife, since almost 70% of the local people are involved in wildlife observation-related activity in one form or another (Hamzah et al., 2003). Even the management of the accommodation facilities at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands revolves around its flora and fauna (Yoneda, 2003).

The current understanding of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is that it evolves, although all the new tourism products still relate to the natural environment. The evolution of Kinabatangan's tourism is undergoing is from observation-based to conservation-based tourism products and services. Drawing on Butler's perspective about the evolution of a tourist

area, the following figure illustrates the changes that the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is experiencing.

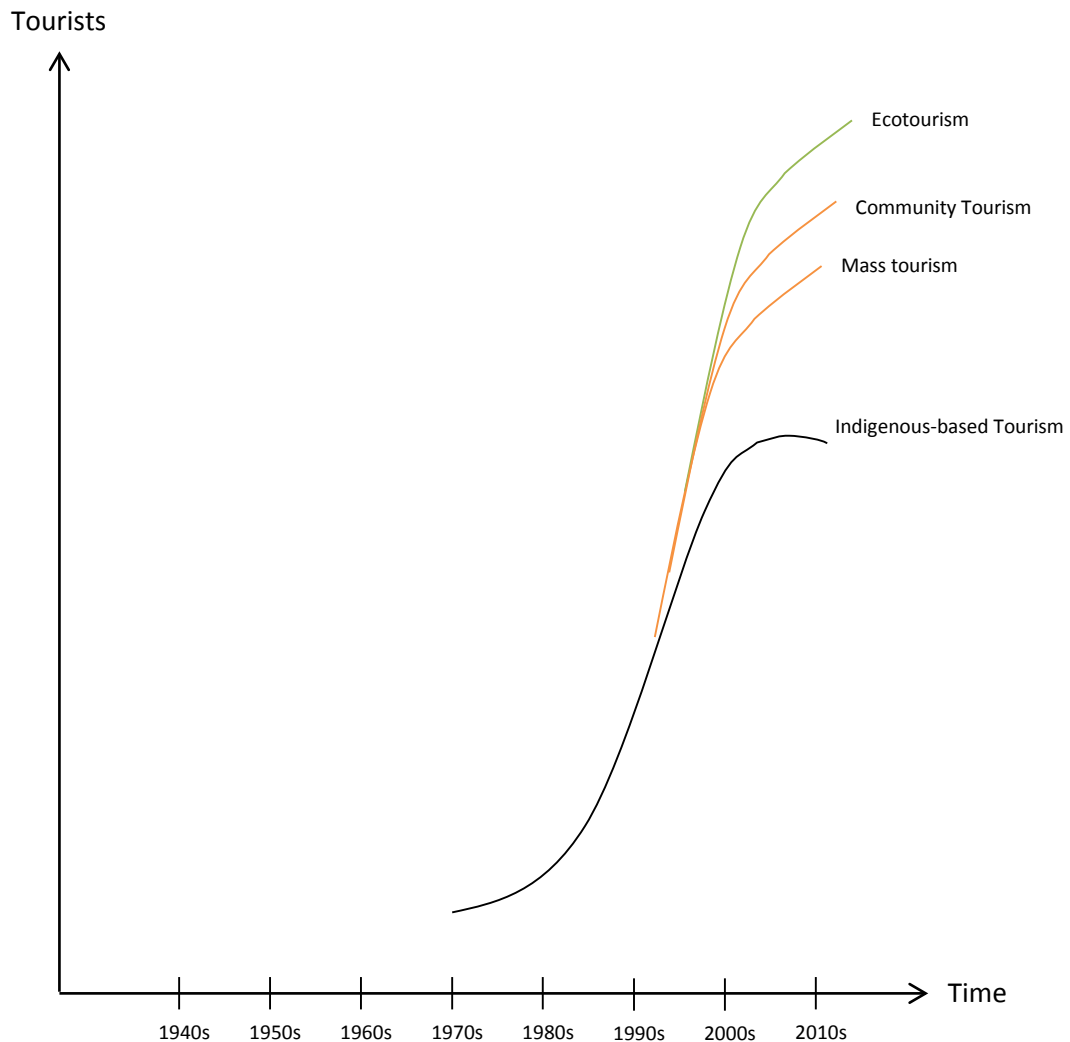


Figure 3.1. Evolution of the tourism cycle of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands; Ecotourism/Green Line, Community Tourism/Orange Line, Mass Tourism/Brown Line, Indigenous Tourism/Black Line.

Figure 3.1 hypothetically illustrates the changes that the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is experiencing and the points when its images began appearing in western media, for example, in travel books. In Figure 3.1, tourism began with a form that encompasses every aspect of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Because it encompasses every aspect, it was inclusive of indigenous and nature-based tourism. Due to the increase in demand and the need to reduce

operational costs, Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourism players changed their approach in three ways, which eventually gave rise to three specific tourism niches. The three forms are mass tourism, community-based tourism and ecotourism. As a result, today, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has four tourism products, namely, the popular conservation tourism, the mass tourism, the newer community-based tourism, and the less popular indigenous-based tourism.

Each form of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has its unique characteristics. In general, the region's tourism that is based on the conservation concept about tourists venturing into the land to understand and contribute to the wellbeing of the forest. This form of tourism is called ecotourism. The community-based tourism is a form of tourism that subscribes to a concept where the local community leads tourism development and management. Mass tourism is a form of tourism that follows the principles of economy (i.e., the increase of production reduces cost). The last concept is a concept that generally allows the host-guest relationship to dictate the tourism activity. Another way of understanding the concepts is presented through the categorization of tourists as ecotourists, nature lovers, conservationists, and guests in homestays. These four forms of tourism are affected by a change in the physical natural environmental and the urgency to protect future generations.

3.2.1 Tourists of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands

There ought to be a relationship between tourists' demography and the profile of a destination. Currently, Sabah receives about three million tourists a year; one million of them are foreign tourists, factored by transportation availability. There are equal numbers of male and female tourists with 32% of them being between the ages of 21 and 30, 28% between the ages of 31 and 40 and 14% above the age of 41. ("International Visitors' Profile," 2015). Only 15% of the one million foreign tourists are from English-speaking countries (i.e., Oceania, Europe and

America); 25% of the one million foreign tourists are from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan; and 11% of the one million foreign tourists are from Japan and Korea. Fifty-one percent of international tourists stated they were attracted by nature-based attractions, while 25% were attracted by culture, and 19% were attracted by activity-based attractions (Institute for Development Studies, 2007, p. 42). While public tourism agencies generalize data for easy public access from immigration authorities, tourism operators privately keep data about tourists and their movements. As a result, there is no public report about the Wetlands' tourists' demography and profile.

Based on the available literature, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourists would mainly be between the ages of 21 and 40 and are attracted by nature. This corroborates the findings in the literature that suggests the Wetlands' tourists are generally ecotourists who are mainly interested in Kinabatangan's natural endowments and, occasionally, interested in the community of Kinabatangan (Chan & Baum, 2007a). But since term ecotourist is a colloquial associated with the consumption of ecotourism products and services (Fennell, 1996; Hussin, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Page & Dowling, 2002), by extrapolating tourists' feedbacks e.g. blog and guest's remarks in guestbook that were obtained from tourism operators and the Dusun Sungai community and available tourism information, we would then have a typology of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourists.

In general, from feedbacks and tourism information, there are a number of factors that must be considered for a visit to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Types of factors include group

size¹², the participated activities and amenities associated with the tourism experiences. In following table, I categorized four types of tourist based on five different factors.

Table 3.1. Types of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourists

	Ecotourist	Nature Lover	Conservationist	Guest
Group size (G)	G > 8	G < 8	G < 8	G < 3
Trip (days-D)	D < 2	D < 3	D > 5	2 < D < 5
Preferred accommodation	Chalet, bed & breakfast	Chalet, bed & breakfast, hostel, homestay	Bed & breakfast, hostel, homestay	Chalet, bed & breakfast, hostel
Transport used	Tour coach	Small capacity bus, tour coach	Small capacity bus	Private vehicle
General activity	Wildlife observation	Wildlife observation and Education	Wildlife observation, education and conservation work	Wildlife observation, education and socialization

Table 3.1 shows four different types of tourist at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that are based on five different factors. The factors that determine the type of tourist are the group size, tour duration, preferred accommodation, transport used and the activities participated; and the four types of tourist are ecotourist, nature lover, conservationist, and guest. An ecotourist is a visitor who takes part in the typical tourism activities of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands i.e. wildlife observation. The hosts of the Wetlands always encounter this type of tourist. This type of tourist generally come from America, Europe and Asia, and always travels in a large group. The second type of tourist is called “a nature lover”. A nature lover spends slightly more time in Kinabatangan and appreciates environmental education. At present, there is no visible trend in their country of origin; however, based on personal observation, a Chinese tourist is not a nature lover, while a Japanese might no longer be regarded as a nature lover since the Japanese government had issued strict travel notices about the east of Sabah. The third type of tourist that visits the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is called a conservationist. This type of tourist is

¹² Group size is a factor because the Malaysian tourism authorities had spelled out that a group of tourists is the maximum size that does not need services provided by a licensed tourist guide.

similar to a nature lover but takes part in a number of conservation-related activities like fruit tree planting in degraded forests in addition to the typical tourism activities of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Only Dusun Sungai residing in the Sukau village and the Menggaris village encounter this kind of tourist, since this type of tourist is guided by a licensed tourist guide who specializes in voluntary conservation work in both of the mentioned villages. The country of origin for this type of tourist is similar to the second type. During my field research, I encountered one such group in Sukau village guided by Mark Louis Benedict, who provides responsible volunteering programs this type of tourist (Benedict, 2015). Another such group is located in the Menggaris village. The fourth type of tourist is called a guest. Appropriately referred as a traveller, this type of tourist takes part in the typical tourism activities like all other types of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourist, however in a very small group.

Gudykunst's typology of stranger is based on the stranger's intention and the host's attitude. As for the typology of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourist, it is based on tour factors, which is really the intention of tourist. The host's attitude is not accounted in the typology of the Wetlands' tourist.

3.2.2 Recognition of Kinabatangan's tourism packages

To date, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands have been featured in three national award-winning packages. The Tourism Development Corporation¹³ awarded Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd in 1991 for its *River/Cave Safari* tour package; and the Tourism Malaysia Promotion Board¹⁴ awarded S. I. Tours Pte Ltd¹⁵ in 1995 and 1998, respectively for *A Kinabatangan Adventure* tour package and the *Sandakan Safari Extravaganza* tour package. All of the

¹³ Tourism Development Corporation was institutionalized in 1972 through the establishment of the Tourism Malaysia Corporation of Malaysia Act 1972

¹⁴ With the establishment of the Malaysian Tourism Industry Act in 1992, Tourism Development Corporation was formally institutionalized into Tourism Malaysia Promotion Board

¹⁵ The term "S. I." of S. I. Tour Pte Ltd refers to "Special Interested"

national award-winning tour packages featuring the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands displayed the region's wildlife distinctiveness; but only the *River/Cave Safari* tour package contained cultural elements, which will be described in Section 3.3. The wildlife attributes in these tour packages were noted by the Federation of Malaysia in its Malaysia National Ecotourism Plan¹⁶, and by the State of Sabah in its Sabah Tourism Master Plan.¹⁷ As a result, tourism development in the 1990s centred largely on the strength of the area's wildlife. This in turn, generated an industry focused on certain wildlife and conservation of the habitat of the wildlife. For instance, I became involved with an elephant population study at Tabin Wildlife Reserve in the early 1990s some 100 kilometres south of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands (Dawson, 1993). The study was part of the Sabah Wildlife Department's plan to manage the anticipated human-wildlife conflict in Kinabatangan, Lahad Datu and Tawau, where forest conversion for agriculture purposes was heavily being carried out.¹⁸

Reinforcement of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' wildlife image was carried out on many occasions through mass media. This emphasis on wildlife distinctiveness at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands on top of other distinctiveness was so overwhelming that the Wetlands was listed as a site under a convention known as the Ramsar Convention¹⁹ on October 28, 2008. Today, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is recognized as a wildlife haven among tourism players.

¹⁶ The Malaysia Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism commissioned WWF (Malaysia) to conduct an ecotourism study that led to this document publication in 1996

¹⁷ The Sabah State Government commissioned Institute for Development Studies (Sabah) to conduct a tourism study that led to the publication of Sabah Tourism Master Plan in 1996

¹⁸ Historically, the origin of elephants in Borneo is somewhat unclear; there is no archaeological evidence of elephants in Borneo. It is believed that elephants in Sabah were part the Sultan of Sulu's gift to the Sultan of Brunei (Cranbrook, Payne, & Leh, 2008). This belief is plausible but questionable since the current population size does not match up with the animal's possible growth. The origin of elephant in Borneo remains a mystery to this day.

¹⁹ The Ramsar Convention (The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance) is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands that was established in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran.

3.3 Tourism development at Lower the Kinabatangan Wetlands

As I briefly introduced at the beginning of this thesis, as in many other parts of the world where there is an indigenous population, tourism activities at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands were initially organic and sporadic. However, the described organic and sporadic development of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands does not readily match with the dominant public perception.

Since 1950s, Sabah's tourism operators have carried out many tourism activities in the Kinabatangan region. A local newspaper dated 21 July 1963, *The N.B.N & Sabah Times*, recorded the first inaugural meeting for the Tourist Association of North Borneo in December 1962. In that meeting, and on seeing that tourism was one of the largest business in the world, the chairperson of the association, R. Knowles, described the function of the association as an association to assist in improving the tourist experience and making a "fair share of this terrific amount of money" ("Tourism means money for all," 1963). The establishment of the Tourism Association of North Borneo in 1962 suggests that tourism activities have been going on for a long time. While tourism in Sabah began well before the 1960s, in general, written laws about tourism and the industry that surrounds it, were rare before the 1980s. Among the earliest Sabah State laws applicable to the governance of tourism is the *Sabah Parks Enactment* of 1984. Under this enactment, native Dusun people's beliefs concerning Mount Kinabalu²⁰ were recognized, and the people were given privileged rights to guide foreigners up Mount Kinabalu. Other Sabah laws included the *Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation Enactment* and the *Sabah Cultural Heritage (Conservation) Enactment*; federal laws included the *Tourism Industry Act* and the *Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board Act* that replaced the *Tourism Development Corporation of Malaysia Act* 1972. The "Laws of Malaysia: Tourism Industry

²⁰ Highest mountain in South East Asia.

Act 482" (2006), gazetted in 1992, pertains to individuals and organizations wanting to take part in the tourism industry as guides, tour leaders, and proprietors of hotels, bed and breakfasts, etc.

Central to the tourism activities is Kinabatangan's natural endowment. This has led to a common belief that Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism endeavour began through conservation work, which started with the publication of *The Kinabatangan Floodplain: An introduction* by a prominent conservationist of Sabah, Junaidi Payne, who highlighted the importance of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands for future generations. Payne (1989) suggested that the government needed to take notice of tourism as a conservation tool for Kinabatangan's natural endowment. Among the endowments that Payne was referring to are the wildlife inhabitants of Kinabatangan (e.g., the proboscis monkey [*Nasalis larvatus*], Bornean pygmy elephant [*Elephas maximus*] and rhinoceros hornbill [*Buceros rhinoceros*]) and its natural landscape features such as the oxbow Lakes, Gomantong Cave and Batu Tulug, which later became the basis for a typical tourism package in Kinabatangan.

The predominant notion that is well publicised in the media and through word-of-mouth about the tourism history of Kinabatangan is that tourism in the region started with Uncle Tan's camp and its activities in the early 1990s. Tan Su Lim was a retired law enforcer and the camp provided jungle experiences to young, adventurous tourists by tapping environmental issues and the urgency of "seeing something before it is gone".



Figure 3.2. Uncle Tan's experience (source: <http://www.uncletan.com/>)

Tan Su Lim forged a partnership with *Dusun Sungai* individuals at Sukau Village to run his tourism activity, and this involved camping in the jungles around the Wetlands, particularly adjacent to the Sukau Village. While it might maintain traditions, the activity mainly focuses on the “rough” traditions, that is, those that involve ‘roughing it out’ in the wild. With the package gaining popularity among young adults from Europe, Tan forged other partnerships in a neighbouring village, namely Bilit Village. Uncle Tan's Jungle Camp offered culture and forest adventures, and involved *Dusun Sungai* as tourism partners, but Uncle Tan was not the first.

In fact, the first known tourism activity was the River/Cave Safari tour package developed by Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd in late 1980s. This tour package introduced tourists to Mohd Idris's family who resided in Batu Puteh village, near Batu Tulug. Danny Chew, a Malaysian Chinese licensed tourist guide from Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd and, Mohd Idris, a *Dusun Sungai* person from Batu Puteh village, forged a partnership to take tourists cruising along the Kinabatangan River, trekking in its forests, and climbing the Batu Puteh limestone outcrop. This attempt earned the company a prestigious award from the Malaysian tourism authority. The Tourism Development Corporation awarded the trophy for the

company's River/Cave Safari tour package. The package involved visits to ancient burial sites, viewing bird's nest harvesting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

Both the River/Cave Safari and Uncle Tan's Jungle Camp involved Dusun Sungai culture and forest adventures, and both involved native Dusun Sungai as tourism partners. Moreover, both the River/Cave Safari and Uncle Tan's Jungle Camp greatly influenced tourism interest at Kinabatangan. Following the success of Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd and Uncle Tan's Jungle Camp, other well-known tourism companies in Sabah began establishing tours packages at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. These well-known tourism companies include Wildlife Expeditions Pte Ltd, Borneo Eco Tours Pte Ltd, and S. I. Tours Pte Ltd. These companies built their own resorts and facilities through leasing arrangements with natives. However, unlike Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd and Uncle Tan Tours, the new tourism players mainly concentrated on wildlife-related tourism. Their packages largely involved visits to Gomantong Cave, and wildlife sightseeing along a tributary of the Kinabatangan River, that is, the Menanggul River. In sequence, the typical Kinabatangan-related tourism package includes a visit to Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center, a visit to the Gomantong Cave system, boat rides and wildlife observation on the Menanggul River, a sightseeing visit to Batu Tulug, a Sandakan city tour, and an overnight visit to an island that is carrying out a public turtle conservation project.

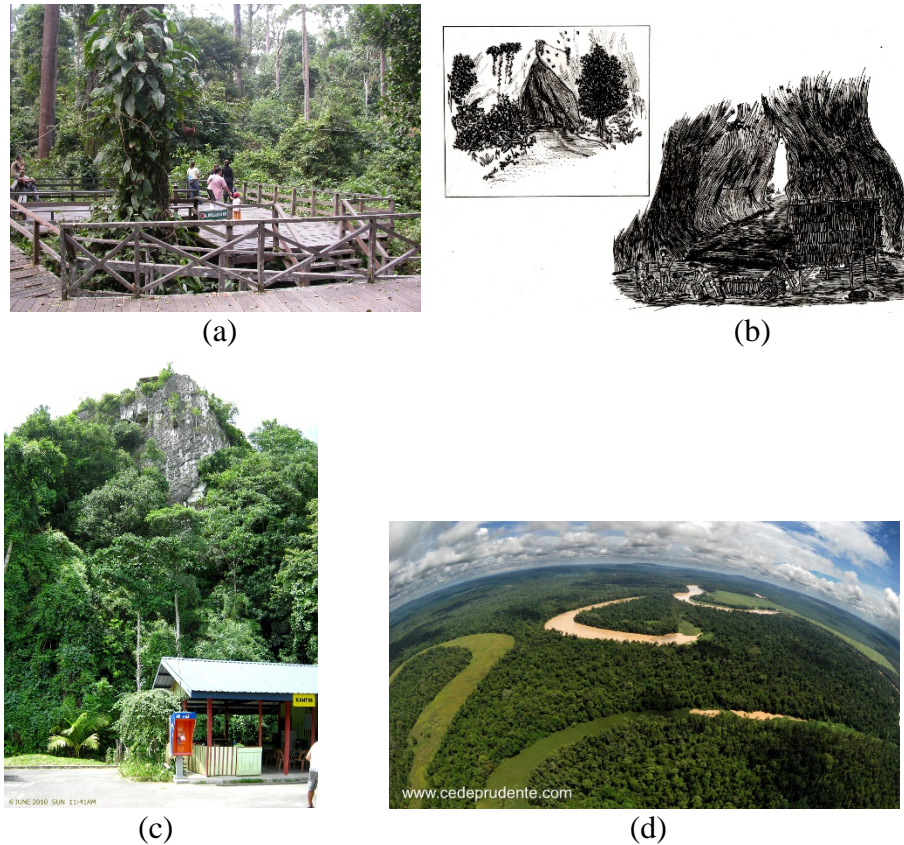


Figure 3.3. Popular places on tour to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. (a) feeding Platform A at Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center, (b) an illustration of Gomantong Cave, (c) Batu Tulug, and (d) An oxbow lake along the Kinabatangan River

A typical wildlife tour at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands involves visitation to the following places over a period of two to three days. These places are the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center, Gomantong Cave, Batu Tulug, an oxbow lake, and a tour up and down the Kinabatangan riverbanks. These places give a tourist a sense of Sabah's wildlife diversity, some threats to that diversity, and the efforts taken to protect that diversity. However, visits to these places are largely for the wildlife viewing opportunities. This package was cheap and extremely popular because land transportation was already available and it emphasized visiting a number of popular conservation sites. The package was shorter in duration and had few contacts with the Dusun Sungai community.

The success of the second-generation tourism operators encouraged other tourism operators to establish their own conservation-based tourism products and services in Kinabatangan. Among

them, include Diethelm Travel Pte Ltd and Mizume Tours & Travel Pte Ltd, and inspired other people to establish their own tourism operations. These operators are the third generation of tourism operators. Subscribing to the principle of economies of scale, many third-generation tourism operators tried to compete with well-established tourism operators by increasing their outputs as a way of reducing cost; the operators took existing packages and broke them into smaller packages before offering them to the tourists. A typical tourism package consists of five main components, namely attraction, wealth, accommodation, transportation, human resources, and activities (Peters, 2008a). There are many types of facility for each component and, when forming a package, a tourism player has many choices to form a complete package.

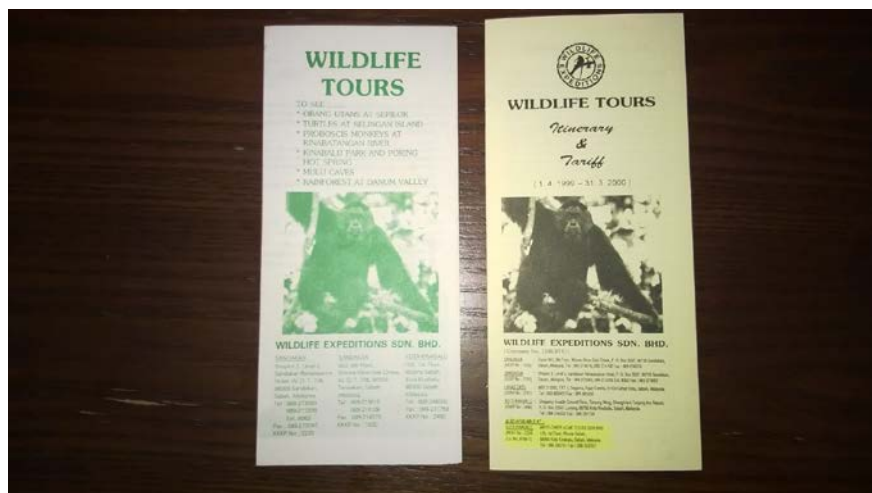


Figure 3.4. Tour brochures for Wildlife Expeditions Pte Ltd: before 1998 (left) and 1999-2000 (right).

The figure above shows two brochures for Wildlife Expeditions Pte Ltd that were published and used in the mid-1990s and in the late-1990s. Part of the tour packages noted in these brochures includes “The Kinabatangan River Trip”. Part of the distinctiveness includes price and activity. In the mid-1990s brochure, there were no day trips, while the late-1990s offered day trips. Besides this, while both brochures offered one-day/one-night and two-day/two-night packages, the mid-1990s offered cheaper packages. Interestingly, the text in brochures are more or less identical. Besides identical texts that revolve around the wildlife theme, there is one mention of the Dusun Sungai people.

Tourism is not static. In 1997, Malaysia experienced the Asian financial crisis and devalued its currency. Governments reduced their liability by implementing privatization programs and the Kinabalu accommodation services were privatized. Tourism players responded by offering cheap packages with the increase in competition. At the same time, indigenous people began entering the tourism industry aggressively, while the tourist profile changed; tourists wanted products that were cheap. The changes that tourism was experiencing were not translated into the products of Wildlife Expeditions Pte Ltd. While the texts of the packages did not change (and this might have contributed to the rise in the demands of the indigenous people), it is clear that tourism operators did not include indigenous knowledge in their commodification of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands into tourism packages. The third generation tourism operators separated island trips from land-based trips and popularized oxbow lakes visits and conservation-related activities as part of land-based trips. Besides this, the operators engaged a foreign workforce to run the smaller packages, thus reducing further the packages' costs. Eventually, these operators created many packages that were shorter in duration and lacked any contact with the indigenous hosts.

By the end of the 1990s, the image of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands had changed because of deforestation through logging, and agriculture operations became more visible along major travel routes. The change motivated tourists to specifically demand conservation-related packages. There are two major types of tourism products and services today at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, which are differentiated by the attraction. The first are the wildlife-related tourism products and services, and the second are the culture-related tourism products and services.

3.3.1 Mass tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands

Tourism development at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands began in earnest after 1997. This was because there was a nationwide effort to use tourism as a socio-economic tool. The developments included more tourism attractions and tourist guides as vital human resources for the tourism industry. The State of Sabah established a number of tourism attractions as early as 1997 and placed information and signage at all of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' touristic sites. The following figure shows an example of one of those signs.



Figure 3.5. An information stone about the Gomantong Cave placed at the front of the old Sabah Wildlife Department's Gomantong Station.

Figure 3.5 shows an information stone placed at the front of an old Sabah Wildlife Department's Gomantong Station. This information stone was placed there by the Sabah State Museum in the mid-1990s to improve tourists' experiences, and there are a number of them throughout the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Besides information stones, the Sabah State Museum also spearheaded the development of a visitors' centre next to a prominent ancient burial site, Agop Batu Puteh.²¹ The following figure shows a photograph taken from inside the cave that was posted on a social media site.

²¹ "Agop Batu Puteh" is a Dusun *Sungai* term that literally means "Cave of Batu Puteh" in English



Figure 3.6. A photograph taken from inside Agop Batu Tulug (Source: Rabini, 2006)

Figure 3.6 was taken in 2006, and it shows the coffin headpiece with the backdrop of the cave's opening overlooking Sandakan-Lahad Datu highway and the Kinabatangan plain.

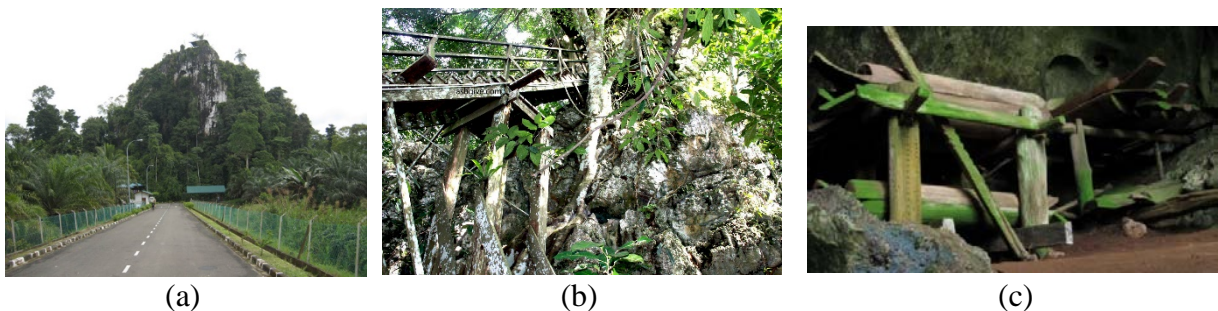


Figure 3.7. Photographs of the Agop Batu Puteh visitors' centre, facilities and burial site.

The Sabah State's tourism development is an upgrade and improvement of existing tourism attractions from earlier tour packages. Figure 3.7 shows a number of photographs illustrating the convenience of the Agop Batu Puteh visitors' centre. The far left photograph shows the road and entrance to the centre and the middle photograph shows the stairs leading up to the burial chambers. The far right photograph shows the artefacts inside the burial chambers. The stairs of Batu Tulug were developed by the Sabah State Museum meant to allow local and

foreign tourists to appreciate the historical significance to Sabah of the Batu Tulug burial site. The stairs made the burial site accessible to virtually all types of tourists.

Mass tourism is a form of tourism relating to the movement of large number of tourists across a region. To be convenient for the movement of large numbers of people, the tourism operators offered standardised tourism products and services e.g. buffet meals, cubical rooms, regimented or strict schedules, etc. Additionally, the operators would go to great lengths to guarantee the tourists' comfort (Cohen & Cooper, 1986, p. 540).

Mass tourism depends heavily on the employment of the economies-of-scale principle. This principle allows operators to produce products and services in large amounts eventually bringing down their production costs. In the context of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the accommodation and activities for mass tourists are the same as for ecotourists. A defining characteristic of mass tourism is the need to accommodate the movement of a large group of people, and this characteristic is explained using two social products, namely, mode of transport and space. Examples of the mode of transport are shown in the following figure.



Figure 3.8. (a) A Borneo Eco Tours Pte Ltd Boat anchored in the city of Sandakan, with orange personal flotation devices as per required by authorities, (b) tour coach parked at the Gomantong Caves Visitor's centre denoted by the green colour strip on the body and the word *Bus Persiaran*²².

²² Direct translation of *Bus Persiaran* in English is "Tour Bus".

Before the 1980s, all tourism required the use of boats (refer to Figure 3.8(a)) since the existing logging roads required the use of all-terrain vehicles or four-wheel drive vehicles which could only transport a few people at a time. With better road linkages after 1990s, land transportation of tourists used a mix of all-terrain vehicles and small group transport, such as eight-seater mini buses (refer to Figure 3.8 (b)). Of course, transportation was still limited to four-wheel drive vehicles and small coaches with a 25 person seating capacity. Road transport improved in 2000 and with it came the use of big coaches with a 44 person seating capacity. If the tourism operators are transporting a group comprising a minimum of nine tourists, they need to use approved modes of transport. When it comes to the use of boats for tourism purposes, personal flotation devices are needed and tourism operators need to gain the approval of the State of Sabah Department of Fishery with the support of the Federation of Malaysia Tourism authority. As for tour coaches denoted by a green strip colour on the body of the vehicle, the tourism operators need to gain approval from the Federation's tourism authority with the support of Malaysian Road Transport Department.

Another aspect to mass tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is the need for large spaces and certain facilities to accommodate large groups of tourists. Since tourists are not accustomed to a host's environment, they will need certain facilities and amenities to make their stay pleasant. If those facilities and amenities are not readily available, the indigenous peoples and tourists would use the same resources, and this could lead to conflicts. Places where conflicts might occur include all the places where the Dusun Sungai community encounters tourists (e.g., roads, shops, public halls, jetties, and historical sites). A place of conflict under observation in this case study is the village jetty, located along the Kinabatangan River system. While some families might opt to construct their own boat jetties, a village would have at least one communal jetty. The following figure presents pictures of the Bilit Village jetties.



Figure 3.8: (a) photograph of the Bilit Village's jetty, (b) photograph of a new jetty for the Bilit Village.

Figure 3.8 shows two photographs of jetties at the village of Bilit. These jetties are adjacent to each other, about 30m apart, and the jetty in Figure 3.8(b) is a newer jetty. According to a number of Bilit Village residents, the new jetty was meant to accommodate the growing number of tourists. In the interviews, the Bilit villagers claimed that the idea of a different boat jetty for tourists emerged after taking into account that the existing jetty (refer Figure 3.8(a)) usually gets overly crowded during noontime when the adjacent village's primary school session finishes and when tourists' groups on chartered tour buses reaches the Bilit Village after a three-hour drive from Sandakan on-route to the resorts facing the Bilit Village across the Kinabatangan River.

3.3.2 Dusun Sungai involvement in mass tourism

With the improved tourism facilities, demand grew for tourism packages to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands; and the Malaysian government focused on tourism human resources to meet the demands. In the mid-1990s, many tourist guides were not residents of the region; they came either from Sandakan or from Kota Kinabalu, and travelled for many hours together with their tourists to see the attractions of Kinabatangan. The limited level of indigenous participation and ownership resulted in the people lacking an authoritative influence in tourism.

They usually hold jobs that require little training or education, and they can easily be replaced or transferred; these jobs include porter, guide, artistic performer, kitchen staff, and housekeeper. Indigenous people seldom act as administrator, manager or tourism executive, since those positions need specific western knowledge and skills for tourism. More importantly, higher positions require a certain amount of commitment which, it is claimed, indigenous people lack. With limited potential to progress in their careers, indigenous people may as well opt to work for themselves in businesses they own. As entrepreneurs, indigenous people commonly carry out simple businesses that do not require huge investment, administration processing or expertise, like selling handicrafts and souvenirs, operating food stalls or running grocery shops. These kinds of businesses readily face other businesses and compete for the revenue from the finite amount of money spent by tourists. As a result, indigenous people can either occupy low-level jobs or just follow existing market trends to survive.

To increase the participation of the local community, Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism and Culture conducted several specific tourism-training programs. The first ever tourism program was carried out in July 1996 by the Borneo Tourism Institute Pte Ltd, a sister company of Borneo Wildlife Adventure Pte Ltd, It focused on training indigenous people as specialized guides using skills and knowledge that the people already possessed (Bahagian Pelancongan, 1996). Due to my tourism involvement, I acted as one member of a of a three-member panel for the first local tourist guide examination (refer to Appendix B).

The upgrading and improvement of tourism attractions plus the development of human resources, meant a speedy growth for the tourism industry at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. In addition to this growth in mass tourism, other organizations that could become involved in tourism emerged. The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands had always been known for

their rich biodiversity. This shapes much of the tourism activity in the area. To the Dusun Sungai community at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, tourism means the fulfilment of tourists needs. If the tourists want to see wildlife animals, they only see those, and nothing else. Local nature guides seldom point out, or describe in detail, the culture of the people that reside in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. A fourth generation of tourism operators emerged because of the steps taken by the third generation tourism operators. This generation of tourism operators comprises mainly Dusun Sungai individuals acting on their concern regarding the lack indigenous representation in tourism.

By 2000, the region had experienced the emergence of culturally-based tourism. There were several factors at play, including: a) the increased participation of the Dusun Sungai community in tourism; b) the establishment of numerous tourism networks (Rajaratnam, Pang, & Lackman-Ancrenaz, 2008); and c) the popularization of homestay activities (Razzaq et al., 2012). Clearly, the technical highlights were nature and culture. This is noted through the governing art and narrative, which is further described in the following subsections.

3.4 New approaches to Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism

During the 1990s, the involvement of native Dusun Sungai people in tourism was limited to tourism-related roles such as guide, boatman, and tree planter. The natives were mainly involved in agricultural, that is, palm oil-related activities. The lack of tourism knowledge and financial means limited their participation in tourism businesses. The situation improved dramatically in the last decade, and it prompted a surge in native Dusun Sungai peoples' participation in the tourism business. With this participation, tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands introduced more culture-related tourism activities. Today, at the

Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, there is wildlife tourism and culture tourism, and a tourist can participate in either.

3.4.1 Ecotourism and the Dusun Sungai

The environmental movement begun in the 1970s, and this movement played a significant role in bringing attention, in the 1990s, to the urgent need to manage the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands in an appropriate manner. Ecotourism is a form of tourism where environmentally conscience people engage in tourism activities centred on unique wildlife or natural objects that have become an attraction. Like many other forms of tourism, there is no one universal definition of ecotourism, but the International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as a form of responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Boo, 1990).

An ecotourism space must have the characteristic of being in the wild. Beside this, travel must be in small groups and the spaces must be a certain distance apart so that people can appreciate them. The following figure shows some examples of spaces where both the Dusun Sungai community and foreign tourists appreciate the environment of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.



Figure 3.9. During the field survey, tourists' relationship with the environment was noted through activities such as jungle trekking and boat cruises.

Figure 3.9 shows two typical situations where tourists venture into the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. In Figure 3.9(a), a small group of tourists observes the physical characteristics of a leaf; the shape of a leaf could indicate the species of the plant that is being observed. In Figure 3.9(b), a boat full of tourists observe the wildlife activities along the river. This boat is usually driven by a Dusun Sungai person unless the guide is capable doing so.

Ecotourism relies heavily on indigenous knowledge. The tourist guide leads the tourists to locations so that the tourists can understand how plants adapt in such environments. In addition, the guide needs an excellent knowledge of the environment and forest trails. A forest trail allows a tourism player to go through a forest with minimal impact on the surrounding environment. The trail is narrow, generally shoulder-wide and, in length, no less than a kilometre (Peters, 2000). Tourists occasionally pick up unwanted passengers such as leeches when they brush with the forest plants. A person is only able to be in this space if he or she wears boots, leech socks, long-sleeved clothing, and brings along a small backpack that is filled with tit-bits, water and raincoat. Apart from picking up unwanted passengers, a person could easily lose their way if they fail to recognise the signage, which is usually inconspicuous. Because of this, a guide usually also carries a simple map and a compass.

A tourism destination that is involved in ecotourism has a number of specialized characteristics. In general, the destination would be equipped to allow the host and guest to explore the natural environment. Besides this, the destination would have ‘modern’ amenities to fulfil the needs of both the host and guests. The following table lists some aspects that indicate the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands suitability for ecotourism.

Table 3.2. Evidence of Ecotourism at the Lower Kinabatangan

Component	Social artefacts and social products	Remark
Accommodation	Designed to depict environmentally-friendly conditions	Lodge, bed & breakfast
Transportation	Open boats	
Attractions	Swiftlets, Proboscis monkeys, Elephants, Orang Utan	
Activities	Tree-planting	
People	Organizations are geared towards conservation activities	HUTAN-Kinabatangan OrangUtan Conservation Project
Wealth	Printed materials	Malaysian currency

Table 3.2 lists the social artefacts and social products that are instrumental to ecotourism in the research location. The five categories represent the basic components of tourism. Based on the literature, ecotourism is about the environment and the willingness of certain tourists to pay for being in the environment (Hussin, 2006).

In the literature, much attention was given to foreign scientific studies relating to the deforestation of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands wherein researchers alleged that corporate greed was harming the environment (Legeh, 2011), while the indigenous people were stamped as environment-damaging-culprits through their shifting cultivation practices (Lawrence, Peart, & Leighton, 1998). This environmental awareness level is directly linked to the ecotourism that had been ongoing at the research location for decades. In order to facilitate ecotourism, a number of networks were established.

Among the organizations were the Koperasi Pelancongan Mukim Batu Puteh Kinabatangan Berhad (KOPEL), which was associated with the Model Ecologically Sustainable Community and Tourism Initiative (MESCOT), and the Kinabatangan OrangUtan Conservation Project (KOCPP), which was associated with HUTAN, a French non-government organization. In response to the achievements of organizations like KOPEL, the Rural Skills Development

Institute (INFRA) from the Ministry of Rural Development, became involved in the Wetlands' tourism development by helping the natives establish tourism cooperatives.

The HUTAN network was established in 1997 with the intention of effecting ecotourism's function to realize the role of local people in conservation. This network is located at the Sukau village. A similar network known as KOPEL, exists at the Menggaris village. These networks are largely driven by ecologists working in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Both HUTAN and KOPEL use tourism as part of their strategy.

Kinabatangan–Corridor of Life (K-CoL) is a network initiated by WWF Malaysia that was designed to empower the residents of Kinabatangan to act as environmental stakeholders. Although tourism was not part of K-CoL's strategy, making this network sustainable required finance which was eventually gained from the tourism industry through the formation of Kinabatangan–Corridor of Life Tourism Operators Association (KiTA). Established in 2009, KiTA is a network that comprises tourism businesses that operate in the district of Kinabatangan. The main function of this association is to support the protection of river banks, and certain endangered wildlife. The network provides this support through monetary contributions based on the number of tourists that each member operator receives²³.

Several tourism-related businesses were established by conservationists or ecologists and the Dusun Sungai people. Among the businesses are Red Ape Encounters and Batu Puteh Tourism Corporate Limited (*Koperasi Pelancongan Mukim Batu Puteh Kinabatangan Berhad* - KOPEL), and the function of these tourism entities is to provide a livelihood to the Dusun Sungai people that is an alternative to forest exploitation. Tree-planting activities involve the

²³ A member's interview

preparation of tree saplings and the planting of the tree saplings. The open spaces of a tourism facility are often used for this purpose.



Figure 3.10. Open spaces of a tourism facility are used as plant nurseries.

Figure 3.10 shows a local resort having tree saplings placed by the side of a pathway to the resort's guest cabins. In the Sukau village, many of the low budget businesses double up income by preparing tree saplings for non-government organizations or foreign tourists to use in tree planting. Through non-government organization buy-back programs, both preparation and planting are monetized to give the indigenous people an avenue to develop their socio-economic position without resorting to natural forest conversion. This activity appears to be quite successful since there is a sizable population of Dusun Sungai people in all of the villages at the research location that are involved in preparing tree saplings for sale. In fact, the head of Bilit Village prepares fruit tree saplings and sells them to non-government organizations that are involved in Kinabatangan forest enrichment program.

Only a certain kind of tourist would participate in these activities, and these tourists are recognized as special interest tourists. During a field survey in 2012, there was a group of special interest tourists at the Sukau village. Guided by a tourist guide, these tourists stayed at a bed and breakfast establishment that is owned by a Dusun Sungai individual. Based on an

interview with the tourist guide, the tourists comprised nurses, students, and teachers, and the activities of the special-interest tourists included wildlife-viewing, tree-planting, village beautification and community service. Hence, tourism and tree replanting businesses can avoid overexploitation of the natural resources. This lead to the establishment of environmental networks throughout the region (Majail & Webber, 2006) including RiLeaf, KiTA and HUTAN.

In the village of Sukau, the RiLeaf project has established a field office²⁴ next to the Sukau Green View Bed & Breakfast. One of the services provided through the project is access to an information centre that contains resources for those wanting to contribute to replantation activities. Interviewee R23 is a tourist guide that has conducted a number of forest conservation and replantation tour packages in areas adjacent to the Sukau village. During an interview, Interviewee R23 stated that his tourists are mainly professionals who are concerned about the environment. His packages are usually six to nine days long during which tourists do volunteer work such as beautifying the Sukau Village and replanting certain areas with fruit trees. Interviewee R23 takes his tourists to Sukau because the village has a number of resource centres like the RiLeaf Project Field Office and a computer centre that tourists can use.

By the end of 2000s, the participation of the Dusun Sungai community was so intense that travel writers remarked upon it, writing that Dusun Sungai businesses were “popping up with increasing frequency in Sukau, Bilit and other villages, giving tourists a chance to stay with local Orang Sungai and inject money almost directly into local economies” (Robinson et al., 2011, p. 108). The businesses that the travel writers were referring to were the homestay businesses.

²⁴ Refer to <http://rileaf.blogspot.my/p/project-location.html> for more information about the office.

3.4.2 Culture tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands

Culture tourism at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands revolves around bed and breakfast businesses and homestays. By definition, culture tourism is tourism that revolves around a host's culture and traditions (Razzaq et al., 2012); it is a form of tourism where there are distinct cultural and traditional difference between hosts and guests (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014). Culture tourism generally exists in places like villages and cultural centres that are only able to accommodate a handful of guests at any one time. Hence, the number of tourists differentiates culture tourism from mass tourism.

There are numerous bed and breakfast businesses found at the research site, and business competition is stiff. This can be noted by the number of businesses at a particular location. The following notes the competition in Sukau village.



Figure 3.11. Signs showing the direction of several bed and breakfasts at Sukau Village.

This photograph shows the signposts/signage of four different privately owned tourism facilities. The facilities include Sukau B & B, Sukau Green View (bed and breakfast), Sukau Longhouse Lodge, and Barefoot Sukau Lodge. Bed and breakfast businesses are privately owned tourism facilities. A bed and breakfast business rents out a bed or a room and provides

breakfast to the customer. The bed or room could be part of the owner's house or a different building structure. The following section illustrates the different approaches and levels of service that may be associated with different facilities.

In general, bed and breakfast establishments are owned and managed by locals. These facilities offer tourism products and services like morning and afternoon river cruises, jungle walks, cave exploration trips, bird watching, and night walks. Based on the information noted from the available resources and an interview with Interviewee R21, interviewed on September 23, 2012, culture-related tourism activities include traditional games, traditional dances, cooking lessons, tree planting, and fishing, among others things. However, these culture-related products and services are not exclusive; and because of this, all tourism bed and breakfast and homestays outlets at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands offer packages and services that are similar to those of the large or well-established tourism companies like the Sukau Rainforest Lodge and the Bilit Rainforest Lodge. Cultural and traditional social interaction and artefacts could be the only items that differentiate culture-related tourism and nature-related tourism.

As for the homestay cooperatives, each village²⁵ at the research location has formed its own cooperative. The cooperative functions as the centre for making tourists' arrangements. Each cooperative has its own set of activities that it offers to tourists. However, these activities are similar to the activities that are offered by other tourism businesses: river cruises, wildlife viewing, oxbow lake visits, jungle trekking, etc. All cooperatives are monitored by both the State and Federal authorities as these cooperatives are entitled to infrastructures assistance. Because of its experience, the most successful village cooperative of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is the Miso Walai cooperative with a gross income of nearly half a million US dollar

²⁵ Each village needs to have at least eight members before they are allowed to form a homestay cooperative.

per year. Other village cooperatives are not as successful as the Miso Walai cooperative.²⁶ The following table lists the homestay facilities noted during my field survey within the research location.

Table 3.3. Homestays at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands

Village	Homestay Facility
Batu Puteh	None
Bilit	Bilit Homestay Kinabatangan
Menggaris	Miso Walai Homestay Kinabatangan
Sukau	Balai Kito Mayu Homestay Sukau Kinabatangan

The homestay facilities in Table 3.3 are registered with local and regional authorities, and these facilities are listed in the *Sabah Homestay* booklet and website.²⁷

The following figure is a house that is endorsed under the homestay program.



Figure 3.12. A Sukau village house that participates in the Malaysian homestay program.

Figure 3.12 shows a house located in the Sukau village that is involved in the homestay program. This is evident in the logo noted on the top right of the red and white flag; the

²⁶ In a press release dated September 2012, the public representative of Kinabatangan stated that all of Kinabatangan's cooperatives should emulate Miso Walai cooperative.

²⁷ The Sabah Homestay website (<http://www.sabahhomestay.my/>) is owned and managed by the Sabah Homestay Association. In this study, the website was accessed on October 15

endorsement comes in the form of logo usage. All the villages listed in this study have residents that have participated in the Malaysian Homestay Program. With the certification and endorsement, the players can feel reassured and they can get further assistance.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described pioneering tourism activities that were able to create good indigenous host-guest relationships. Several decades ago, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands received many tourists. Many of them were given a taste of the natural environment, life in a village and the unique attractions of Sandakan. When accounting for the maintenance of indigenous knowledge in tourism, it is evident in pioneering tourism activities organized by Danny Chew and Tan with some partnership from the indigenous community. Today's tourism hosts focus on different matters, and tourists' experience the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands differently.

In the early 1990s, tourism authorities accepted the understanding tourism involvement of the Dusun Sungai community at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands was limited to certain routine jobs such as tourist guiding, boatman, and tree planting. There were few exceptions. The Dusun Sungai community's lack of tourism knowledge and financial strength, and this lack limited their participation in tourism. The increase in the community's financial strength mid-2000s prompted a surge in the community's participation in the last decade. With the Dusun Sungai community's increased participation, Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism began having more culture-related tourism activities. However, no thanks to mass media, the general interest in the flora and fauna of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands still over-shadowed tourists' interest in the indigenous peoples of the Wetlands. Towards the end of 2010s, more focus was placed on community-based and culture-based tourism as an avenue to overcome the lack of

tourists' interest in the Dusun Sungai people. There were few changes since community-based and culture-based tourism still drew much of its tourism attractions and products from the flora and fauna of the Wetlands. Flora and fauna had become the tourism standards of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. In the next chapter, I show that host-guest relationship, and maintenance of customs, are no longer available in contemporary tourism businesses as a result of standardization within the industry.

Chapter 4 The Impact of Tourism on Dusun Sungai People, their Knowledge and Culture

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the history of tourism development at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. In general, tourism development was carried out to bring about socio-economic changes. Repositioning a community through tourism has positive and negative implications. In terms of positive implications, tourism can help the community preserve their culture and traditions if they are exercised through tourism activities. Nevertheless, misappropriation of the peoples' culture and traditions would have the reverse impact.

To a tourism developer, having noted that tourism can eradicate poverty, it is inevitable that they improve their delivery system. The aim of these improvements is to encourage more people to participate in tourism. A common approach is the creation of a standard recognition technique. This standard can then be used as a yardstick or tool for determining the flow of development. In Malaysia, various ministries contribute to the formation of tourism standards. The country's Ministry of Human Resources was tasked with implementing standards for several professions. Among the national occupational skill standards are the standards for Tourist Guide (HT-023-3), Nature Guide (HT-25-3), Localized Nature Guide (HT-21-2), Homestay Coordinator (HT-040-3), and Homestay Operator (HT-040-2). These standards outline the basic skill sets that guiding and homestay personnel ought to possess. Knowledge that ought to be possessed is secondary as the Tourism Ministerial officials and Tourism Training Providers believe that it will be acquired over time. The Malaysia Ministry of Tourism contributes to this process by licensing guides, boatmen, tourism operating businesses, and tourism trainers. It also recognizes tourism-related associations and provides some funding to

these associations. In addition, the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism introduced the Homestay Program to help villages enter into the tourism industry. Overall, the improvements legitimize the knowledge of tourism developers. Indigenous knowledge is least of a tourism developer's concerns. Majority of the Dusun Sungai people also lack the concern about indigenous knowledge, they see tourism in a positive manner and as a way to put them in a better financial position.

When taking an indigenous community e.g. the Dusun Sungai community as a deprived community and then addressing the deprivation in context of Malaysian *Bumiputera* development, there is the possibility of the identity of the Dusun Sungai being affected. I argue that the networks that have been established to empower the Dusun Sungai have had the effect of creating cultural questions and questions regarding the sustainability of knowledge, secondary to issues regarding poverty eradication and wildlife conservation. In addition, networks associated with homestay-related businesses systematically replace Dusun Sungai culture with a standardized version that emphasizes on the Malay culture. Evidence of came from the members of the Dusun Sungai community involved in the Malaysian Homestay Program; a program aimed at improving *Bumiputera's* involvement in tourism by tapping images of traditional village lifestyle (i.e., the Malay culture). In Chapter 2, the traditions of the Dusun Sungai community were described, and it deferred the Malay traditions. Through the Malaysian Homestay program, the Dusun Sungai people's traditions are not highlighted as compared to the Malay people's traditions. Even in bed-and-breakfast establishments, there is no clear evidence of an interest in the cultural possibilities of tourism. Further elaborations are provided in Section 4.3. The Dusun Sungai culture was expelled from the larger tourism scene at the research location.

The aim of sustainable tourism is to develop an industry that respects the local environment, the community and the culture on which it is based. The implementation of sustainable tourism development in developing world is an enormously difficult task owing to the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in the developing world (Tosun, 2001). Some of the constraints faced when developing sustainable tourism based industry “include the lack of promotion, training, and maintenance of facilities” (Dieke, 1991, p. 288). Other constraints include the likelihood of negative tourism influences on local culture. Like many other indigenous peoples, the Dusun Sungai community faces challenges maintaining their identity and cultural uniqueness although they have defining traditional activities that have withstood the passing of time (Hussin, 2012a), and thus a sustainable form of tourism industry could not successfully developed.

As introduced earlier, to explore the Dusun Sungai responses to the tourism industry and explain the process and impact of professionalism and bureaucratization of the tourism industry on the Dusun Sungai people, I carried out interviews and analysed for patterns within the transcripts that created no behavioural changes, surprise behavioural changes or unexpected behavioural changes. I also analysed the significance of the pattern and its relationship to social artefacts e.g. formulated tourism networks at the research location. In this chapter, I explain how the process of the professionalism and bureaucratisation of the industry has impacted on the Dusun Sungai people, their knowledge and culture; thus resulting in the emergence of a not-so-sustainable form of tourism to the people.

4.2 Dusun Sungai attitudes towards tourism

A process begins because there is a certain objective that needs to be achieved and there is an option of achieving the objective. Tourism as a developmental tool is only possible because

there is evidence or some indication of such. In general, the Dusun Sungai people have a number of attitudes towards tourism. These attitudes can be categorized as economic, social and environmental. In each of these categories, Dusun Sungai people determine their attitude towards tourism in terms of the improvement that tourism provides. Elaboration is provided in the following sub-sections.

4.2.1 Tourism is positively accepted when it provides better opportunities

My interviews with Kinabatangan district officers, and tourism agencies revealed that all forms of tourism are seen primarily as tools to eradicate poverty, rather than tools to promote one's cultural uniqueness or to maintain traditional knowledge. In contrast with cultural groups such as the Australian Aboriginal Ngarrinderi people described by Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2014) and the Maoris and First Nations peoples described by Bunten (2010), the Dusun Sungai, particularly those who are involved in agricultural businesses, thought of tourism primarily as a tool to eradicate poverty. This was uncovered in an interview with a Kinabatangan District Office staff - Interviewee R10. According to R10, tourism can eradicate poverty. Being a person who was given the task of monitoring tourism development in the District of Kinabatangan, Interviewee R10 claimed that the Sabah State government used it as a poverty eradication tool through the acceleration of infrastructure and amenities development. In support of the state government, Interviewee R10 added that certain natives banded together by forming cooperatives. One such cooperative that Interviewee R10 highlighted is the Miso Walai cooperative. Through tourism, Miso Walai cooperative was able to provide jobs and business to the residents of Menggaris and Batu Puteh. To these Dusun Sungai individuals, tourism is "just another business". But while it has significant benefits for the community, none of these benefits are considered to be cultural.

Believing that youths are migrating to urban areas in search of jobs, my interviewees felt that the development of tourism in rural areas could provide opportunities for these youths, reduces migration, and ultimately eradicate poverty among people in rural regions of Sabah. This condition is reflected in an interview with a young Dusun Sungai male from the Sukau village, Interviewee R12. According to Interviewee R12, he left the Sukau village to work in Sandakan, where he claimed to have worked for 10 years in a number of tourism companies such as Bunibon Backpackers Sandakan²⁸ and North Borneo Trackers.²⁹ Interviewee R12 now works in his uncle's tourism accommodation business known as Barefoot Lodge Sukau. His uncle used to have an agriculture business, a palm oil plantation, and the earning from the plantation business was used to setup a tourism business. In the interview, Interviewee R12 stated that he returned to Sukau because he no longer wanted to work for outsiders (outside of his on community or ethnic group). Interviewee R10 also expressed a similar view i.e. the need for youths to contribute in their villages. In an interview with Interviewee R18, a teacher with relatives at the village of Bilit, the interviewee even stated that tourism might secure the future of his children.

Sabah's poverty rate was 23% for the year 2004 (Institute for Development Studies, 2007), and the state has a significant number of people earning well below the national poverty level³⁰. This level was reported to have dropped to 8.1% in 2012 ("Double-digit drop in Sabah poverty rate," 2013). Sabah's condition is largely due to the lack of infrastructure and evenly-spread business opportunities ("Double-digit drop in Sabah poverty rate," 2013). Sabah is still among the most underdeveloped states under the Federation of Malaysia, and its youths have resorted

²⁸ Bunibon Backpackers Sandakan is a budget accommodation provider, and information about was accessed on 25/08/2015 online (http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Hotel_Review-g303997-d3780887-Reviews-Bunibon_Backpackers-Sandakan_Sandakan_Division_Sabah.html)

²⁹ Interviewee R12 described North Borneo Trackers as a tourism marketing company dealing with TV documentary crews.

³⁰ The Malaysian Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development defines a total household income of less than RM830 (about USD240) per month as being poor. This definition is accessed from the Ministry official website on 25/08/2015 (<http://www.kpwkm.gov.my/nkra/definisi>)

to migrating out of their communities in search of better opportunities. The situation improved dramatically in the last decade after some Dusun Sungai families were able to reaping the benefits of their agriculture ventures e.g. palm oil related businesses and invested some of the profits in the development of tourism businesses. When the agriculture industry international competition increased and profits began dipping dramatically, those tourism businesses provided the Dusun Sungai families with another source of income. Sukau village provides many examples of tourism operations that were the direct outcome of agriculture gains, and provided a reliable financial income. This was confirmed through an interview with Interviewee R03, a stockholder of the Sukau Green View Bed & Breakfast. According to Interviewee R03, tourism is less demanding and provided a more reliable source of income amidst increased competition in the agriculture industry.

The progress that the villages of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands experience is not total; there are pockets of problems. For example, in Bilit Village, there is an incomplete bridge that links Bilit Village to the main Sukau road that cost taxpayers RM \$9 million (almost USD \$3 million). The bridge could not be completed because the approved funding was only meant for the construction of the bridge, it's the foundation of which were washed away by flood waters during construction. This problem is affecting the transportation of goods to villages, and tourists to the 14 tourist accommodation operating in Bilit Village (Jumadi, 2012). In another example, a 30-metre stretch of road in front of Sukau's future hospital has been left unsealed. According to Interviewee R07 and Interviewee R11, the road was left unsealed because the road contractor could not convince the land owner to honour his agreement to accept compensation. These problems indicate that development in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is hampered by environmental or social problems.

4.2.2 Tourism is favourable when it improves the social status of a group

The social status of the Dusun Sungai people, in relation to tourism, is dependent on many factors. Two factors identified in this study are:

- a) The intention of the tourists: It is understandable that the tendency of some tourists to focus on their role as consumers can be a point of sensitivity for indigenous people. Tourists may seek to obtain products and services at a minimal cost. The act of demanding a particular level of service is most visible during mealtimes. The consumptive act is not visible during a tour because a tour is only carried out when tourists have agreed to the terms and conditions (duration, distance, etc.) set out by guides. Interviewee R02 stated in an interview that he thought tourists were “*cerewet*” (“fussy” in English) and calculative; the tourists are always looking for the “best-price” and haggle a lot. His example was that a tourist might want extra serves even if there is a set meal. He knows tourists have the ability to pay for anything extra.
- b) The attitude of other communities: The lack of financial means has limited Dusun Sungai participation in tourism businesses; this lack of participation among the Dusun Sungai people is not due their understanding of tourism. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, this is demonstrated by both the tourists and the hosts. Among the hosts, the reaction was towards the comfort of tourists. In another incident, when there was an electricity disruption at Bilit Village, villagers called and pressured the Sabah Electricity Pte Ltd about the frequent electricity power disruptions, and the villagers stated that tourists are not accustomed to electricity outages. After this incident, the natives started discussing their predicament and how some communities are being

privileged with basic amenities. Their attention was directed on a neighbouring settlement of Bugis people.³¹

4.2.3 Sensitivity about the environment

Tourism generally is about the pleasures that tourists can gain from a particular visit, and in Sabah, this concerns the image of wilderness and wildlife. In general, tourists visiting the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands are driven by the intention of seeking the last pristine place (Chan & Baum, 2007b; Hussin, 2006). In one incident, prior to a field visit to the villages at the research location, a palm oil plantation accidentally discharged agriculture waste into the Kinabatangan River. A licensed tourism operator reported this incident, and stated that the Kinabatangan's reputation as a premier tourist destination was at stake. While I was doing fieldwork, a number of social activities were organized to clean the Kinabatangan River. One example was a cleaning activity by 14 students of St Bart's College, England, in August 2013. This activity resulted in some 270kg of rubbish being taken out of the Kinabatangan River near Kg Batu Putih including Sungai Tekala and Sungai Koyah. The rubbish included plastic bottles and discarded tyres. This activity was in relation to a biology field survey jointly organized by the Danau Girang Field Centre, St Bart's and two other organisations. I interviewed R4, a Dusun Sungai teacher. He said that MASCOT had carried out many such activities before. He generally is not happy with these, particularly when they become news in papers. The reason is it shows that local people cannot do anything. He said in Malay "*bikin malu saja*", which means "It disgraces us" in English. This sensitivity has given rise to a prominent issue of indigenous people as tourism players; they become more sensitive to their tourism destination's environment.

³¹ Bugis is a race that originates from Philippines. Mid 1990s saw the Sabah State Government recognized this people as natives to the state.

4.3 Identity and tourism

Tourism has always been associated with the cultural setting of a particular place; and because of this, it is only logical for tourism developers to associate themselves with both culture and tourism. While this is evident in the way the Sabah State government structured the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment, at the national level (i.e., the Federation of Malaysia), tourism's association with culture is a fragile association. The organization that is responsible for this is none other than the Malaysian tourism authority. Since its establishment at the end of the 1980s, the Malaysia's tourism ministry had undergone a number of changes. The ministry was first called the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. In 1992, this ministry was restructured into Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism. The Malaysian Ministry of Tourism emerged as a result of the former structure splitting up on the 27th March 2004. The components of culture and arts were re-established into the Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts, and Heritage. Five years later, on 9 April 2009, changes made to this ministry established the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Culture. The change of 2004 made the Malaysian government experience tourism without culture; thus, limiting any possible connection of tourism to indigenous people and their knowledge. Of course, this was reverted when the Ministry of Tourism and Culture was re-established in 2013. Tourism and culture association in Malaysia is a fragile association.

With tourism and culture having a fragile association, the identity of an indigenous group involved in tourism could be easily confused. This is evident for the Dusun Sungai people, and the cause of this confusion is the establishment of a tourism network and the change in the Dusun Sungai people's attitudes about tourism. While a tourism network could affect economic and environment changes, it affects the identity among indigenous peoples and pushing indigenous knowledge into the background of tourism.

4.3.1 Dusun Sungai could be portrayed as people belonging to the Malay ethnic group

The Malay ethnic group is not regarded as an indigenous community of Sabah, let alone of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. This is a historical fact that had been on display in Sandakan Heritage Museum. The Sandakan Heritage Museum was established in 2003, and it is one of the many tourism spots that tourists visit when touring the eastern parts of Sabah. Among the Museum's exhibits is a poster of a collage of photographs of the communities that populate the eastern parts of Sabah. One such poster is shown in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1. Photograph of a poster of the Malay community as migrants in Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that was taken at the Sandakan Heritage Museum.

Figure 4.1 shows a poster of the Malay communities in the eastern parts of Sabah. These Malays are migrants to one of the many plantations that were established by the North Borneo Chartered Companies almost a century ago; Malays are not indigenous people of Sabah.

4.3.2 Homestay and bed and breakfast businesses

There is much evidence worldwide of indigenous peoples wanting to change their situation. Many have tried to change their situation by directly competing with non-indigenous tourism businesses. In tourism, non-indigenous tourism players seem to be more successful, while the

indigenous people's poor socio-economic situation seems to remain. Such a situation exists in many tourism destinations that have an indigenous population.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the constitution of the Federation of Malaysia privileges people that are categorized as *Bumiputera*. Being a multi-racial society striving to create a national identity, the Federal government designated the Malay culture as the overseeing culture of the *Bumiputeras*. As introduced at the beginning of this study, indigenous peoples of Malaysia are grouped as *Bumiputeras*. The privileges of a *Bumiputera* include priority administrative treatments, social advantages and economic subsidies. Being indigenous peoples, they are entitled socio-economic advantages so that they can be on par with other ethnic groups, namely the Chinese and Indians. One example is through the Malaysia Homestay Program. The Malaysia Homestay Program allows communities to draw on their abilities to participate in tourism.

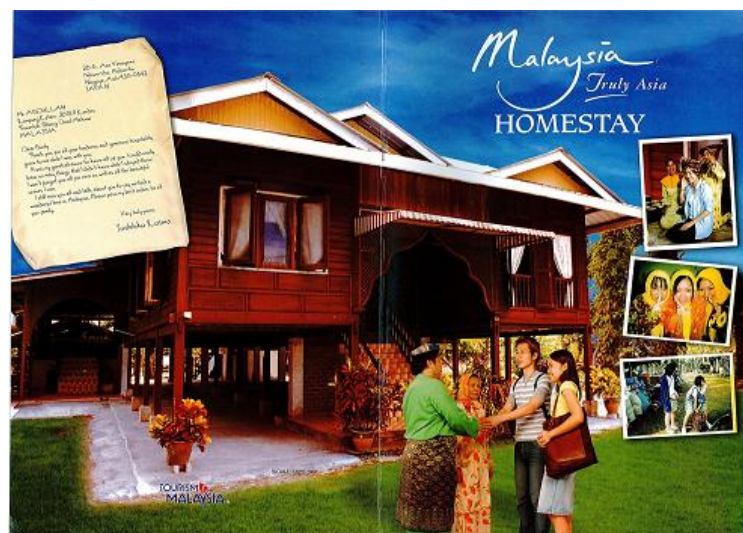


Figure 4.2. Front and back cover of the Malaysia Homestay Program book

In general, the tourism authorities provide administrative and financial support such as the use of a national homestay logo (refer Figure 4.2(c)) if a village has no less than 10 participating families that have undergone training organized by the Malaysian Institute for Rural Advancement and is registered with a Homestay Association.

Each village at the research location has formed its own cooperative after fulfilling the criteria of the Malaysian tourism authorities. The cooperative at each village functions as the tourists' management centre. Each cooperative has its own sets of activities that it offers to tourists. However, these activities are similar to the activities that are offered by tourism businesses for example, river cruises, wildlife viewing, oxbow lake visits, jungle trekking, etc. All of the cooperatives are monitored by both the State and Federal authorities as these cooperatives are entitled to infrastructure assistance. Because of its experience, the most successful village cooperative of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is the Miso Walai cooperative with a gross income of nearly half a million US dollars per year. The Miso Walai cooperative is now set up as a standard or example for the others to emulate.³²

The Miso Walai's experience can give a better understanding of the lack of emphasis on cultural knowledge. Historically, the Miso Walai is a group of people who were actively engaged in habitat-improvement activities. Led by an ecologist, the group aimed to reforest a damaged area of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. To sustain the group's activity, they decided to participate in tourism. However, upon getting to know the rules and regulations surrounding tourism, Miso Walai was eventually registered as a corporation that dealt with tourists, subject to the Malaysian tourism laws. Appropriately, a homestay was setup. The native Dusun Sungai participants willingly emulated the Malay culture in order to portray success. As such, they were propelled to form networks and consortiums for the sake of improving their socio-economic position.

The Malaysia Homestay Program popularises the Malay culture above all other races in Malaysia such as the Indians and Chinese. Figure 4.2 illustrates the popularisation of the Malay

³² In a press release dated September 2012, the public representative of Kinabatangan stated that all of Kinabatangan's cooperatives should emulate Miso Walai cooperative.

culture when it became the focus of the Malaysia Homestay Program guidebook. Because the Malaysia Homestay Program popularises the Malay culture, followers of the program are also expected to observe Islamic religious guidelines. One example of this guideline is the prohibition of alcohol. At the research location, the prohibition of alcohol was noted at the Bilit Bed & Breakfast and the operator was pressured not to allow it. With such conditions at a Bed & Breakfast, a tourist might get the impression that consuming beer and liquor is taboo among the Dusun Sungai people. If a tourist was to have such impression, it would be a wrong impression because according to Interviewee R17, Dusun Sungai communities living along the Segama River used to consume rice wine in the past when tribal wars and head-hunting were frequent occurrences. Getting drunk is one way for indigenous warriors to muster courage before battle.

To be a member of the Malaysia Homestay Program, Muslim native Dusun Sungai are obliged to observe their religious practices. Interviewee R05, is a Muslim Dusun Sungai woman who recently became involved in a local tourism business involved with infra-structure development projects; she has good business experience. However, after getting involved with a tourism business in the village of Bilit, she found that the business must have a religious dimension. Members of the Bilit Village community who considered Interviewee R05's business as being Islamic, brought the religious consideration matter to her attention. According to Interviewee R05, the Bilit Villagers felt that a tourism business ought to reflect the religious integrity of its owner. While the Bilit community acknowledges that some tourists drink alcohol, they informed Interviewee R05 of their dissatisfaction. The villagers have made it apparent that her staff were selling beer to visitors. Since Interviewee R05 did not have a license from the local authority to sell liquor, she had to devise new rules for her staff, and advice to her tourists. Surprisingly, the villagers' religious concerns did not extend to other tourism businesses in their vicinity, although they were wary of those operations. Non-Muslims owners operated

those businesses. The expectation of religious people in the tourism business causes businesses owned by Muslims to be beer- and liquor-free. This is not always possible, as Interviewee R13 confirmed. Interviewee R13 does not sell beer or liquor but does not discourage tourists from buying their own stock. Recollecting that indigenous people have the stigma of being the worshippers of false gods, their customs are questioned.

At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, there was also evidence that outside labour was used to ensure the maintenance of a particular concept of tourism. For example, on September 12, 2012, I interviewed Interviewee R07, a technician-handyman (uncertified) who is a Dusun Sungai, about his tourism experience and perception. Interviewee R07 had been involved in tourism for almost 10 years working in a number of tourism facilities. Interviewee R07 gave his experience and perception by illustrating incidents that happened at a local tourism lodge, the Bilit Nature Lodge. According to Interviewee R07, the Bilit Nature Lodge, which is managed by Nasalis Tours Pte Ltd, used to employ residents of the Bilit Village. However, there were incidences of staff falling-in-love and having children out-of-wedlock. Being a taboo of the Malaysian society at large, the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism gave stern advice to the lodge's management about the maintenance and upkeep of tourism professionalism. Because the Ministry of Tourism issued the licence to Bilit Nature Lodge, the management took seriously the advice and made new employment policies that prohibited relationships among staff. From that point onwards, the company slowly replaced the staff with people from outside the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Many of the replacements came from the West Coast of Sabah. Although the replacements were indigenous to Sabah, a Dusun ethnic group from the West Coast, these replacements did not necessarily have a high appreciation of the indigenous culture and traditions of the local Dusun Sungai people.

Guidelines associated with the Malaysian frontline staff, including drivers, receptionists and waiters, present a good example of the way certain tourism players are to act. Generally, Malaysian frontline staffs are expected to deal with guests in a particular manner. To be trained for this, the frontline staff are required take part in a course known as Mesra Malaysia. Running for a fee of RM150 and started in the late 1990s, I, on many occasions, conducted this one-day course introducing etiquette for dealing with tourists. Part of this course requires participants to perform a standardized greeting to tourists, regardless of the participant's background. Today's revised course is called "We Are The Host".³³ Figure 4.3(a) illustrates how front liners are to greet tourists. As for guidelines associated with tourism facilities, tour buses present a good example. Introduced in the mid-1990s, the Malaysia tourism authorities ruled that all licensed tour buses ought to have a green strip as noted in Figure 4.3(b), which denotes the eco-friendly tourism packages that were popular at the time.

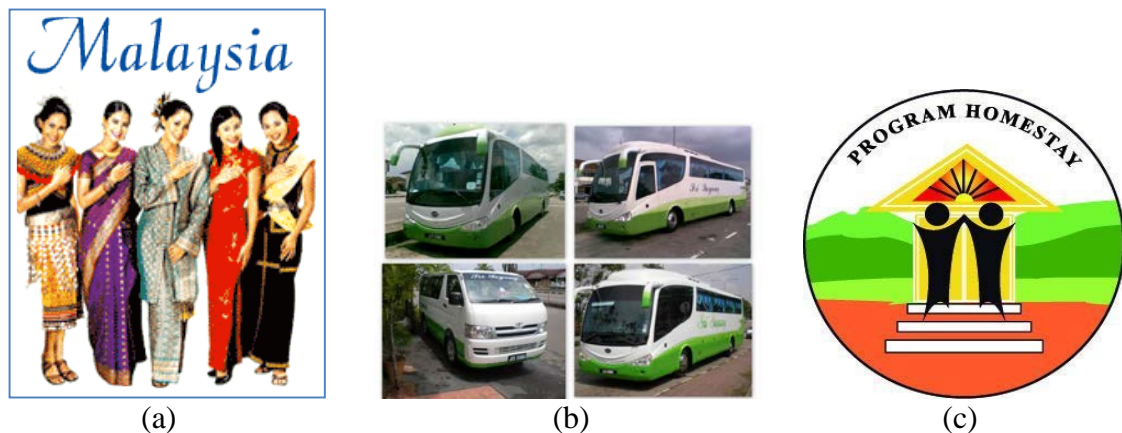


Figure 4.3. (a) Standardised Malaysian tourism greeting, (b) Green striped Malaysian tour buses, and (c) the official Malaysia Homestay Program logo

In general, the Malay greeting of placing the right hand over the left side of the chest has now been adopted outside of tourism as the nation's identity gesture. This was confirmed when school children greet foreign visitors. Interviewee R18, a school teacher, stated that even the

³³ Malaysia Ministry of Tourism and Culture, <http://www.motour.gov.my/bm/program/kursus/we-are-the-host>, 2014, (accessed 24 August 2015)

current Sabah State Education Department Director subscribed to such hand gestures when the national and state anthems are sung. Besides this, the guidelines relating to the colour scheme of all tour buses remains to this day, even though Malaysia has diversified its tourism products and services beyond nature-based tourism.

There are no indigenous members of the Sabah Homestay Association executive committee. Interviewee R19, a Sabah State public servant, told me that the 2012 executive committee members of the Sabah Homestay Association comprised almost entirely public servants from tourism-related governmental agencies. As previously described, the Malaysia Homestay Program capitalizes on the Malay culture. It would not be inaccurate assume that homestay operators wanting to gain access to governmental assistance might need to change their image to be more Malay-like. No doubt, some tourism standards are against the culture and traditions of the Dusun Sungai community.

This standardisation leads to the invention of traditions. One afternoon during my fieldwork in 2012, I witnessed a group of five tourists checking-in to the Bilit Kinabatangan Heritage Bed & Breakfast, and they were greeted by the Dusun Sungai guide, Interviewee R08. Before the tourists could climb up into the main building, Interviewee R08 informed the tourists in English that they would need to leave their shoes on the cemented floor or on the wooden stairs as shown in the photo below. According to Interviewee R08, leaving shoes below was a custom that the Dusun Sungai community practiced. The tourists dutifully complied.



Figure 4.4. Slippers and shoes placed at the bottom of a staircase is claimed as Malay culture and promoted to tourists

In general, a Malay house has a wooden staircase with a barrel or jar of water placed at its side. Ancestral Dusun Sungai people typically walked around barefooted. With the barrel or jar of water, a person could wash his or her feet before entering the Malay house. Observations made at the Bilit Kinabatangan Heritage Bed & Breakfast shows how Dusun Sungai traditions are mingled with Malay customs. Hence, certain tourism rules, regulations and guidelines are used to illustrate changes to the identity of a community and, thus, the abandonment of their own indigenous knowledge and customs. Tourism rules, regulations and guidelines affect how indigenous culture is portrayed.

This also impacts on Dusun Sungai self-conception. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the members of the homestay cooperatives stated that, in order for tourists to experience the local culture, they need to display the Malay culture. This is evident when interviewing a Dusun Sungai mechanic that used to be involved in conservation work whose wife is directly involved in tourism. According to Interviewee R02;

Bagi saya, pelancongan itu baik. Pelancongan memberi peluang kepada orang luar lihat kebudayaan kami. Mereka boleh lihat melalui majlis-majlis yang orang-

*orang homestay buat, mereka boleh lihat baju Melayu dan baju Selangor.*³⁴ – Malay Language

To me, tourism is good. Tourism gives opportunities to outsiders to see our culture. They can see it through the ceremonies that the homestay operators carry out, they can see the Malay attire and the Selangor attire. – My translation in the English Language

What is particularly strange in Interviewee R02's statement is that he sees the Dusun Sungai community as part of the Malay ethnic group.

A tourism network is derived from the need to spur a relationship with minimal effort. Tourism rules, regulations and guidelines are used to help in the development of specialized products and services, which in turn spur the formation of the tourism networks. Non-complying tourism operators are marginalized. As previously described, a tourism network can instil new knowledge and identities in place of indigenous ones. This becomes evident when understanding the manner in which the Malaysian Homestay Program is sometimes implemented.

4.3.3 Indigenous ecological knowledge is not used

A tourism network is a network of tourism players and organisations. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, tourism networks are conduits between hosts and guests, suppliers and users, and makers and consumers. While a tourism network is envisioned to promote tourism development that fulfils the needs of its many members, it usually introduces a situated identity and fulfils certain kinds of needs. As a result, tourism networks can also produce some negative outcomes (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Scott, Baggio, & Cooper, 2011). As discussed in the previous chapter, at the research location, there are now four prominent tourism networks. These are HUTAN, KOPEL, KiTA, and Homestay Cooperatives. Almost all of these networks

³⁴ Selangor is a one of 11 states that constitute Malaya.

were established to put the role of environmental protection on the shoulders of the Dusun Sungai community.

It is generally portrayed in mass media that environmental damages are largely the result of greed or ineffective resource governance. Similarly, the Kinabatangan's tourism networks sensitivity towards the region's environment generally relates to the perception that indigenous peoples' greed are among the causes of deforestation. To address Kinabatangan's environmental issues and at the same time overcome the perception that some indigenous people cause the environment to degrade, the Dusun Sungai people took a number of steps. A visit to Bilit Village and Sukau Village revealed that many villagers are involved in planting and selling fruit-tree saplings, an activity easily found on the Internet. In September 2012, I interviewed a young Dusun Sungai woman working at Sukau Green View Bed & Breakfast (Interviewee R11). She explained that her understanding of tourism is based on what she reads on Facebook and what is discussed with other people. She does not have any formal education about tourism. In the interview, she stated that she believes the role of her people is to reforest the degraded places of Kinabatangan. The actions of the villagers and the belief that the interviewee has showed that the environmental matter is of an utmost important matter. Bearing in mind that the Dusun Sungai is a community based on fishing and hunting, the environment matter outgrew basic Dusun Sungai cultural practices.

The situated identity of the Dusun Sungai as custodians of the environment rather than fishing or agriculture community is further perpetuated through the inaction of the Sabah Cultural Board. In an interview with Interviewee R34, who works at the Sabah Cultural Board, it was learned that the *Inventori Budaya Etnik Negeri Sabah; Etnik Orang Sungai Buludupi*, a publication about the Dusun Sungai people, is only available through the Board's online webstore and certain speciality bookstores in small numbers. As a result, very few Dusun

Sungai people are aware of the existence of the publication. This lack of awareness was confirmed during interviews with Dusun Sungai Interviewee R02, Interviewee R05, Interviewee R07, Interviewee R08, and Interviewee R09. In fact, I only came to know about this publication when carrying out a literature research at the Ranau District Library on my way to the research location in 2012. The Dusun Sungai people no longer has need use for their indigenous knowledge since it no longer has any place in their daily living.

4.4 A standardized tourism

The impact that tourism is able to have can be described using Rosemary Coombe's understanding of this issue in *The cultural life of intellectual properties: Authorship, appropriation, and the law*. According to Coombe (1998, p. 134), certain laws enable commodification and create conditions for the creation of other meanings, alternative identities, and new forums for recognition. Accordingly, the law inserts signifiers e.g. business practices in order to ground the rational circulation of values e.g. the need to improve socio-economic positions of certain groups of people with the general aim of doing away with relatively unproductive tribal systems by creating a monopoly over the power of representation or the ability to produce a tourism image (Coombe, 1998, p. 233). The tourism rules, regulations and guidelines led to the formation of a tourism network in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands could have ultimately resulted in the absence of indigenous knowledge. The absence is possible when those involved in tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands are expected to subscribe to a national tourism standard instead of subscribing to the needs of their community e.g. the appreciation of indigenous knowledge. Tourism rules, regulations and guidelines introduce and maintain a certain order at a tourism destination, and in the years since the establishment of the Malaysia Tourism Industry Act in 1992 and 2008, the Malaysian tourism authorities have made

many. These rules, regulations and guidelines range from the way some tourism players are to act to the manner in which tourism facilities are prepared and operated.

The concept of a stereotype denotes an overgeneralization of a particular group's characteristics. In tourism, the term stereotype is used to express the condition of a group's tourism products and services that has been duplicated until the group's distinction no longer becomes less obvious (Peters, 2008b). Stereotyping a group's tourism products and services has its positive side and its negative side. On the positive side, tourism planners and developers (e.g., governments) sometimes duplicate successful tourism products and services to encourage faster rural development in places that have similar conditions. However, on the negative side, duplicating tourism products and services, sometimes as a whole, can cause a community to be stereotyped. When this occurs, the uniqueness of a destination becomes diluted and less visible.

Indigenous-based tourism focuses on the indigenous people and their way of life. Since tourists might not know the indigenous peoples' way of life, the stereotyping of tourism products and services helps tourists. Stereotyping helps by creating a sense of familiarity, thus avoiding culture shock. During the process of stereotyping tourism products and services, some indigenous practices and the indigenous knowledge associated with the practices, begins to disappear.

Tourism planners, developers and industry players are aware that the displaying of indigenous knowledge is essential for indigenous tourism. Since these players have narrowed their scope of indigenous knowledge to tourism products, they have overlooked other potential ways in which indigenous knowledge disappears. Among tourism industry players, a feedback form is a questionnaire that tourists use to provide comments about the services rendered to them. It is a valuable source of information to tourism operators and developers when they want to gauge

their success or opportunities for improvement, and it could be used to determine the authenticity of their products.

Following is a feedback form that was in used in one of the tourism facilities in the research location.

BILIT KINABATANGAN HERITAGE BED & BREAKFAST

Feedback Form

Name :
Country : Date :
Email :

Thank you for staying at Bilit Kinabatangan Heritage Bed & Breakfast. We hope you have enjoyed your stay and we would appreciate your comments. Please take a few minutes to fill the form below, giving a score for each activity where applicable. (1 – poor / 2 – Need Improvement / 3 – satisfactory / 4 – Good / 5 – Excellent).

1. **Welcome and Briefing.**
Score :
Comment :
2. **Transport and Boat Service.**
Score :
Comment :
3. **Guide.**
Score :
Comment :
4. **B & B (including meals, activities with B & B Staff)**
Score :
Comment :
5. **Nature Activities / Wildlife Viewing (e.g river cruise, Night trekking, ox-bow lake)**
Score :
Comment :
6. **General Comment**
Comment :

" Have A Safe Journey, We Hope To See You Again.....Selamat Jalan"

Figure 4.5. Feedback form obtained from a tourism facility operating in the Bilit Village.

Figure 4.5 shows a form with questions revolving around certain tourism services such as transport, room cleaning, food-serving, and guiding. Tourists respond to these questions by giving their score according to the scale provided. Additionally, tourism developers and indigenous people ask tourists more about the services rendered rather than the things that truly motivate them; there is no space for tourists to comment about their motivations or expectations. This is visible in the feedback forms used and comments placed in guest-books. The form in Figure 4.5 does not have any questions that are very specific to the indigenous culture and traditions of the Dusun Sungai community nor was it designed to depict any Dusun Sungai cultural elements. It is impossible to get any understanding about the authenticity of the tourism experience in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands through any of these questions. While a tourist might gain some amount of indigenous knowledge from their experiences with indigenous people, their remarks to the tourism developers do not contain much about that experience. Instead, tourists communicate matters relating to paid services. Besides this, the current practices of tourism, including those at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, do not allow tourists to convey their overall experience in this kind of feedback form. There is no place to describe their experiences other than the service experience. For such expression, a tourist might use social media such as the Guestbook or the Internet. As a result, a disconnect from the culture and traditions of the Dusun Sungai people appeared in this tourism questionnaire. No doubt a tourism questionnaire generally seeks opinions about the quality of tourism, but as a medium, it shifted the tourism players' focus to one that is basic tourism and social practices away from the hospitality of the Dusun Sungai people.

The use of standardized tourism questionnaires and the replacement of local labour by the local tourism operators, all in the name of quality assurance, has its toll on the image of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands as a tourism destination. These questionnaires and non-local labour projected an image that indigenous knowledge is not a vital aspect of the Lower Kinabatangan

Wetlands' tourism scene. The knowledge that a tourist possesses cannot be enriched by the Dusun Sungai's people indigenous knowledge, even if the tourism project is adjacent, or in the vicinity of, the indigenous population. Besides this, a tourist could not possibly influence indigenous knowledge in any manner, positive or negative. As a result, tourists would demand some aspect of indigenous knowledge to be visible and generally subscribe to the understanding that the concept of authenticity is crucial to a destination that has an indigenous population.

The impact of having standardized tourism conditions and activities at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands can be seen in tourists' comments at websites like TripAdvisor when the tourists compared the Wetlands against their expectations. One such tourist is penned as MUCTraveller from Dubai. When visiting the Wetlands in September 2012, MUCTraveller stayed at two different lodges. MUCTraveller commented that the Wetlands' tourism activities were organized. But MUCTraveller was appalled by the gimmick associated with the activities. According to MUCTraveller, "1. The entire river forest is only a minimal patch of a couple of hundred meters left and right of the river; 2. Everything around are palm oil plantations!" (MUCTraveller, 2012). No doubt, MUCTraveller never mentioned about the Dusun Sungai community as hosts. In that comment, the tourist claimed that Dusun Sungai effort in tourism does not really reflect the essence of tourism because surrounding areas are ravaged, degraded and inhospitable. Because of this, although the Dusun Sungai community is involved in tourism, the image associated with an improved socio-economic position would eventually give the impression that indigenous people are out for what MUCTraveller (2012) term as a "quick buck"; tourism in Kinabatangan is "One BIG LIE" (MUCTraveller, 2012). If anything, such a comment emphasizes the need to ensure that indigenous perspectives and cultures are represented authentically within tourism products and services rather than just for show.

4.5 Conclusion

There is an overwhelming demand for authentic tourism products and tourism services by both hosts and guests alike (Chambers, 2007; Cole, 2007; Wang, 2007). These people form their expectations based on their romantic understanding of tourism products and services against new and modern ones that are perceived as being inauthentic (Brida, Disegna, & Osti, 2012). Such expectations and perceptions suggest the likelihood that a person's historical perspective and interpretive ability causes them to recognize something as authentic or not authentic (Peter, 2011; Peters, 2000). As a result, authenticity-related studies have focused on the appropriation of cultural heritage and tourism communications (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cole, 2007). These authenticity-related studies were carried out based on the assumption that neither hosts nor guests have a baseline or universal understanding of each other (Cohen, 2007; Wang, 2007).

The understanding of the existence of a bubble in tourism is well-known in the tourism literature. This concept refers to the development of a space where every aspect of culture can be commodified and presented in a touristic fashion and can be controlled (Macleod, 2006); it relates to the concept of authenticity. What occurs in this bubble is the tourists' consumption of a tourism destination and vice-versa (Urry, 1990, 1995, 2005). This consumption is made possible due to the availability of extra-ordinary products and services that contribute to the development of a tourist's gaze (Urry, 1995, 2002). There is no issue of authenticity in such bubble (Urry, 1995).

The most obvious impact of tourism on the Dusun Sungai is economic. It has improved people's lives by providing income, diversifying the local economy, and providing employment opportunities for youth. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the economic impact of tourism has improved the players' economic positions. It has caused its players to

become more alert to their surroundings. However, it is not sustainable tourism. I also showed how the business models and networks focus on economic matters, and push indigenous knowledge into the background. The tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, therefore, is not sustainable tourism in its fullest sense.

Tourism development in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has been seen primarily as an approach by Government agencies and the Wetlands' community to overcome socio-economic disadvantage of the Dusun Sungai people. This is quite different from the experiences of other indigenous peoples mentioned in much of the tourism literature that suggests indigenous participation in tourism is motivated by the hope of keeping culture alive and educating tourists, rather than by economic gain. Now, tourism in Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is centred on its wildlife, pushing indigenous peoples and their ecological knowledge into the background. Of course, indigenous knowledge has, in the past, been the bedrock of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism; and the network of homestays is becoming the platform for indigenous knowledge to come into the foreground of tourism.

The presence and position of indigenous people in tourism is being debated in relation to ecotourism (Chan & Baum, 2007a), community-based tourism (Hussin, 2006) and many other forms of indigenous-based tourism. The debate about indigenous peoples' relationship with tourism will continue since indigenous-based tourism offers crucial jobs and business security to indigenous people (Hinch & Butler, 2009), which might affect the people's identity.

In general, a concerted effort is required to eradicate poverty. The reason why this is needed is explained by Ramzah Dambul and Amriah Buang. According to Dambul and Buang (2008), many local or indigenous communities subscribe to a concept that could be described as collectivism, the combined effort that allows people to tap each other's strength. This concept

is seen as circular for people from a different background. Since tourism is a private enterprise, structural changes are needed. H. M. Dahlan explains how poverty eradication is achieved in a developing state. According to Dahlan (1989), a structure is bureaucratized so that development can be carried out. Hence, one reason why it was possible for the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands to experience this positive tourism impact was because a network was used as a tourism vehicle. This chapter explained a process by which indigenous knowledge is replaced by westernized techniques for tourism i.e. tourism knowledge. Rules and regulations do not allow the appreciation of indigenous knowledge among tourism players. In general, certain tourism procedures and guidelines, such as the homestay program, were devised to maintain the relevancy of indigenous knowledge by formulating a network around that knowledge. However, the fact that the program is primarily about Malay culture means that the network changes too. Such a network has a negative effect on the indigenous knowledge of the community that it was meant to serve. In an attempt to locate native Dusun Sungai at the centre of tourism, standardized homestay activities are promoted.

The impact of creating and maintaining a standard form of tourism is that indigenous knowledge becomes invisible to the tourists consuming tourism products and activities. The highlighting of an indigenous culture, or its altered form, depends on one's goal for tourism. Shaped by certain rules and regulations, this goal determines what is shown and what is sold. The stereotyping process causes the creation of an environment whereby tourists are drawn towards consuming standardized products. The standardization of tourism privileges the perspective of Malay culture at the expense of indigenous cultures. Hence, stereotyping of tourism products and services among tourism developers is the result of tourism's impact, and it leads to the creation of consumptive actions and atmosphere. Tourism activities can alter indigenous culture (Boynton, 1986). In the next chapter, I explore the impacts of various Lower

Kinabatangan Wetlands tourism conditions on communication between guides and tourists on tours, and on the exchange of local knowledge.

Chapter 5 Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands Tourism's Communication and Consumption

5.1 Introduction

Dusun Sungai traditional ecological knowledge is not foregrounded made as a foundation in tourism products of Lower Kinabatangan. Rather, the tourism products are foregrounded with the environment and animals of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. To put native Dusun Sungai culture at the centre of tourism, homestay activities are promoted. As shown in chapter 4, within the context of homestay activities, Kinabatangan's tourism knowledge regarding conservation and the identity of the host was established. This establishment occurred with the presentation of the Dusun Sungai identity as the Orang Sungai or Malay identity, standardized greetings, as well as accreditation instructions for homestay activities. As a result, the tourism industry's rules and regulations, and national religious agenda do not encourage for indigenous culture to be communicated particularly the ones of with animistic aspects. This marginalizes the Dusun Sungai people. This is central to the idea that the Dusun Sungai people is not 'authentic' indigenous people, or have lost their traditions.

While most tourism studies (Cohen, 2007; Wang, 2007) regarding the subject of authenticity were carried out with the assumption that neither tourists nor indigenous communities have a baseline or universal understanding of each other, the tourism literature about authenticity show that both tourists and indigenous communities expect some level of authenticity in tourism (Wang, 2007). People claim authenticity, but this is based on a comparison to whatever the people deemed as being "modern".

In general, a person's ability to consider something as being authentic or otherwise comes from the person's historical perspectives (Peter, 2011; Peters, 2000) and interpretive ability.

Since a tourist's desire to communicate is a reason to travel (Crompton, 1979), tourism communication has garnered interest, particularly in regards to the impact it has with reference to the relation that exists between hosts and guests. Some tourists feel that they have more meaningful experiences when they are guided by aboriginal guides or when they were able to be close to indigenous people (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2004; Ingram, 2005). The perception that information coming from indigenous guides is more meaningful is attributed to the biased image that indigenous people have in tourism (Sharma & Carson, 2002). The attitudes of tourists are crucial to the quality of a communication (Gudykunst, 1983). Besides this, host and guest have attitudes and intentions that affect their actions toward others (Gudykunst, 1983).

To study the indigeneity of tourism at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, I looked at the social and symbolic changes that tourism brought about. Drawing from the characteristic of indigenous knowledge described in Section 1.4, this chapter considers the quality of communication between tourists and the Dusun Sungai. From the historical aspect of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands (Chapter 2) and interpretative ability as a guide (Chapter 3), I analysed the context that created those impressions, and explores what happens to indigenous knowledge in standard tourism contexts. This process inscribed the fusion of horizons from the study with other earlier studies that eventually will lead us to see the foundation of indigenous hospitality.

5.2 The materiality of indigenous knowledge

Tourists are sometimes driven to take up activities that they consider to be new and different - novelty-seeking (Chang et al., 2006) - and they are sometimes culturally and spiritually driven to travel to indigenous tourism destinations (Smith, Scherrer, & Dowling, 2009). Their travel

usually includes relationship-building with their host (i.e., indigenous people). Some tourists appreciate such relationships and the communication that goes along with it (Zeppel & Muloin, 2007), while others do not (Mundy et al., 1995). Hence, not all tourism players (e.g., tourists) are able to appreciate indigenous tourism and, ultimately, indigenous knowledge.

Scholars generally regard indigenous communication to revolve around hands-on demonstrations (Tongkul, 2002). Many fundamental studies about indigenous communication were carried out subjectively on aspects such as indigenous etiquette and body language (Davidson et al., 1983; Mundy et al., 1995). These fundamental studies suggest indigenous communication is about someone gaining or drawing knowledge directly from the environment (Damarin, 1996). Beyond these fundamental studies, studies about indigenous communication have made little progress. There are two reasons for this lack of progress. The first reason is about the role of storytelling and was presented by Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt. The second reason is the importance of local setting and was presented by Aaron Mushenqyezi. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt who elaborated on the difficulty of studying indigenous communication when they researched indigenous education systems. According to Kawagley and Barnhardt (1999), indigenous communication involves stories and demonstrations. Within those stories and demonstrations, information is passed along using mediums such as plants, animals and natural materials. Accordingly, “traditional education processes were carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plant and animal world, and using natural materials to make their tools and implements” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999, p. 1). Mushenqyezi explains the hurdles of studying indigenous communication. According to Mushenqyezi (2003), most communication studies are about modern media, however, Mushenqyezi (2003) stated that indigenous people do not extensively use modern media; modern media has yet to be contextualized into local settings.

To overcome these limitations, a different perspective on mediums as communication platforms is useful. The perspective that fits the needs of my study belongs to Marshall McLuhan. In his earliest writing, *Understanding media: extensions of man*, he paved the way for mediums to be perceived as more than just for communication purposes. McLuhan (1964) suggested that every tool that humans have ever invented are extensions of ourselves and communicate our messages. This thesis explores the question of not only how the Dusun Sungai are represented in the media, but the mediums that provide the messages.

Methodologically, the tourist's gaze, in particular the focus on wild animals, means that many important indigenous elements have gone missing during the planning and development of tourism. To emphasize indigenous elements and increase indigenous peoples' visibility, tourism planners and developers established a tourism niche known as indigenous tourism. In the academic literature, the indigenous elements included were simply described as indigenous customs and traditions. Among these are the act of eating wild fruits (Zeppel, 2002), the presentation of native delicacies (Liu, 2006), and the presence of indigenous people (Ingram, 2005). Because some tourists expressed appreciation, researchers believed that these indigenous elements enable indigenous peoples to emerge from tourism's background, and eventually allowed host and guest to get closer to each other. Hence, through indigenous tourism, the planners and developers brought indigenous peoples into the forefront of tourism by emphasizing the indigenous peoples' culture in tourism products and services. In turn, the establishment of indigenous tourism increased indigenous peoples' visibility to the tourists. Nevertheless, issues of authenticity remain problematic because of the commodification of those experiences.

There are two tourism subjects that may aid the study and appreciation of indigenous tourism. The subjects are cross-cultural communications and a traveller's learning process. Cross-

cultural communications is about communication based on difference; education is about the sharing of information. Existing cross-cultural communications studies over-emphasize concept comparison between a host and a guest (Gudykunst, 1983). Besides this, many tourism scholars assume that the existence of communication between a host and a guest signifies a relationship between them. The need to compare a host and a guest, or to assume that a relationship could exist, is problematic because there are many kinds of host and guest that could result in the formation of several kinds of communication (Gudykunst, 1983). Appreciation of indigenous tourism through cross-cultural communication needs to take into consideration both the host's attitude and the guest's intention. As for the study of a traveller's learning process, although it is an important aspect in the appreciation of any form of tourism, tourism scholars have paid little attention to it (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, & Benckendorff, 2012). According to Falk et al. (2012, p. 909), "notions of learning and education are grounded in the academic discourse dealing with motivation, serious leisure, visitor experiences, situated learning and sustainable tourism" (p. 913); there is no centrality in the subject. Falk et al. also argue that scholars' context for tourists' learning does not include "life-long and life-wide processes" or learning as both a process and a product.

There are a number of communication shortcomings when trying to appreciate indigenous tourism. These shortcomings relate to the usage of tools and contextual conditions of other communicators during communication that people appreciate indigenous tourism (Abali & Önder, 1990, p. 281; Dhoest, Cola, Brusa, & Lemish, 2012). These tools and contextual conditions are essentially communication mediums; and Eleanor Bonny and Fikret Berkes believe that such mediums can provide the communication solution between a host and a guest to communicate his or her knowledge. Print media, maps, DVD/video, audio, CD ROM and websites could also function as mediums (Bonny & Berkes, 2008). As long as all

communication contexts remain the same (Blaeser, 1999; Bonny & Berkes, 2008), a person could mix and match the mediums accordingly when conveying a message.

Although the use of mediums improves the appreciation of indigenous tourism, and subsequently indigenous knowledge, in the literature, there are no in-depth explorations of these mediums, their influences, and the communication of indigenous knowledge, particularly in a host and guest relationship. The limitation of studying mediums for indigenous tourism is that it relates to the mediums of indigenous people.

5.3 The communicative condition in tourism

A tourism package embodies the uniqueness of the tourism destination and the touring process a tourism player needs to follow. In the case of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism packages, they are arranged around the ecological processes of the area (e.g., resting time of proboscis monkey and elephant river crossing); timing virtually guarantees wildlife appreciation. For example, one of the highlights of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is the ability to glimpse the Bornean pygmy elephant. Tourists expect to see wildlife while the indigenous people expect the tourism industry to flourish amid the backdrop of this environment. The expectations of tourists are established through iconic images and displays of destinations and holiday packages viewed before they reach Malaysia.



Figure 5.1. A postcard published by Borneo Ecotours Pte Ltd of elephants crossing the Kinabatangan River.

Brochures use similar images of wildlife to tempt the visitor. Inevitably, little information is provided at this point concerning the indigenous people they might meet in these situations, or of indigenous tourism.

5.3.1 Tourism information is gathered in stages

There are a number of ways for a foreigner to obtain information that would allow him or her to become a consumer of an indigenous-based tourism package. Generally, the common sources of information include word-of-mouth and mass media. Travel or tour agencies also provide information, however this source is, in turn, dependent on the common sources of information.

There is the opportunity to study the source of information from a practitioner's perspective, and this requires being involved in tourism work. In 2012, besides carrying out my field survey in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, I also conducted observations around tourism-related venues. The venues visited included the Capital city of Sabah, Malaysia (i.e., Kota Kinabalu),

and the capital city of Victoria, Australia (i.e., Melbourne). In Melbourne, I visited the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, and several travel agencies. While in Kota Kinabalu, I visited the Sabah tourism authority and a number of tour operators. These observations were similar to those a foreigner would make. My findings show three stages of information gathering for a foreigner to become a tourist, and these stages are illustrated in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2. A foreigner's stages of obtaining tourism information.

Figure 5.2 shows three main stages for foreigners to obtain information. At the initial stage, foreigners thinking about visiting an indigenous destination like the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands would search for information in all possible locations. Besides word-of-mouth, mass media and embassies, travel trade exhibitions and travel agents could provide the needed information. I attended the 2012 Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meeting Expo held in February 2012 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre as a visitor, and visited the Sabah Tourism Board's booth. Besides the Sabah tourism authority, there were a number of travel agencies and tourism operators from Sabah stationed at this booth; I interviewed one of the people tending the Sabah Tourism Board booth, a Chinese descendent Sabahan whom had

worked with Dusun Sungai people on tourism since 1994 - Interviewee R14. According to Interviewee R14, the travel trade exhibition serves not to market new products, since there already numerous mass media outlets that could do the same job without the need for their physical presence. When visiting the Sabah Tourism Board booth, I noted brochures, booklets and matter such as Facebook and Twitter addresses. The booth does not use electronic media such as video clips to promote Sabah as a destination overseas. In Interviewee R14's opinion, the Sabah Tourism Board uses the event to maintain the relationship between them and the other tourism players i.e. the relationship is between a generalized host (not the Dusun Sungai host) and tourists. Hence, in this first stage, while the Sabah's tourism authority promotion and marketing has many objectives, one of the objectives is to maintain a certain type of relationship by ensuring the all parties understand the role of others. There is no display of any indigenous knowledge elements here.

When a person has obtained sufficient information from travel trade shows or travel agencies, the person might make a trip to the destination. At the destination, more precise information is needed. A place that tourists would visit is the Sabah Tourism Board (STB) which is an agency of the Sabah State Government operating under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Environment. The STB's primary responsibility is the marketing and promotion of tourism for the State of Sabah. At the STB, tourists begin glimpsing indigeneity in non-indigenous environments. Figure 5.2 shows that the next step is a visit to the Sabah tourism authority. In one observation, made on 5th September, 2012, a female tourist who wanted to make a trip to Kudat in the northern part of Sabah to experience the Rungus culture, approached the STB for information about transport, route, accommodation and fare. After much querying, the STB's personnel decided to make the necessary booking for the tourist, although she had already provided information about tour operators that the tourist could approach. The action taken by the personnel inevitably saved the tourist time and money but, at the same time, the

personnel went beyond her role as information provider, and played the role of tour operator. Such approach is the basis for the corruption of a tourism system since the STB personnel had unknowingly servicing the tourist thus depriving a tour operator from making a profit for such services. The STB personnel's action demonstrated unusual level of hospitality that might have been derived from her cultural background, which caused her to unethically interfere in the business of tourism. In a non-indigenous environment, certain plays will be carried out to showcase indigenous form of hospitality; and in the STB's situation, the indigenous matter is the hospitality of the indigenous population.

After a tourist had obtained led information, the tourist now needs to go to a tour operator to make the needed arrangement. In the far right of Figure 5.2 is a marketing poster outside a local tourism agent at Kota Kinabalu city. This agent is located in Wisma Merdeka, a shopping centre that houses many of the tourism businesses of Sabah. On the poster, the information that is available is the details of a package in Kinabatangan. The details include activities, locations, and group size. Once a tourist enters the office and speaks with the officers, the tourist would have the necessary knowledge to meet with an indigenous person.

From the observations, information comes in stages. Many of the information centres that were visited in this study are not staffed by the Dusun Sungai people. Besides this, many of the tourism materials in Sabah do not feature indigenous tourism, though it may involve representations of the Dusun Sungai people. Because of this, Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourists would only gain an understanding of the Dusun Sungai people in stages.

One may conclude that most tourists' expectations of Sabah, and of their visit to wilderness areas, is mainly informed by the information they receive about packages for viewing wildlife rather than indigenous tourism opportunities. A common notion associated with tourism is that

a destination's true image is not always projected; the guests can only have a tourist's gaze. This gaze creates a distorted environment that impedes a tourist's ability to see the actual situation of a host (Urry, 2002). The existence of extraordinary tourism products and services that exclude modernization and the signification of certain signs during the construction of a representation is the main cause for the distorted image those tourists see (Urry, 2002). Like other indigenous peoples elsewhere, the Dusun Sungai community is invisible in Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourism; they are pushed into the tourism background and their hospitality is not known or felt.

5.3.2 The program of a tourist package

A typical tourism package consists of six main components, namely attraction, wealth e.g. money, accommodation, transportation, human resources, and activities (Peters, 2008a). There are many types of facility for each component and, when forming a package, a tourism player has many choices from which to form a complete package.

Most tourists who visit the Wetlands are those keen on Kinabatangan's nature. From the tourists' perspectives, indigenous knowledge relates to Kinabatangan's wildlife. A typical experience that tourists have when touring the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is as follows. The sequence starts with a meet-and-greet session between a guide, sometimes an indigenous guide, and a tourist. This session may be carried out at the Sandakan Airport, a hotel in Sandakan or a meeting point in the district of Kinabatangan. Tourists that are met in Sandakan would be taken to the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre and the Sandakan Rainforest Interpretation Centre before making their way to the Kinabatangan district by land. Tourists that are met in the district of Kinabatangan would have already visited the rehabilitation centre or the interpretation centre. Along the way, they will pass by many palm oil plantations. At their destination, they will again be greeted. After registration and resting, activities will

include a boat ride up the river, passing several villages to a tributary where wildlife-viewing will commence. After wildlife-viewing, the tourist will return to the resort, refresh, dine and turn in for the evening. The next morning, before breakfast, the tourists might take a walk on a nature trail around the resort. After breakfast, the tourists will trek to a nearby oxbow lake. Upon returning to the resort, the tourists will check out and make their way back to Sandakan town either by boat or over-land.

Figure 5.3 shows a three day/two night tour package and a two day/one night package schedule for a tour operating at Sukau Village.

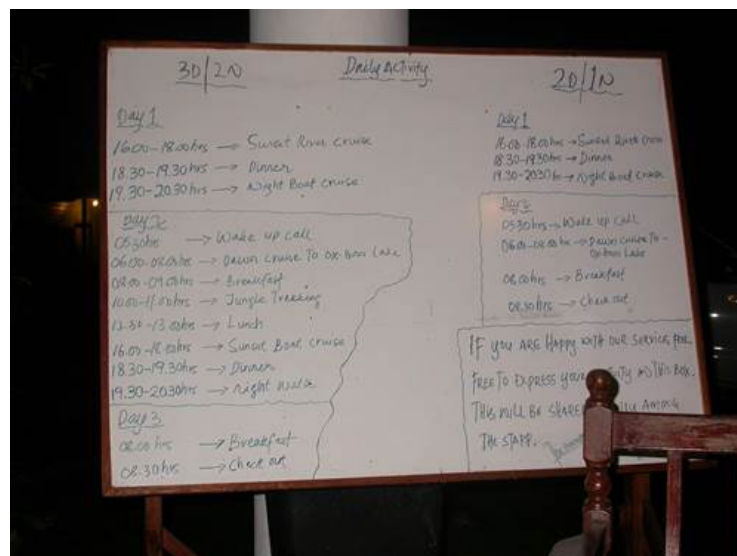


Figure 5.3. A photograph of a typical daily tourism itinerary in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that was taken from a tour operator outlet at Sukau village, Kinabatangan.

Within such a detailed schedule, tourists have limited free time. Tourists of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands have rigid schedules with free time only between 2pm and 4pm. They have little time for activities other than the package that they chose. Such a schedule does not allow tourist flexibility for any other activities. At the end, the tourists will leave the research location without experiencing its cultural uniqueness or gaining any indigenous knowledge. The indigenous knowledge of a community in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands may include knowledge of specific medicinal plants, fishing techniques, and even wildlife ecology. While

tourists may be aware of other types of indigenous knowledge, other expressions of indigenous knowledge are not noted.

Studies about Kinabatangan's tourism activities do not diverge far from the appreciation of the natural environment and the understanding of conservation; Kinabatangan's tourism activities signify conservation efforts. Investigations about these activities generally focus on the contextual impact of those activities onto the environment, the society (the host community, the guests or both) and the economy. These studies generally define tourism activities by their intended objective or message. Since all Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands' tourism activities are conservation-related, researchers have not seen the necessity to characterize these activities. As a result, the investigations do not explore the importance of these activities to the host-guest relationship.

The kinds of activities that a host and a guest could carry out depend on the abilities the host and the guest. Presently, in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, a host's ability is determined by his or her ownership, while a guest's ability is based on his or her physique. Since certain articles and products are communally owned, and the research location's tourists are generally physically capable, Kinabatangan's tourism activities are characteristically either observational, experiential or both. The following figure illustrates the tourism activities that exist at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

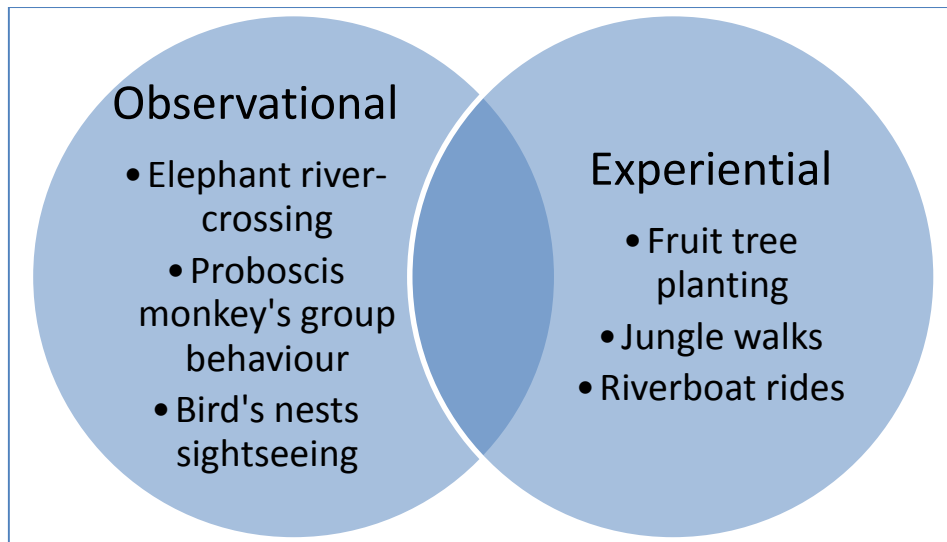


Figure 5.4. General grouping of tourism activities in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands

Figure 5.4 illustrates the two major tourism activities at the research location. The first group is the observational activities group that includes elephant river-crossing observation, proboscis monkey group behaviour and bird's nest sightseeing. This group of activities are largely seen as ecotourism activities. The second group is the experiential activities group which includes fruit-tree planting, jungle walks and riverboat rides. The second group of activities are more inclined towards the traditions of the Dusun Sungai people. Since indigenous tourism relate to both the traditions of indigenous people and their surroundings, the activities that fall under the combination of both observational and experiential activities are truly indigenous tourism based activities.

5.3.3 The communication between a guide and a tourist

Communication is the conveying of meaningful information. On its own, information is only an ordered sequence of symbols that conveys a message. However, that message can be interpreted in various ways (Saussure, 1960). Getting meaningful information will depend on ones' existing knowledge and their ability to pass information along. Because we all have some limitations, instead of meaningful information coming about on the first account, we might get one, or a few, information precursors. Taking feedback (Emerson, 1966) as a consideration,

the person providing the feedback sets up a communication goal. Feedback maintains communication. In a conversation between two people, a listener occasionally utters or gestures something as an indication that he or she is still following the speaker. In addition to this, the listener may engage with the speaker by offering talking points. This maintains communication, and eventually promotes satisfaction.

The action of continuously giving and receiving information may lead to the intended meaningful information after all precursors have been acknowledged and addressed. Thus, communication is a process that requires a sequence of information giving and receiving, so that, eventually, meaningful information is conveyed. In this research of communication quality, each group of people has its own expectations. Tourists expect to view wildlife inexpensively, while indigenous people expect job opportunities and income.

One possible communication condition that may exist between a tourist and an indigenous person is a condition where communication is fluent. Under this condition, both the tourist and indigenous person are capable of conversing in one language. This occurs at designated spaces such as a river jetty, entrance balcony, reception counter, lounge, restaurant or canteen. These designated spaces contain basic furniture, and some common reading materials meant to increase comfort.

Communication between a tourist and an indigenous person can come about over several sessions, namely, the meet-and-greet session, the on-tour session, and the deliberation session. In a meet-and-greet session, the indigenous person will lay down the rules and regulations of the area. These are usually in relation to the traditions of the area and the tourist's safety. In return, the tourist may query the rules and regulations for clarity. Whether at the first meeting or on tour, a tourist will want to know what an indigenous person has actually experienced as

a means of exploring the depth of their knowledge of a region. Similarly, an indigenous person may want to probe a tourist's experience to find similar tour experiences as the one that is currently happening. Indigenous people at the research location have the tendency to ask tourists if they have been to Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre in Sandakan³⁵ prior visiting the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. Such a line of questioning will indicate to the indigenous inquirer a tourist's conservation understanding and the amount of current affairs³⁶ that the indigenous person can or cannot share.

In an on-tour session in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the subject of wildlife dominates the communication process. During this session, a discussion surrounding particular wildlife may arise. In fieldwork of this kind of communication, I often encountered communication that existed primarily to convey the authority of the speaker. The unique aspect of this communication is that there exists a situation to convey the authority of the speaker. The following figure illustrates this matter.

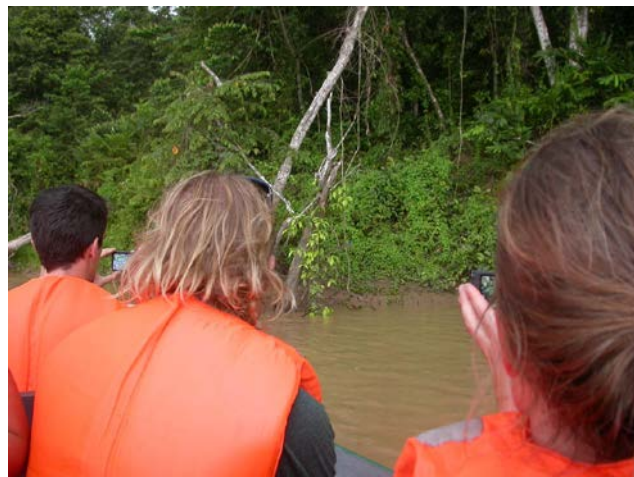


Figure 5.5. Tourists photographing a small bird resting at the end of a tree trunk known as the Oriental Darter Kingfisher.

³⁵ Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre, Sandakan is world renowned for its effort to rehabilitate displaced Orang Utan back into the wild. The centre is a must-see tourist destination for tourists visiting the eastern part of Sabah.

³⁶ The Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is surrounded by large palm oil plantation estates. While the Wetlands are seen as a conservation-work-in-progress, its success is threatened by those estates. Land-use conflict usually arises from these two quarters of development.

Figure 5.5 shows a number of tourists looking at a small kingfisher resting on a tree trunk. The bird was so small that the male tourist in the far left of the picture stated that he was unable to see the head of the kingfisher. Even when using a digital camera and zooming in on the trunk, the male tourist was still unable to see the kingfisher. This suggested that the male tourist is a keen observer of birds and understands the differentiating characteristic of a kingfisher e.g. the feathers on its head and the shape of the bird's beak. Using the qualities of communication, in the context of shaping meaning i.e. the use of a digital camera to enhance the view of the bird, the tourist signals his expectation. Contextually shaping a particular kind of meaning is also used by indigenous people. In a conversation with a Dusun Sungai individual about conservation activities in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, I noted that, besides describing how the conservation activities were carried out, the individual dropped or mentioned names of important conservation contributors³⁷. Using the qualities of communication, in the context of shaping meaning, people signalled their expectations.

A deliberation session usually occurs at the end of the on-tour session. During such a session, conversation usually revolves around the subject of the tour (i.e., wildlife) and the communicators' beliefs. Prior experiences, preferences and interpretation may be communicated here. During such a session, it is common to hear an indigenous person stating that he or she is a friend or, at least, treat the other as one; the communicators "fall into discussion" (Gadamer, 1985). It is in this "discussion" that words like *tápun*, and non-touristic matters are mentioned. This way, communication between a tourist and an indigenous person is never complete.

³⁷ A leading academician – an entomologist (Datin Prof Dr Mariati Mohamed) at the State's university, and a regional Statesman (Datuk Bung Moktar) were mentioned in a conversation.

However, not all indigenous communities are able to fulfil the expectations of tourists, apparently due to indigenous communities' limited ability to converse using the tourist's language. To overcome this limitation, certain indigenous individuals may need to rely on other knowledge mediums. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, some indigenous people use books as communication tools as shown in Figure 5.6. These books contain a collection of colourful animal illustrations and information about the animals. Many of these tools are produced using the English language. While some books are large-sized, many fit comfortably in pockets and knapsacks. Tourists and indigenous people use these tools when trying to confirm a sighting or when trying to explain something to one and another. Without these tools, there is no communication.

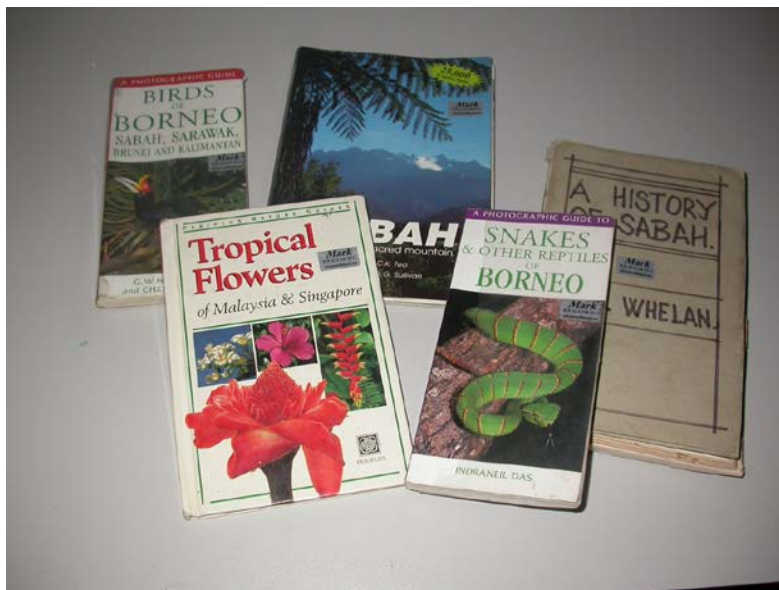


Figure 5.6. Books found at the research location

When they carry these artefacts, the Dusun Sungai are projecting their ability to fulfil the expectation of tourists. These tools or artefacts give the impression to observers that the holders are knowledgeable or, at the very least, reliable. In this way, communication between a tourist and an indigenous person is based on what they have; an interaction using symbols (Mead, 1934). Those venturing to the research location need to be in possession of several copies as a

show of intent. This is evident in Figure 5.7 which shows a photograph that was taken on a typical river cruise. An indigenous person conducts this cruise for a number of western tourists. The indigenous person in this photograph is playing two roles. The first is the role of boatman³⁸ while the second is the role of guide. The role of guide is evident from the book in one hand and the straps/harness on his back. The book is a checklist of birds while the strap is a professional binoculars-holding strap.



Figure 5.7. Indigenous boatman

Both the binoculars and book are used to locate wildlife, particularly birds, the position of which will be eventually communicated to the tourists when the indigenous person in Figure 5.7 feels the need to do so. Blue-eared Kingfishers, Pacific Swallows, Serpent Eagles, Purple Herons, and Pied Hornbills are birds that can be seen while on a cruise along the Kinabatangan River. Since the indigenous person might not know the Latin or English common name of a particular bird, he or she will need to refer to their book. When these books are used, they become authoritative, as opposed to the traditional ecological knowledge of the guide.

³⁸ Recognised as a profession under the Malaysian Ministry of Human Resources

This need to use tools is not limited to people's relationship while on tour. It also applies to the use of artefacts at a tourist location. Most of the accommodation facilities around Kinabatangan have numerous framed photos of wildlife. An example of this is shown in Figure 5.8.



Figure 5.8: Poster of monkeys and primates found in Sabah

Besides posters, many of the tourism facilities in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands contain shelves of fauna and flora checklists for tourists' use. Through observations, tourists were seen referring to posters such as this to confirm an animal sighting.

A significant feature of the quality of this communication is the manner of its reliance on the visual medium. Indeed, the act of photographing the environment may be one of the main ways tourists engage with that environment. Besides the use of a book, the camera is an essential tool in a tourist and an indigenous person's communication. The photograph is an inseparable act among those involved in tourism and the act of photography is somewhat of a compulsory act of the tourist (Chalfen, 1979). In literature, the act of photography is studied in the context of predominant tourism conceptions. According to Markwell (1997), the act of photography would decline when the photographer's mindset of a spectator shifts to a mindset of a

participant. Regardless of whether the camera being used is a professional camera, auto-focus camera, or something that is integrated into a mobile phone, tourists always take photographs. At the research location, tourists mainly take photographs of the tourist destination background. Many of the photographs taken are in relation to the wildlife of the Kinabatangan wetlands. While there are cultural activities at Kinabatangan, wildlife-related photographs are more often taken. During these photography sessions, the tourists seldom take photographs that include themselves. This form of engagement with the environment privileges a certain kind of detached knowledge that may be contrasted with indigenous knowledge.

5.4 The communication of indigenous knowledge

Like many scholars, Sarah Rinkevich stated that there is no universally accepted definition of traditional ecological knowledge. According to Rinkevich (2008), the term usually describes the knowledge acquired by indigenous people about their immediate environment and includes the cultural practices that build on that knowledge. This knowledge system incorporates: detailed knowledge of plants, animals, and natural phenomena; the development and use of appropriate technologies for hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry; and a holistic knowledge or "world view" that parallels the scientific discipline of ecology. Methods of propagation, usage, and consumption are grouped under the know-how attribute of indigenous knowledge. Although both attributes are different, in the context of indigenous knowledge, scholars tend to describe and discuss them as traditional ecological knowledge. Knowledge, practices, and representations intertwine and are mutually dependent in that all operate like an ecosystem and are internalized in the local language (Joranson, 2008). This knowledge is held in common among a people, founded on their own language, and they have their own taxonomic systems for classifying plants and animals (Joranson, 2008). Such knowledge is transferred between generations by tradition, learnt and communicated through practical

experience. Indigenous people are not familiar with trying to express everything they know in words (Sillitoe, 1998). According to Paul Sillitoe (1998), an indigenous person passes on their knowledge through informed experience and practical demonstration. This communication of indigenous knowledge may involve the use of idioms such as symbols, myths, and rites that are alien to science. Since it is more often shown than articulated, indigenous knowledge is not about information alone; it is as much a skill as a concept.

The Dusun Sungai express their knowledge through an embodied engagement with the environment, through hunting and fishing, the preparation of medicines and in their capacity as guides and hosts within tourism experiences. A simple example of the expression of this kind of knowledge is the indirect communication that enables the tourist to engage with the environment. Figure 5.8 shows five young adult tourists getting ready for their jungle trek. An indigenous person from the Bilit Village will guide these tourists to a nearby oxbow lake.



Figure 5.8. Photograph of tourists in their preferred attire and boots provided by the Dusun Sungai.

The tourists in Figure 5.8 came wearing jeans and simple t-shirts, fashionable to young people. None of them came to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands with a pair of boots. Since the place

of visit is muddy, a pair of boots is a necessary piece of attire for a tourist. These boots were given to tourists to wear.

Boots are not part of a regular tourist's attire, or tools that they carry with them when touring a destination. Yet, tourists are able to appreciate the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands because these tools were made available to them.

Apart from the necessity of an indigenous presence, the communication of indigenous knowledge usually happens in the natural setting where there are no modern facilities. Much of that knowledge appears in hands-on situations where natural physical elements are used to strengthen understanding. For example, the use of *melastoma* flowers to stop bleeding from cuts. This flower is found along unpaved recreational trails and is readily used by indigenous people to help tourists with cuts. This act is seen as a form of communicating indigenous knowledge and even more so when it is explained that the flower possess blood clogging properties that have been scientifically proven. Although such information can be made available at information centres or printed in brochures, and the plant can be cultivated around tourist facilities, the knowledge may not be understood and appreciated by tourists. Instead, the act of printing the related information is seen as a form of indigenous knowledge commoditization.

During the oxbow lake trekking activity, the Dusun Sungai guide would describe to the tourists the wildlife that they come across, how this wildlife is spotted, and the interaction of that wildlife with its surrounding. Among the regularly animals sighted are bearded pigs, mousedeer, and understory birds like flycatchers. The guide would draw on his or her indigenous knowledge to provide the description and spotting of the wildlife. The process of spotting is the play that makes the indigenous knowledge real, and the satisfaction of the trip

is in the walk and the process of spotting wildlife. During this play, both the Dusun Sungai guide and the tourists would trek very slowly in single file. Everyone would be observing the surrounding and each other, because the moment a person spots an animal, he or she would freeze, while the rest of the people would follow suit. In this situation, the tourism participants attempt to blend into the environment; a play to mimic the other animal's behaviour. The knowledge that the tourism participants share allows a tourist to comprehend and appreciate traditional ecological knowledge; one other aspect of indigenous knowledge.

Although the elephants have been somewhat boxed in by the ever-encroaching land-converting planters, their sighting is quite seasonal. Generally, sighting of the elephants occurring during the flooding period and the fruiting period. In September of 2012, there was a mass movement of elephants across the Kinabatangan River, and this movement had everyone excited because it was an opportunity for viewing the elephants conveniently. During that trip, the indigenous guide accommodated the tourists' needs, found the herd and brought the boat to the riverbank so that the tourists could get on land. Without considering the animal's territorial space, some tourists left the boat to get close the elephants, only to stumble back to the boat in a hurry after being charged by an elephant. The tourists' experience gave the other tourists a better understanding about the elephants, one that is not described in ecological textbooks.

People generally have a certain amount of knowledge and communicate that knowledge to achieve their respective objectives. In relation to indigenous tourism, both indigenous hosts and guests already possess a certain amount of knowledge, and they find ways of communicating their knowledge within their available timeframe using any available means in the hope of gaining a particular understanding before their participation ends. Because of time

constraints, everyone is pushing for completion of their story or objective before the end of the tour. Sometimes communication fails and, when this happens, tourism is perceived negatively.

To emphasize indigenous knowledge in a tourism package is to emphasize the experience that one is able to gain when in a specific environment. It is also to mean to present an authoritative means of engagement with, and survival within, that environment. The challenge, therefore, is to understand contexts or spaces of engagement within which this exchange of knowledge is made possible between indigenous people and tourists.

5.5 The contexts of understanding: Tourism's spaces

Yu Wang has described how a space can be enriched through an exchange, and it has appeared in the literature about the concept of authenticity. According to Wang (2007), when both the host and the guest contribute to the making of a particular space, both eventually feel that the new space is authentic and this influences the overall understanding about the authenticity of a particular place. This process, however, requires communication to occur between indigenous peoples and tourists in such a way that indigenous knowledge is shared between the locals and tourists.

The concept of a tourism bubble that was forwarded by Macleod (2006) explains the commodification of culture. In this bubble, tourists' consume the tourism destination and vice-versa (Urry, 1990, 1995, 2005). The consumption of a place occurs when it is used up the production of extra-ordinary products and services (Urry, 1995, 2002). As a result, observers to have what Urry calls "a tourist's gaze" since the place no longer appears natural. The consumption of a place does not occur when ordinary products and services are taken up. An example of this in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is at the dining hall of the Bilit Bed & Breakfast facility. Constructed to emulate a typical Dusun Sungai eating outlet, both the hosts

and the guests are free to mingle and dine together. In this ‘ordinary’ space, hospitality emerges. Both the Dusun Sungai community and the tourists enrich the space through exchanges of some sort. It might be argued, therefore, that we should consider communication in the contexts through which it occurs in relation to material experiences.

A typical action of tourism operators operating in Sabah is to present authenticity in the activities that are offered to tourists. One way of presenting authenticity is through food. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, river resorts try to accomplish this by serving up giant fresh river prawns (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) and *sayur manis* (*Sauropus androgynus*) as must-have specialties on their menus (see Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.9. Popular mass tourism dishes: (a) deep fried freshwater prawn, *udang galah*; and (b) stir-fried Sabah Vege³⁹

Referred to in Malaysia as *udang galah*, this prawn resides in large rivers. In Sabah, large rivers such as the Kinabatangan River, the Labuk River, and the Padas River have this prawn species. According to Ramli, who fishes and sell this prawn at a local market, the abundance of this prawn is seasonal and particularly high during the wet monsoon season. While a person might

³⁹ Sabah Vege is a colloquial name for a plant that is scientifically named as *Sauropus androgynus*. This colloquialism emerged as a result of people's perception to the sweetness of the fried vegetable. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2014/08/14/340358325/sayur-manis-delicious-but-also-deadly-greens-from-borneo> on 28 Sept 2015.

catch this prawn using a fishing rod⁴⁰ or fishing line, Ramli states this prawn is best caught using a bamboo trap known as *bubu*. The size of the prawns caught depends on the gaps between the *bubu*'s frame. With a *bubu*, native fishermen can bait the trap using tapioca, leave it, and trap more prawns without harming them. These traps are usually placed along a riverbank tied to a long pole or flotation device such as empty plastic drinking bottles. These markings are never fancy because it might attract macaques which have learned that *bubu* contain food. *Sayur manis* is relatively easy to cultivate since a person can take parts of a healthy plant and propagate it into another healthy plant; seeds are optional. Sabah Chinese farmers usually plant this vegetable⁴¹ on vegetable beds, and it is usually stir fried with some garlic and served hot; somewhat like an asparagus of the east. Natives in Sabah might grow this plant for themselves if they have a close relationship to the Chinese. It is a popular vegetable among the Sabah people, but not so much among the Dusun Sungai people; Dusun Sungai people do not heavily consume Sabah vegetables because they do not regularly plant them. The reason why *sayur manis* is important to mass tourism is because it uses local land, namely, that of the Dusun ethnic group, and the local people are informed that it is one of the many dishes that must be tried, particularly by Chinese tourists, so now the local people mass produce it. During my site visit, Bilit village was planting Sabah vegetable. Hence, these two ingredients and dishes, could be used to promote indigeneity.

Tourists in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands are always served with *udang galah*, and *sayur manis* dishes during their visit, regardless of the season. Resort managers along the Kinabatangan River purchase these ingredients in bulk from villagers who catch the prawns upriver, and from those planting the vegetables. Because of the managers' action, other

⁴⁰ Yusdi, a native *Dusun Sungai* interviewee actually caught this prawn using a fishing rod a day prior his interview.

⁴¹ Other Malaysian not resident to Sabah sometimes refers to this plant as Sayur Sabah (trans. Sabah Vege.)

residents sometimes do not get the chance to purchase the prawns and vegetable for themselves. In fact, the demand sometimes is so huge that most of the time, tourists are served half-sized prawns or smaller vegetable portions. Regardless, resort staff and tourist guides might take the opportunity to explain the dishes to their visitors during dinnertime.⁴² The explanations are limited to where the prawns and vegetables were taken from since some tourism personnel might have limited English language abilities. When these resources are in tourists' plain sight during a tour, little explanation is given.

The evidence above suggests that authenticity of a tour experience relates to the existence of a relationship between tourism objects (e.g., prawns) and its environment, excluding its human inhabitant. The strict serving of so-called iconic dishes does not show or stress and relationship with what understanding about the objects e.g. prawn and vegetable that the native Dusun Sungai communities have. However, experiences that engage with these foods, such as the collection of prawns from the river traps and the vegetables from the local Chinese farms, enable tourists to recognize not only the skills of the Dusun Sungai, but to come to terms with the complex history and ethnic relationships at that locality.

In a previous chapter, I argued that the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has four tourism conceptions. The conceptions are ecotourism, mass tourism, community tourism, and indigenous tourism. Since all of the tourism conceptions share some relationship, the tourism spaces would also share some relationship. Figure 5.10 is a diagrammatic representation of all of the spaces that could occur in an indigenous host-guest relationship in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

⁴² Udang Galah and Sayur Manis are usually dinner highlights

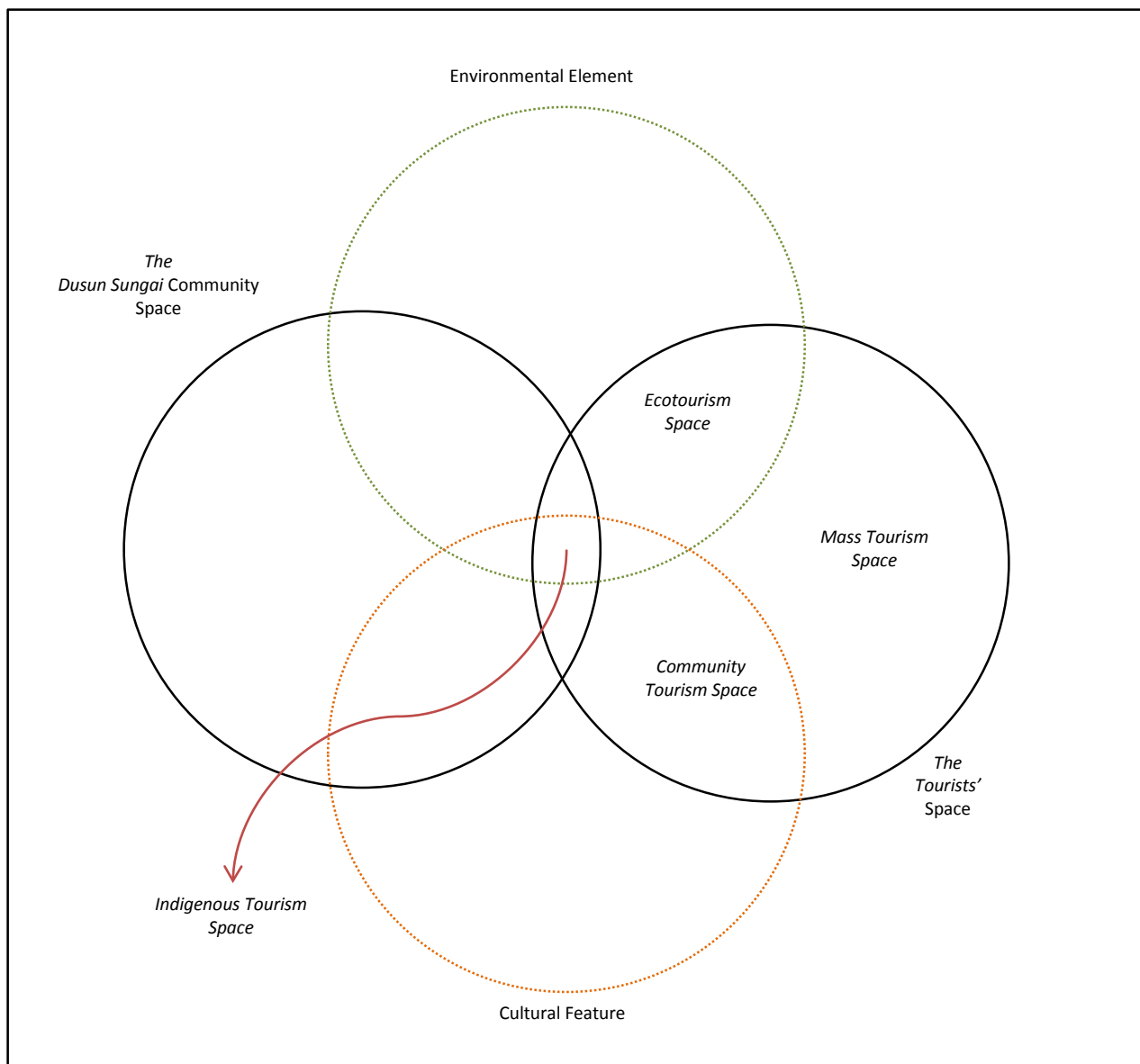


Figure 5.10. Tourism related spaces between the Dusun Sungai community and tourists of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

In Figure 5.10, both the host and guest occupy a spot at the research location, and from that spot, they govern certain amount of space. The space where only tourists exist is a mass tourism-like space (i.e., a consumptive space). Where environmental elements or cultural elements are emphasized, the space respectively relates to ecotourism or community-based tourism, while an indigenous hospitality space exists between both groups of people that have the environmental and cultural elements. Based on my investigation, I found the research location has ample spaces for a mass of tourists. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, there

are four kinds of spaces which correspond to their respective tourism conceptions. Mass tourism-like space occurs because of the take up of the mass tourism concept. Besides this, tourists can have either some space to have a 'last chance' wildlife viewing opportunity or some space to carry out conservation related activity. The former space generally relates to ecotourism, while the latter space generally relates to the community-based tourism. Besides the three spaces mentioned, another space at the research location is a space that is associated to indigenous tourism. I explore the communication in these spaces more closely in the next chapter.

The act of being hospitable towards someone affords the person time to appreciate something. With an understanding in the concept of hospitality, the process for exchanging information and developing knowledge can occur in stages. Similarly, as evident that time is needed to digest and sort indigenous knowledge-one's limitation, and this requires time, the acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge by non-indigenous person varies according to the distances between an indigenous host and the non-indigenous person. While there is a tendency to equate indigenous information with indigenous knowledge, information exchange does not constitute the acquisition and development of knowledge because information and knowledge are different; information is chunks of knowledge (Ziman, 1969). Within hospitality, a person is given time to take up knowledge at his or her own speed. When the knowledge of the indigenous people comes through, they will move position into the foreground of the tourism experience.

5.6 Conclusion

My findings showed that the tourism communication mediums were mostly used to promote environmental material already in the public domain. The current tourism communication

mediums do not promote local or indigenous knowledge. In support of Urry (2002), the main cause for the distorted image tourists see is the existence of extra-ordinary tourism products and services that excluded modernization and the signification of certain signs during the construction of a representation. As a result, the Dusun Sungai community is invisible in Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands tourism. Like other indigenous peoples elsewhere, they are pushed into the tourism background and their knowledge is not recognized. As highlighted mainly in Section 5.3, the availability of certain types of information is the main reason for this. Besides that, indigenous knowledge is not readily associated with any form of commercial communication mediums. Hence, the manner in which tourism communication mediums are used have implications for the way tourists and indigenous people communicate.

In literature, indigenous knowledge is taken as knowledge that allows an indigenous person to function effectively in their home environment. Its communication can be different from modern communication, but like modern knowledge, if its audience *feels* it, in whatever form, that knowledge becomes a gift (Hyde, 1983). To understand knowledge, we need to appreciate its ability to transcend itself; and indigenous hospitality is what allows it to have continuity. In fact, when indigenous information is used and communicated to others, it is adapted (Mundy & Lloyd-Laney, 1992).

The need for the use of tools is another communication context, particularly in the generation of communication meaning. The use of certain tools conveys certain meaning and communicates something between tourists and indigenous people. Tourists and indigenous people do not really face any issue of authenticity or expectation since they are not accustomed to certain behaviours or traditions. Instead, what they have is a form of limitation of understanding (Hottola, 2004). Communication addresses that limitation.

Both the tourist and the indigenous person have the role of taking the words and gestures of the other and putting them into a meaningful sense; one need to “play” with words and gestures. This play is possible when the interpreter draws upon his or her existing resources (i.e., knowledge), and adds meaning or a sense to a particular subject. In doing this, that interpreter extends his or her own horizon (Gadamer, 1985), building his or her own truth at the same time. But when several horizons fuse together, something is abandoned.

Authenticity in tourism is not nostalgic. This is because authenticity is related to an extraordinary circumstances that promotes tourism businesses. This is the opposite of indigenous tourism that depends on the originality of a place. The ordinary space of indigenous tourism is not consumed. In the previous section, Yu Wang pointed out that a place is enriched i.e. both the host and the guest contributing in making a place meaningful to themselves, and this enrichment addresses concerns about the concept of authenticity. Such situation is also evident in the previous section where both the Dusun Sungai community and the tourists enrich the space through exchanges of some sort.

The commodification and consumption of a place does not occur when ordinary products and services are appreciated by both the host and the guest. Such situations are the direct opposite of the extra-ordinary products and services that John Urry described as central in the formation of a tourist’s gaze – a gaze where authenticity is an issue. The ordinary spaces of indigenous tourism are not related to the act of commodification and consumption. These spaces have escaped the attention of tourism scholars and, thus, the hospitality in those spaces. In the next chapter, I will discuss hospitality in these ‘ordinary’ spaces further.

Chapter 6 *Tápun* as an Indigenous Concept of Hospitality

6.1 Introduction

Chinese traders, as well as the Europeans and Malays who followed, were, and are, tourists in Dusun Sungai land. Some of them have joined the Dusun Sungai people; all of them have been shown the people's hospitality. It seems some Chinese traders stayed, however, and the Batu Tulug burial site shows that they did not remain strangers.

One of the earliest recorded observations about Kinabatangan was made by Charles Vandeleur Creagh. As North Borneo's governor from 1888 to 1895, he toured the country. On 13th March 1895, Creagh (1897) believed that he had been introduced to something unknown to the Western world when he entered a cave in a limestone outcrop on the Batu Puteh tobacco estate. He apparently saw indigenous wooden coffins decorated with fine carvings. He wrote in his diary that the relics (i.e., coffins) in Batu Puteh cave appeared to be of Javanese origin although there was no history of the Javanese ever reaching the Kinabatangan River. Figure 6.1 shows one of Creagh's illustrations of the relics.

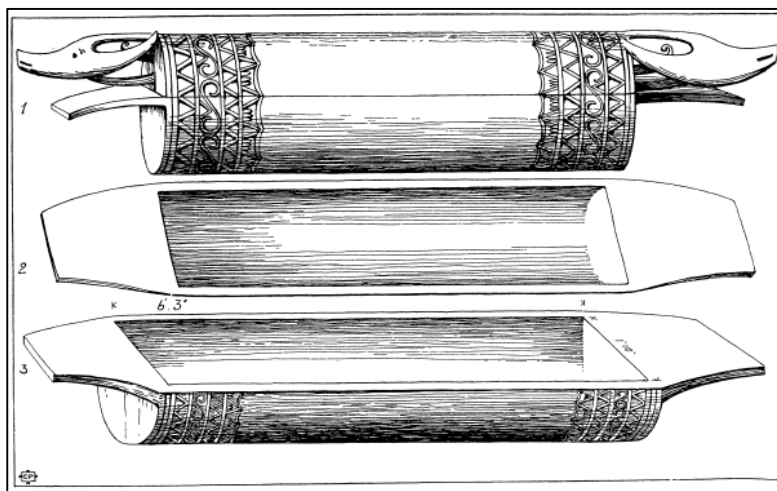


Figure 6.1. Sketch of what Creagh saw (Source: Creagh, 1897)

Made entirely out of Bornean Ironwood, Figure 6.1 illustrates a wooden coffin that consist of two parts; a lower half shaped like a boat, and a lid. The carving at the end of lid is of a buffalo head. Creagh (1897) was made to understand later by a native Illanun chief that several East Coast tribes used similar burial practices in the past. Creagh (1897) could only conclude that the relics were from former races of inhabitants of the Kinabatangan River. Almost a century later, Sabah State Museum carbon dated those coffins and found that each was aged between 700 and 900 years old. This means the tribe that carved the coffins existed around the period when Kublai Khan's army visited Java (Peters, 2001).

There were several reasons for having Batu Tulug as a burial site. From an environmental perspective, the Kinabatangan River floods the lower parts of the area for weeks in line with the *El Niño-La Niña* phenomena. From a cultural perspective, burial on high ground signifies the deceased was someone important in a community. In Batu Tulug's natural limestone chambers, wooden coffins decorated with carvings of buffalo heads, crocodiles, house lizards and snakes signified the respect in which the deceased was held. Crocodile coffin heads signify the deceased was a person of courage, while a buffalo heads signifies the deceased was a wealthy person. The State Museum Authority conducted a series of investigation around the 1990s and found that the coffins were 500 years old and of native Dusun Sungai origin. But the ancient practices of indigenous people do not include coffin burial, and it certainly shows that this ancestral tradition does not depict a typical Muslim or Malay tradition. Such a practice was believed to have been adopted from the Chinese culture because of the encounters that the Dusun Sungai community had with Chinese merchants. This shows that the Dusun Sungai people were influenced by their visitors. But more importantly, as this study necessitate a chapter about the history of the Dusun Sungai people, we now can see the role of history in providing an understanding about the foundation of hospitality.

In the Dusun language, visitors are called *tumbuhui*; the Chinese, Malays and Europeans who visited Dusun Sungai land are were *tombuhui*. They began as people who were strangers, or *tulun menengkusuayan* in Dusun (*tulun* means person). Through hospitality of the indigenous host or *mimang hamin* in Dusun (*hamin* means house), their status has changed. The Batu Tulug burial site shows that foreigners did not remain strangers forever. Over time, they became respected *mirokot papadagang*, meaning business partners. A person in partnership is *pirokotan*, in which the root word *rokotan* carries the meaning of sharing work or burden, and *dumagang* means work or business.

In Dusun, *tá* is an expression that is usually associated with feelings of amazements, while *pun* is a syllable found in a number of winged animals such as bats and birds that the Dusun hunts. When combined, it might give the impression of a “gift from above”; it would certainly imply food. As introduced at the beginning of this study, the central question concerned the need to understand how indigenous knowledge, namely, the concept of *tápun*, could be used to improve the indigenous peoples’ relationship with tourism. In Chapter 3, I described the development of tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. As the study progressed, findings have shown that indigenous knowledge is not truly integrated into the tourism of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, although the tourism destination has an indigenous population that is actively involved in tourism. Indigenous knowledge is neither a product nor a component of tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. As a result, indigenous knowledge has no links with contemporary tourism, and this is because indigenous knowledge has been misrepresented. I believe this misrepresentation this would be the general outcome of any scientific research that questions authenticity because the basis of the ‘indigenous knowledge’ in tourism is the understanding of tourists rather than the understanding of the Dusun Sungai people. What is given to the tourists is what the tourists want and not what is associated with optimal living in the area.

Conventionally, this chapter would equate the discussion of this study. In this Chapter 5, I described a number of conditions that influenced the communication between the Dusun Sungai people and their guests. These conditions encourage knowledge-sharing between both groups of people, and I argued that the shared knowledge is not indigenous knowledge. Nevertheless, what has become apparent is the existence of a form of hospitality that prompts the sharing of knowledge between the host and guest, thus, influencing the host-guest relationship in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. The progress of this study caused the central research question to change into one about indigenous hospitality as an indigenous knowledge system and its occurrence in tourism. The change made in the central question was not because there was no relationship between indigenous knowledge and tourism; instead the change made is a realization that indigenous knowledge has not been fully enough described to allow questions about its relationship with tourism.

In this chapter, I foreground indigenous hospitality of the Dusun Sungai people i.e. *tápun*, as a form of indigenous knowledge that has facilitated indigenous tourism in two following sections. Within this framework, an indigenous person is not without tourism expertise. The tourism knowledge is based not only on a long history of trading, but on indigenous customs and relations, and this is explained in another two following sections. From within this framework and described in Section 6.6, indigenous hosts display generosity of spirit, solicitude for others, and command respect and reciprocation. Finally, within this framework, a fusion of horizons may occur between strangers (Section 6.7). This fusion occurs not between equals, but between host and guest. In offering hospitality, the Dusun Sungai are visible as they are, rather than as depicted in nostalgic representations of past indigenous people.

6.2 Literature on indigenous knowledge excludes a knowledge of tourism

According to popular conceptions, tourists are people who take time off and spend money on a holiday while certain indigenous communities open their doors to allow them into their villages and homes. The notion of hospitality within the academic literature on tourism seldom goes beyond discussion of a tourism object or product and the convenience of sightseeing dominates the current tourism perspective (Adler, 1989; Winter, 2006). A western perspective of tourism allows scholars to better understand the needs of tourists, particularly western tourists, through subjects such as the content setting in photographs (Chalfen, 1979), the tourist's gaze (Urry, 1988), and inter-cultural conflicts (Zeppel, 2009). Although this perspective has improved knowledge about tourism, it does not aid understanding of the hospitality of indigenous people. Instead, a misconception about the indigenous notion of hospitality has emerged. This misconception emerged because indigenous culture no longer seems to exist in some places designated as tourism destinations. Besides this, indigenous people are perceived as not being mobile (Habibis, 2011). Hence, many tourism scholars only note western hospitality while indigenous hospitality is perceived differently.

Indigenous people have knowledge of tourism from numerous perspectives including from the perspective of a traveller and from the perspective of a host. Similar to western people, indigenous people travel, and they travel for many reasons. Indigenous people travel for their personal development process (e.g., meditation; Digance, 2003; Liberman, 1999), for sustenance, and for social or recreational reasons (Bauer & Herr, 2004). Within these activities, a notion of hospitality might already exist. Although indigenous peoples are not normally associated as travellers and participants in tourism activities, they are great travellers, and Rhys Richards describes them as such. However, as Richards (1990) points out, there is a lack of records that discuss their journeys. Because of this lack of records, historians and ethnologists

could not study indigenous travellers. In addition, by the time studies did get underway, foreign travellers had already replaced indigenous travellers in the normal growth process of tourism destinations, thus making the indigenous travellers less obvious or noteworthy. Consequently, while indigenous people do travel, they are less noted in tourism studies as travellers, and seen more as tourism suppliers.

Although there are discussions about tourism based on non-western tourism concepts (Yan & Santos, 2009), these discussions are seldom related to indigenous knowledge. In these discussions about tourism, indigenous knowledge is systematically categorized as a product or as an attraction at a particular destination (Zeppel, 2002) rather than as providing tourism's founding concept. No doubt, the notion of hospitality is evident in tourism activities, such as the Maori's *haka* and the Hawaiian *hula* dance, but in the context of contemporary tourism, and in relation to the indigenous people, tourism communication studies generally revolve around the topic of the accuracy of the tourism content, tourism authenticity, and intercultural relations.

Contemporary understandings of indigenous tourism revolve around the idea that it is a form of business, and that this business is alien to indigenous cultures. There is little discussion about the hospitality of the indigenous people within indigenous tourism. The lack of discussion of the indigenous people's hospitality and, subsequently, their indigenous knowledge beyond nature and into human social order, has several implications. The most obvious implication of excluding indigenous hospitality from the discussion about indigenous tourism is the restriction of indigenous tourism as a tourism resource. Hospitality is a universal human concept; excluding indigenous hospitality from an understanding of indigenous tourism diminishes and misrepresents indigenous culture.

In the academic literature, findings about tourism spaces in the indigenous host-guest relationship are generally about conflict (Digance, 2003; Echtner, 2010); there is no in-depth research about spaces where indigenous hospitality is adequately expressed. The definition of indigenous tourism presents three basic issues, namely, that the indigenous tourism products and services need to display indigeneity correctly, that indigenous knowledge needs to play a role in the development and management of indigenous tourism, and that indigenous tourism needs to fulfil the expectations of all tourism players. The issues revolve around the relationship between the indigenous people and tourists. The emphasis on conflict in tourism spaces is governed by the need to manage indigenous peoples' spaces since some spaces are sacred and cannot accommodate large numbers of tourists (Cater, 2006). In relation to the indigenous people, tourism communication studies generally revolve around the topic of the accuracy of the tourism content, tourism authenticity, and intercultural relations. These tourism studies have focused on the information inaccuracy about indigenous people that is affecting the indigenous people and tourists' relationship; tourism scholars usually cite authenticity and tourism players' readiness as the determining factors in the accuracy of information. Of late, tourism has been plagued with issues concerning the authenticity of indigenous culture. With its influence in the way certain tourism quality is enhanced (Chhabra et al., 2003) and the way culture is commodified (Cole, 2007), tourism communication centres on the appropriation of cultural heritage. The appropriation of culture is never accurate (Chhabra et al., 2003; Coleman, 2008), but it is also not necessarily bad (Cole, 2007; Coleman, 2008). However, all these studies assume that tourism is alien to indigenous people, and that it is not something they understand.

However, there is not one model of tourist, any more than there is a single model of host. Tourists generally seek to participate in extra-ordinary activities and as many indigenous hosts promote extra-ordinary tourism activities as there are those who promote ordinary activities.

Tourists are sometimes novelty-seeking (Chang et al., 2006), driven to take up activities that they consider new and different, and they are sometimes culturally and spiritually driven to travel to indigenous tourism destinations (Smith et al., 2009). Their travel usually includes relationship-building with their host (i.e., indigenous people). Some tourists appreciate such relationships and the communication that goes along with them (Zeppel & Muloin, 2007), while others do not (Mundy et al., 1995).

In relation to the Dusun Sungai, and probably many other indigenous people with long histories of trade, the assumption that indigenous people know nothing about tourism is simply wrong. The evidence - history - does not bear this assumption out. In this study, I have noted how the Dusun Sungai have been both hosts and guests. They are guests during the flooding of the many rivers of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands that force them to leave their homes, and they have been hosting tourists, in the form of traders and sea-farers, for hundreds of years. They were also the first people in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands to provide tourism packages and tours.

6.3 Tourism, hospitality, and the concept of *tápun*

The concept of hospitality is inseparable from the understanding of tourism. Anthropologically, “the basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship” (Selwyn, 2000, p. 19). It is a concept that allows someone to act as a host to another person who becomes a guest. Hospitality is a highly regarded concept among many societies, because it has similarities to the principle of nobility (Heal, 1984; Malpas, 2015). The term “noble savage” was coined in the seventeenth century to describe a person or a group of people that has much potential and is relatively uncorrupted by a social hierarchy. As early as the 19th century, the term was used by Joseph Conrad in a romantic

fiction set in the jungle of Borneo titled *Almayer's Folly*, about the relationship that a Dutch trader had with his mixed heritage daughter. This term describes the natives of Borneo as being people that were hospitable to outsiders. This aspect of hospitality makes it a humanistic trend; and because of this trend, hospitality should appear among indigenous people, otherwise, the term “noble savage” becomes meaningless. Hence, a noble savage accommodates outsiders because they are able to.

Because of the importance that many societies place on hospitality, it is part of the human body of knowledge. However, the very nature of hospitality, itself, makes it a difficult subject for many researchers; hospitality is known only through experience. To study hospitality, a researcher needs to investigate a person's knowledge and experiences and possess the ability to process this knowledge and experience.

Among western societies, hospitality is an important concept because “the basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote an already established relationship” (Selwyn, 2000, p. 19). This thesis has adopted the perspective that, while tourists claim to search for an authentic experience, they are searching, unconsciously, for a sense of belonging (Wang, 2007). Wang (2007) argued that both hosts and guests actively contribute to the production of customized authenticity through the making or unmaking of that sense of belonging. Most tourism communication studies (d'Angella & Go, 2008; Wang, 2007) already make it clear that regular contact between host and guest is important since communication can occur through many ways and is constantly changing. Forged through communication or severed through miscommunication, that relationship is also crucial for tourist-returning-visit behaviour (Valle, Correia, & Rebelo, 2008; Žabkar, Brenčič, & Dmitrović, 2010). The importance of the relationship between host and guest is evident from the mementos people collect on their visits to foreign places. It is common practice among tourism players to take a

photograph that includes everyone. Such photography has not been looked into; research commonly focuses on photography from the perspective of the tourists (Cohen, Nir, & Almagor, 1992; Scarles, 2012). Throughout this study, photography has taken place in the post-tour moments before the tourists depart from the residence of the indigenous people, and the poses that everyone adopts in these photographs are quite stereotyped (i.e., standing to attention; see Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.2. Photography of people posing (a) taken by the Johnsons in 1937 (Source: http://safari-museum.com/gallery/#/SILVER+SCREEN+SAFARIS/borneo_reprint_poster.jpg. Copyright by Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum. Reprinted with permission); and (b) taken by tourists on location in 2012 (Source: Sukau Rainforest Lodge).

The act of standing to attention is not new, and it is observable throughout history. The act allows both the tourists and the indigenous people to instil the photograph with an understanding that they have a relationship. Besides this, the reason for taking photographs is to reduce any uncertainty between tourists and indigenous people. By reducing the uncertainty, it would be possible to create a relationship (Berger, 1979). In a relationship, both the host and the guest have ethics and there is an etiquette in a relationship. In the literature, the etiquette was captured in the book *Culture shock! Borneo*, a book dedicated to providing foreigners with information for them to cope with a feeling of disorientation (Munan, 1988). While not an academic text, the book is useful for exploring situations concerning the engagement of strangers and locals. According to Munan, a traveller in a remote region will be invited to sleep

on the veranda of a longhouse if they are need of accommodation. Moreover, he or she often will be invited to share the family's meal, however, in return, "decency" requires that the traveller contribute to meal in some small way, such as through the gift of tinned food. A further requirement is that the guest comports him or herself in an appropriate manner. While some practices of etiquette concern behaviour that is not culturally shared, other aspects take on a more ethical tone such as asking permission to go into areas or spaces that are private (the rooms of a long house) and to take photographs.

6.3.1 Theoretical approaches to hospitality

The perspective that cultural mechanisms dictate tourism, suggests an understanding of where relationships are forged in tourism. This understanding has emerged out of the assumption that all relationships within tourism are inherently different; a tourist-tour operator relationship is different from a tourist-indigenous person relationship or a tour operator-indigenous person relationship. But this is not the case. William Gudykunst in his exploration of the complexity of the human relationships(1983), uncovered two positions in the relationship that are related with tourism; the position of the host; and the position of the stranger. In general, a host might react positively or negatively towards a stranger. The host might also react indifferently towards that stranger. On the other hand, a stranger is either in the position to visit, seek residency with, or membership of, the host's community. The positions a host and a stranger occupy might produce a certain kind of relationship. According to Gudykunst (1983), there are nine types of host-stranger relationship. Table 6.1 in the following page presents Gudykunst's findings.

Table 6.1. Gudykunst's typology of the host-stranger relationship (source: Gudykunst (1983))

Host's reaction to stranger	Stranger's interest in host's community		
	Visit	Residence	Membership
Leaning toward positive	Guest	Newly arrived	Newcomer
Indifference	Sojourner	Simmel's stranger	Immigrant
Leaning toward negative	Intruder	Middle-man minority	Marginal persons

As shown in Table 6.1, the positions that the host and the stranger occupy produce a certain kind of relationship. Where both the host and the stranger are repulsed by each other, the stranger is seen as an outsider. Where both of host and stranger genuinely appreciate each other, the stranger is seen as a guest. The differences in all nine relationships are the attitude of the host and the intention of the stranger which, according to Gudykunst (1983), are the true factors of a relationship. Based on Table 6.1, when a host has a positive attitude towards a stranger and the stranger is only visiting, the stranger is treated as a guest. This relationship is the one that what I am interested in exploring.

In context of philosophy, both tourism and hospitality are approached differently. In the literature, the existing philosophy of tourism generally resides in the eyes of the observer, while the philosophy of hospitality seems, generally, to reside more in the eyes of others that are being observed. Scholars like Jacques Derrida, Elizabeth Telfer and Anne Dufourmantelle philosophised hospitality, while scholars like Han Magnus Enzensberger philosophised tourism. The existing philosophies of hospitality and tourism had provided the language and romantic understandings of the people whom are involved in a tourism relationship.

As discussed in the introduction, there are only a handful of studies about hospitality from the perspective of the indigenous people. One such study came from Ana Maria Pineda who studied Māori's hospitality. The study that Pineda (2012) conducted showed that the English word 'hospitality' could only loosely captures the meaning of hospitality from an indigenous

person's perspective. Pineda's explanation of hospitality in English relates to the role of guest and host being non-interchangeable. Pineda's description of hospitality shows that is the phenomenon involves more than has been previously assumed by tourism scholars and is more closely associated to what Louise D'Amore argued was peace. As stated by Pineda (2012, p. 317),

from ancient times to the present, the practice of hospitality has held a privileged, even sacred, place in many cultures and religions. Among some peoples, extending hospitality to those in need, especially to the most fragile members of society, has even been understood as a moral imperative. Diverse religious and cultural traditions express hospitality in a variety of ways, but it would seem that there are certain core values that permeate their distinct practices. Hospitality is concerned not only with extending a welcome, but gives attention to the immediate needs of the stranger, the poor, and the most vulnerable. It thus aims to protect the dignity and moral rights of all men and women and to provide each person with those things that are necessary to realize his or her full human potential.

While to the Dusuns, *tápun* is linked to a system of paying homage to the host as well as to one's physical vulnerability (Williams, 1965), *mannakitanga* is linked to a system and practice of gift giving whereby the roles of guest and host are reversible and interchangeable over time and circumstances (Pineda, 2012). Besides this, *tápun* seems like "a sacrament, a pledge of faith" (Bunten, 2010), while *mannakitanga* is held in "a privileged, even sacred, place in many cultures and religions" (Pineda, 2012, p. 317). The English word 'hospitality' alone could not possibility capture the full meaning of indigenous hospitality since the role of host and guest do not change in the English language as compared to the language of certain indigenous peoples (Pineda, 2012). Both the Dusun and Māori perceptions of their indigenous hospitality are akin to a belief system. Similar to the findings of Pineda (2012), indigenous people possess an understanding of hospitality. *Tombuhui*, *tápun*, and *royong* instil an understanding of hospitality in the indigenous people of Sabah. *Tombuhui* is the word for visitor, *tápun* refers to hospitality, and *royong*, to social relationships.

6.3.2 Dusun Sungai and hospitality

Tápun, and what it represents, has been described in the literature by Thomas Rhys Williams and Jeanne Whitehouse. As introduced earlier in this study, Williams (1965) stated that *tápun* is about paying homage to the host. Whitehouse (1978) believed that there is more to *tápun* than meets the eye. In an observation that she made in the interior district of Sabah (i.e., Tambunan), Whitehouse (1978) stated that *tápun* created a bond between host and guest. Both Williams and Whitehouse did not describe the process associated with *tápun*. Hence, what is missing from the literature is a discussion of the process or mechanism of *tápun*.

As described in Chapter 2, the Dusun Sungai's life revolves around the rivers on which they live. A feature of this life is that, during seasonal flooding, they must move to neighbouring villages, where they stay as guests until the flood subsides. The move to neighbouring villages is only possible because the Dusun Sungai people appreciate the concept of reciprocity. As explained earlier, a central concept of the Dusun Sungai community's kinship is *gotong-royong* or social fellowship. This concept enables a Dusun Sungai person not only to recognize their extended family but the bond established between host and guest during the floods.

Gotong-royong is a Malay phrase that illustrates the concept of reciprocity or mutual aid (Hahn, 1999), which is promoted as a cultural value; *royong* is its Dusunic phrase. This phrase has long functioned as a moral conception of the political economy; it has long functioned as the measure of the village. It has become equated to the concept of networking. This is evident in Johan Pottier's description of the changes that have occurred in the Indonesian agricultural field. Prior to the revolution in Java's food production (i.e., the Green Revolution), Pottier (1999) stated that, after harvesting, local people were rewarded in kind based on the amount of effort they put in through *gotong-royong* activities. However, when the Green Revolution influenced Java's agricultural field, cash replaced the reward in kind. Pottier (1999, p. 84)

claimed that “old patron-client ties were breaking, and that social relations were becoming characterized more by employer-employee qualities.” Among native Dusun people, *gotong-royong* means more than just mutual aid because it “stems out from a deep appreciation of the cultural integrity of a community” (Tongkul, 2002, p. 20). In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, native Dusun Sungai people appreciate *gotong-royong* as a concept for socialization.

In chapter 2, I also explained that the human kinship relationship is based on the relationship that a native’s person’s parents or siblings make with other people. Regardless of whether a person is a blood relation, they are referred to as cousin, uncle, auntie, grandfather, or grandmother. If a native person’s parents receive an outsider into their home, and they drink and joke together, the outsider is immediately referred as uncle or auntie. The sharing of food, in this regard, is the foundation of the establishment of a relationship. Meals and jokes are social activities and, among native Dusun Sungai people, these activities form relationships. One socialization activity comes in the form of a tray or container filled with betel nut (the fruit kernel of the betel nut palm *Areca catechu*), slaked lime, and *sirih* (the leaf of the pepper vine). Figure 6.3 shows these items.



Figure 6.3. In this handicraft, on the left, there is a betel nut container and its cutter, tobacco rolls, a copper container with white-coloured slaked lime in the centre, and green pepper leaves.

According to Alliston (1963), such a tray is a necessary component of hospitality for almost all natives of Sabah, and will always be ready in places where people occasionally gather. In fact, drawing upon his personal experience when travelling round Sabah, Alliston (1963) states that when a visitor comes, he or she will be given a space in the house, eat the same meal as the host, join in, and chew betel nut. However, according to Munan (1988), this tray and its content is confined to the older generations. Younger generations have no appreciation of betel nut because of the stain that chewing them leaves. Regardless, whoever visits will, at least, be offered a drink. However, hospitality does not stop there. There will always be jokes, stories, and gossip-sharing after a meal. Such activity is usually much longer than the actual meal, itself.

The relationship is also extended to the wildlife and environment. Wildlife and environmental appreciation do not necessarily take place through environmental or conservation activities. Even before environmental and conservation activities were carried out in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands in the early 1980s, native Dusun Sungai people had an appreciation for them. There is much evidence to support this appreciation. Firstly, it is in the names of the animals. Elephants are sometimes called “*nenek*” which means grandmother. The people also sometimes call elephants “*datuk*” which means grandfather. This reference indicate respect for the animal. A second piece of evidence suggesting that native Dusun Sungai people appreciate their environment is taken from their religion. Being mainly Muslims, native Dusun Sungai people do not hunt and consume certain animals such as wild bearded pigs, primates and other monkeys.

Besides making reference to particular animals as *datuk* or *nenek*, native Dusun Sungai people also have a high appreciation of the environment. This is observable when venturing into the forest with them. In many instances, native Dusun Sungai people will use trails called “*rintis*

tikus” (translated as rat trails). The width of such trails allows for single-file walking, only. The natives prefer such trails because they cause little change or harm to the surroundings. With such small changes, they are assured that the trail will not have any significant effect on the wild animals in that area.

The festival at the completion of a harvest is also an interaction with the environment which expresses hospitality. Thanks-giving is part of the Dusun Sungai way of life. The Dusun ethnic group of Sabah, those residing inland, are traditionally farmers as compared to those living along the coast or rivers, and they give thanks for a bountiful harvest through a celebration. This celebration is popularly known as the Kaamatan Harvest Festival. To a Dusun, Kinorangan is a caretaker entity, and Kaamatan is a celebration in memory of Kinorangan’s daughter, Hominodun, who sacrificed her life so that the Dusuns could have a bountiful harvest (i.e., rice). During the celebration, tribal priestess known as *bobohizan* carry out rituals in appreciation of Hominodun’s sacrifice before beginning a new planting season. This celebration is held in the month of May. According to Tongkul (2002), when people become Christian or Islam, they perceive these traditional practices as being evil. Because of this, in Malaysia, the Dusuns ought not to celebrate the harvest festivals. Nevertheless, everyone does. The unique aspect of this is that religion does not stop the cultural practices. Although the Dusun Sungai community are traditionally fishers, they are also known to have done some planting, and like all other Dusuns, they celebrate *Kaamatan*, although on a less grand scale (Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, 2011). The harvest festival is an official event of Sabah and is designated as an official holiday. This festival inadvertently binds all Dusun people together. But this festival is not just about the Dusun people; it also involves the Dusun’s guests. *Kaamatan* emerges in close connection to *tápun* where there is a host and there is a guest. In the harvest festival, there would be merry-making and, according to Munan, the festival may last for up to three days, and always involves an ‘open house’ where all guests are welcomed

and entertained with feasting, drinking and dancing. Accordingly, within the Dusun Sungai concept of hospitality there is the idea of the generosity of the harvest and of sharing. But it also includes the notion of *tápun*, as the obligation that a guest owes to their host. At the end of the festival is a period of *pantang*, a taboo period when no-one can leave. As with *tápun*, in breaching *pantang*, a guest risks their own safety and, more importantly, risks the safety of the community (Munan, 1988).

6.4 Authentic 'indigenous tourism' occurs within Dusun Sungai spaces

In chapter four, I described four types of space in the host-guest relationship in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. One of the spaces is the mass tourism-like space where tourism consumption is total. This space is separated from the Dusun Sungai community's spaces. In this space, the indigenous host-guest relationship cannot occur, rather, it is a generic host-guest relationship. In such a space, there is no indigenous concept of hospitality, just the common understanding of hospitality. Also described in Chapter 4 were the spaces where the host and guest can be involved in activities associated with ecotourism and community-based tourism. In such spaces, the host-guest relationship occurs but is limited by a controlling element, the environmental elements and the cultural elements, respectively. Hospitality in ecotourism and community-based tourism can, but need not, emerge, particularly when the related activities are carried out professionally. The only space where an indigenous concept of hospitality is experienced in host-guest relationship is the space for indigenous tourism related purposes.

Currently, community-based tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands appears similar to ecotourism. Community-based tourism players (i.e., hosts and guests) take part in oxbow lake trekking, boat rides and wildlife observations. This is because community-based tourism in the Wetlands relies on similar attractions as ecotourism. The real difference lies in routines. As

argued in the previous chapter, these shared spaces provide opportunities for communication that are lacking in some encounters between tourists and hosts. However, in community tourism, what is shared is clearly the indigenous person's space as well as the food they have to offer.



Figure 6.4. Actions of sharing in the host-guest relationship in a Bilit Homestay

In Figure 6.4, both the hosts and guests sitting on a mat that is placed in the main area of the host's home living space in a traditional fashion. To be invited into the family room is a privilege (Munan, 1988). While sitting, and usually during the first introduction, the host offers either cordial or black grounded coffee and some traditional cookies to the guests. I also experienced this when visiting a Sukau villager who carries out guiding and farming activities. No doubt, a Dusun Sungai family has sofas located in their living room, however, the arrangements of the sofas allow for people to crowd around on the floor.

In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, because of the Dusun Sungai understanding of *tápun*, the Dusun Sungai people need to fulfil their obligation as hosts by ensuring the security and friendship needs of guests. During a hospitable situation, a host would go great lengths to meet every need of their guests, even before the guests knows their needs or ask for them to be met.

This does not mean that the host simply makes something up for the guests to consume. Because no one knows exactly who the hosts and the guests really are in a relationship until the opportunity arises for the formation of the relationship, it is impossible for the host to meet the actual needs of their guests; they can only *hope* to meet the needs of guests. Yet, on many occasions, hosts manage just that. On such occasions, hosts have relied on their previous experiences to develop an image of a guest with which they could engage.

6.5 Conditions under which hospitality exists

Hospitality is not exclusive and it is not always about exceptional services. The daily living routine in which communication occurs is not confined to the houses of homestay participants, it extends into the village. In an interview with indigenous people who operate homestay businesses under the Malaysian Homestay Program, the Dusun Sungai people stated that tourists are free to roam the village. Although, at the time this research there were no tourists roaming, an interview with a worker at small tuck-shop in Bilit Village confirmed that tourists buy food there. Based on interviews with workers at grocery stores operated by locals, visitors also drop by to purchase a number of daily items. As I established in Chapter 5, ordinary tourism spaces create the greatest opportunity for the exchange of knowledge between the Dusun Sungai people and their tourists. One example of a common environment with decent hospitality is the homestay of Lijiang (Wang, 2007). At Lijiang, the hosts and the tourists beautify the place together by making it as comfortable as possible. This process increases the place's hospitality and sense of appreciation.

This process does not mean that all will proceed smoothly. The relationship that indigenous people and tourists forge together at a tourism destination produces three kinds of reactions: a person could feel privileged (Ingram, 2005); a person could be repulsed (Ong, 2008); or tourists

who are visiting a cultural place that is very different from their own, may experience cultural stress when trying to gain new information, reconsider earlier knowledge, or when faced with unexpected difficulties (Hottola, 2004). The phenomena that interest researchers ranges from tourists feeling honoured and grateful when receiving something indigenous and the feeling of relief among indigenous people that some tourists were willing to listen to their story (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003; Ingram, 2005,).

6.5.1 Comfort and safety

An obvious aspect of the tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands is the need to wear specialized attire. Specialized attire is needed because the region is hot, humid, muddy, filled with ‘creepy and crawlies’. For a tourist to be equipped for a Kinabatangan tour, he or she needs light clothing, a cap or hat, a raincoat or umbrella, a walking stick, a torchlight, bottled water, and insect repellent. Of course, these are in addition to the usual travel articles such as toiletries, etc. Common sense would lead tourists to bring with them many of items that are necessary for a tour in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. As a reminder, tourism players who operate tourism business in the Wetlands issue a list of must-bring or good-to-have items to their clients. Among those items are a good pair of walking shoes, leech socks, sunscreen, a camera, and binoculars. Furthermore, to take part in the basic tourism activities of Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, tourists would also need rubber boots.

Hospitality is about ensuring that the guest has a comfortable stay. At the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the use of rubber boots is essential to the entire region’s tourism niches (refer Section 3.2) since all of them involve jungle trekking to oxbow lakes or around riverine areas. Although essential to Kinabatangan trips, there is hardly any mention about tourists needing rubber boots in the tourism mass media. Only when tourists are at their respective bed and breakfast, homestay or lodge would they notice that they are essential. Figure 6.5 illustrates this.



Figure 6.5. Boots and personal flotation devices (i.e., lifejackets) placed on the railing of lodges to dry.

Two items are needed for tours in the region: boots and lifejackets. While lifejackets are provided because the Sabah Fishery Department has made them mandatory on all passenger boats of all sizes, the rubber boots shown in Figure 6.5 are provided based on the initiative of the respective hosts. Figure 6.5 is a photograph that was taken at a lodge in Sukau Village. This boot rack is located next to the lodge's private boat jetty. For convenience, tourists and guides are welcomed to use any of the boots. Of course, for certain jungle trekking activities, the indigenous guides would strongly recommend tourists use these boots as opposed to their own shoes. After these tour activities, the tourists would return the boots. According to Interviewee R33, who regularly guides tourists in Sukau, it is the lodge's staff that takes care of the boots.

In Malaysia, a pair of rubber boots cost between RM25 (~USD \$10) to RM50 (~USD \$30). Quality boots could cost twice as much. Depending on the size of a tourism operator, between RM100 (~USD \$100) to RM500 (~USD \$300) is set aside for the convenience of tourists. This is not a normal operational cost that a tourism facility is expected to take on. From a financial perspective, such cost might burden a local business, a burden that has been claimed many times to be a factor in the failure of indigenous businesses. From a business marketing perspective, such a cost could potentially generate goodwill and positive feedback. Regardless, this Dusun Sungai hosts' action has not been accounted for in tourism studies.

Communication between a tourist and an indigenous person can come about over several sessions, namely, the meet-and-greet session, the on-tour session, and the deliberation session. Each session has its own set of conditions and, because of these varying conditions, the way people communicate knowledge varies. Nevertheless, in all conditions, hospitality is expressed, sometimes beyond normal tourism practices. The following three sub-sections provide some observations based on different communication sessions.

6.5.2 Hospitality during introduction

In a meet-and-greet session, the indigenous person will lay down the rules and regulations of the area. These are usually in relation to the traditions of the area and the tourist's safety. In return, the tourist may query the rules and regulations for clarity. The boots and floatation devices necessary for the comfort and safety of the visitor are provided. In terms of friendship, the use of jokes and laughter help form a relationship. A direct observation of the host-guest relationship in Bilit Village highlights the use of jokes and laughter. On 13th September, 2012, prior an oxbow lake trip, R08, a Dusun Sungai individual acting as a guide to a group of five tourists, gave compliments to his tourists about their attire. The joke that followed the compliments was in relation to the mismatch of the attire and the rubber boots that they wore. Laughter proceeded, during which the guide, R08, took the opportunity to give some instruction to the tourists for the oxbow lake trip.

6.5.3 Hospitality during a tour

In an on-tour session along the Kinabatangan River, the subject of wildlife dominates the host-guest communication. The need to keep to a schedule relates to time-dependent environmental conditions and is crucial. Based on the standard tour package of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the oxbow lake trek is the first activity of the day to be carried out in all the villages in this study. The oxbow lake trek activity starts at 6am and usually finishes at 8am. It involves

jungle trekking and wildlife sighting; sometimes boats are used. Generally, the tourists would be led by an indigenous guide for 45 to 60 minutes in search of living animals. Wild animals are extremely sensitive and can detect the presence of other animals through sight, sound, and smell. Generally, when a wild animal senses the presence of another animal, that animal freezes and observes to assess the threat that the other animal could pose. Their reaction is based on the perceived threat level. To ensure the likelihood of successfully viewing wildlife, the Dusun Sungai people enter into the habitats of the animals in a stealthy fashion following narrow forest trails. The guides share their knowledge of the environment with the tourists to enable them to satisfy their desire to see wild animals.

6.5.4 Hospitality at the end of a trip

While there are many guidelines to the conduct of a tour, there is no hand-and-fast rule. As described in the previous chapter, a deliberation session is a session where the conversation revolves around a subject of interest of both the guide and the tourist. This session is sometime carried out at the end of the on-tour session. One incident that was noted during the field survey was a conversation between Interviewee R23 and some of his guests. This conversation was noted in Sukau at about 11am after Interviewee R23 had returned with his tourists from a morning boat ride. After docking at the Sukau Green View jetty, some tourists thanked Interviewee R23 for his service and proceeded to their rooms. One couple from the group went to Interviewee R23 to seek information. From the conversation, it appears that the tourists had spotted some wild birds. Since some birds appeared similar to others, Interviewee R23 provided an explanation about the differences among bird species to help determine the birds that the couple had seen. The conversation went on for about 5 minutes. Towards the end of the conversation, he suggested that the couple make use of the many resources of the tourism facility to help them identify any other wildlife that they noted during their stay.

6.6 Reciprocation, homage, and vulnerability

Based on observations, Section 6.3 presented an observation of the concept of *tápun*. As in tourism literature, there is no description of its attributes. Its attributes are identified in this investigation and presented in this section. Among the hospitality attributes were the concepts of reciprocation, homage, and vulnerability (a need to understand one's physical weakness).

6.1.1 Reciprocation

Reciprocation is a hospitality attribute that appeared in relation to a communal condition (i.e., the community concept; Heuman, 2005). One example of this is photo-taking where each person take turns, or looking at things together. Hence, this is the quality of hospitality.

Some guests (i.e., some tourists) had always wanted to play the host's role. This is particularly visible in tourism, in particular, indigenous-based and nature-based tourism that has a set agenda as one of its many objectives. Through the understanding of *tápun*, the hosts become more flexible. This flexibility allowed hosts to reverse their roles and positioning. Hence, *tápun* is about dynamic positioning, and this aspect supports the exchange of information and the development of knowledge in stages.

The practice of paying for someone else's meal occurs when the players have a matter of similar interest between them. The role as payee can readily interchange between host and guest. This was clear when I dealt with two different Dusun Sungai individuals, R04 and R09. Both individuals came from the Bilit Village and were interviewed on different days about their involvement as tourism players. In one incident, the Dusun Sungai individual, R04, chose to pay for our meals, while in another incident, the Dusun Sungai individual, R09, accepted that I became the payee.

6.1.2 Homage

Homage is required not only to one's host, but also to the environment. Indigenous people are mediators between the environment and the tourist. In the past, tourists entering Batu Puteh were required to make small offerings of pepper leaves, pau shells, and betel nuts to the spirits, or recite an Islamic prayer, before entering the burial chambers. Mohd Idris normally carried out this activity. These actions signals that the hosts are the spirits, while the guests are the tourists and the Dusun Sungai are the go-betweens. The situation is similar when people use words such as *datuk* or *nenek* to describe elephants. *Datuk* is a Malay word and its English literal translation is grandfather. As for *nenek*, it is a Malay word, and its English literal translation is in the context of grandmother. However, among certain Dusun groups, *nenek* could also carry the literal translation in the context of grandfather. The words enrich the description of particular flora or fauna, and simultaneously mediate it. However, more than enriching the description, the words create closeness between the object and the tourism players.

6.1.3 Vulnerability

The harvest festival expresses the vulnerability of humans in the environment but, in addition to homage, one must recognise one's weakness. For many indigenous peoples, "the environment is like a second society in which people live, governed by elaborate rules of behaviour and etiquette, capable of rewarding those who follow these rules and punishing those who do not" (Nelson, 1983, p. 226). It is also necessary for a visitor to remember they do not know the local environment or the animals within it. Tourism in Sabah has one tragic case that had not received scholarly attention. This case relates to a young Australian tourist wanting to get close to an elephant in a forest some 100 kilometres from the Lower Kinabatangan

Wetlands. Although the tourist was a veterinarian with experience in Africa, against the advice of the accompanying local guide, the tourist approached an elephant in Tabin and was trampled death (“Fatal elephant attack the first in Sabah Resort,” 2011). Regardless of the knowledge that a guest possesses, this case serves as a reminder that a guest will always be a guest because their knowledge is insufficient and could be out of context; the deceased did not appreciate the local guide’s indigenous knowledge. This tragic case serves as a reminder that knowledge learnt in another context cannot always be applied; a wild animal is a wild animal and must be treated as such.

On September 17, 2012, I concluded the first part of my Bilit Village field survey. I had spent a number of days at the village, travelling up and down the river doing what tourists would normally do. Apart from interviews, I chatted with many Dusun Sungai people and tourists, alike. I shared my experiences and knowledge about the ecological and conservational aspects pertaining to Kinabatangan’s environment as well as my regional and national tourism development understanding. Relating to the tourism practices at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, tourists generally check-out around 10am or after lunch. I thought of checking out just before lunch since lunch is provided in the package that I paid. As I was about to leave the Bilit Village for another site around noon time, Interviewee R08 questioned me leaving without lunch. Not wanting to bring up money matters, I replied that I had plans. Interviewee R08 uttered “*tápun dulu*” (i.e. my physical vulnerability due to necessary sustenance), and I took a light meal with him. Interviewee R08’s utterance was akin to William’s *tápun*. And yet, my tour had ended, and the cost of the meal would be bonded by the tourism operator. The ‘demand’ for such homage could be the result of the relationship that was created over the previous few days and, with this possibility, the utterance appears closely associated with Whitehouse’s perspective of *tápun*. Besides the fact that the utterance related to my relationship

with a Dusun Sungai, this utterance is beyond both the description that William and Whitehouse gave, because there is a visible process to the formation of the relationship.

6.7 The possibilities for a fusion of horizon

Teo (2008) stated that when people have hospitality, they are willing to share information with each other, and this allows for the development of knowledge for each of those involved in the exchange of information. The task of improving the ability of a person requires hospitality from an authority (Gadamer, 1985). The authority is usually a knowledgeable person who acts as a host and, because of the association that hospitality has with knowledge, society will always have high regard for hospitality to a point that some scholars will regard hospitality as society (Bell, 2012). Hospitality is needed so that knowledge can be exchanged.

The quality of the communication between a tourist and an indigenous person can provide what Gadamer (1985) calls a “fusion of horizons”. According to Gadamer, understanding always occurs against the background of our prior understanding and history. Understanding is an effect of history, and interpretation occurs within what he calls a horizon determined by historically-determined situatedness. However, this horizon is not static or unchanging; through an encounter with another person and dialectical exchange, the horizon understanding may fuse with the understanding of another (Malpas, 2015).

Another aspect of hospitality is the stretching of a conversation. In a conversation between me, an Italian couple and a Dusun Sungai guide, after dinner at the Bilit B&B in Bilit Village, the river prawn became the topic. The conversation began with the description of the *udang galah* dish, then it moved to the ecology of the prawn, a cultural aspect of the dish. The Dusun Sungai contributed to conversation information about the community’s fishing traditions and the seasonal culture of the Dusun Sungai people, while the Italian couple contributed with the price

and availability of river prawns in their country. Conversations like these begin to fuse the horizons of people from different cultures, not because the tourist achieves a perfect understanding of indigenous culture, but because the horizon of each shifts to encompass the history and condition of the other. Each fusion expands that tourist's or indigenous person's horizon further. However, these fusions sometimes are interdependent; the fusion of different horizons in tourism does not occur only on one plane. It can occur on multiple planes at different degrees. For example *A* cannot fuse with *C* unless it has fused with *B* first. This is because space affects our understanding.

A final important impact of tourism that should not be overlooked is the possibility that tourism can provide opportunities for communication between hosts and guests, and cross cultural understanding. This possibility was expressed by tourists rather than tourist operators or indigenous people. Tourists became aware of similarities that existed between themselves and the native Dusun Sungai people, particularly after engaging with them for some period. In an interview with a male tourist from Spain, the interviewee stated that he came from a place where people used leeches for bloodletting. After a native guide explained about the leeches in the jungles of Kinabatangan to the tourist, he was surprised that natives in Sabah had similar practices. In another interview with the male tourist's partner, after chatting with a native staff working at a bed and breakfast establishment, the female tourist claimed that freshwater lobsters are a prized catch, similar to the giant river prawns of Kinabatangan River.

A space can affect a person's character and role, and it affects the person because spaces, authentic or otherwise, are places of consumption. According to Urry (1995, 2005), in such spaces, the tourism players consume everything, ranging from food to scenery. Returning back to the dining area, the consumption is largely physical (e.g., the consumption of water and food and the production of garbage). Although, in the literature, the consumption of a tourism space

is largely about the consumption of physical matters, this study displays the consumption of matters that are non-physical. Of all the tourism spaces examined, the indigenous hospitality space is an ordinary space that has received the least academic attention. This space is the key feature of the ability for people to create a relationship at leisure. To experience the space means to experience the consumption of something, and it is the consumption of the goodness of another person.

6.8 Conclusion

Exploration of the indigenous form of hospitality has received some attention in tourism studies, anthropological studies (Williams, 1965) and religious studies (Pineda, 2012). This small amount of attention is due to many tourism scholars' and practitioners' preconceived notions about indigenous peoples having a limited understanding of tourism. On the contrary, indigenous peoples do have an understanding of tourism, and I have identified its concept and determined importance through a case study from the Dusun Sungai community of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. The reason it is important is that it provides the spaces in which indigenous knowledge can be shared. This knowledge is not merely knowledge that something is the case (although indigenous people do possess a rich knowledge of medicinal and ecological knowledge), it is knowledge that concerns how one might be in, and relate to, the environment.

In general, indigenous people are seen as unwilling hosts who do not share the same understanding of tourism as the travellers to their land. In this chapter I have shown that the Dusun Sungai have a long history of engagement with tourists, whether they come to the Wetlands as traders or as contemporary tourists. The spaces in which this occurs are very typical and ordinary, so that people fail to recognize it. This space is crucial to indigenous

hospitality because it allow tourism players the flexibility to share information that is largely drawn from the knowledge of the indigenous people. However, it is not only the guest who changes. As with the relationship between the Chinese traders and Dusun Sungai, the hosts may come to understand and appreciate the culture of their guests.

The indigenous hospitality of the Dusun ethnic group, particularly the Dusun Sungai community residing within the Kinabatangan River system, is represented in the concept of *tápun* and is part of their language. *Tápun* is a word of the Dusun ethnic group. As a concept, *tápun* resonates in the community's engagement with outsiders and is capable of influencing the success of tourism at Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. It is commonly related to guests' obligation to consume the food and beverages provided by the hosts, and is recognized as a cultural power in the enforcement of a guest's behaviour (Bunten, 2010; Williams, 1965). However, the existing literature on *tápun* is limiting since *tápun* also provides a set of principles (i.e., ethics) for its speaker and its listener to adhere to. This conception of hospitality is closely related to the recognition of the need for reciprocation, homage and the vulnerability of human beings. A Dusun Sungai person will provide a stranger with a place to sleep and share a meal on their veranda. Through the sharing of meals and accommodation, the stranger becomes engaged in a reciprocal relationship of care.

Tápun creates a non-consumptive environment for a host and guest to co-occupy. The need for ethics in relations between indigenous people and tourists has often been remarked upon. With the help of a host, *tápun* is a process that a tourist undergoes to achieve a feeling of being at home or comfortable in a new environment. Central to this process is the understanding of hospitality, and its existence is essential in all forms of tourism. Indigenous tourism is a type of tourism that relates to the presence of indigenous people as hosts. Thus, the existence of an indigenous form of hospitality is essential to indigenous tourism.

Like everything about indigeneity, the indigenous form of hospitality is highly specialized by location and culture. Because of its specialization, applying conventional concepts could prove limiting. Indigenous tourism has many issues and challenges, and one reason for this relates to the adoption of conventional or contemporary hospitality, although there is an indigenous form of hospitality that could be adopted for indigenous tourism. The indigenous form of hospitality is not readily adopted for indigenous tourism because it is less known as a subject of tourism.

In this study, the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has been involved in tourism for many decades, if not centuries, and over the years have established several tourism spaces. Among the spaces for tourism that exist in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands are the ecotourism space, the community-based tourism space, the mass tourism space, and the indigenous hospitality space. In mass tourism, the distance between indigenous people and the tourists is so great that the indigenous people become invisible. No hospitality can be felt. Other spaces are different. Indigenous tourism is a space where hospitality is felt. The Dusun Sungai community of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands has been hospitable to foreigners for a very long time, although tourism studies have only recently recognized the community's involvement. Central to the Dusun Sungai community's hospitality is the *Tápun* concept. It has three interconnected aspects that are crucial to overcoming intercultural problems in the indigenous host-guest relationship. The three aspects concern cooperation, the positioning of relationships, and etiquette and these aspects contribute to the development and maintenance of the indigenous host-guest relationship. The cooperation aspect of *tápun* encourages the Dusun Sungai individual and the foreign tourist to form a relationship. The positioning aspect of *tápun* determines the strength of the relationship and its character, and the etiquette aspect of *tápun* outlines the function of the relationship.

The concept of *tápun* ensures the host-guest relationship is restrained from turning into an avenue of tourism consumption. Hence, *tápun* resolves indigenous tourism, particularly for the Dusun Sungai community of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

Chapter 7 Final remarks

In 2008, the United Nations published the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This publication demonstrated the global society's commitment to up-lifting indigenous peoples' position equal to others because it contains matters regarding what indigenous peoples possess and what they can do with their possessions (UN, 2008). A year after the publication of the declaration, the United Nations published *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. This publication focused on the potential and challenges related to repositioning the indigenous peoples of the world socio-economically (UN, 2009). In the UN's 2009 publication, tourism was identified as being able to improve the position of the indigenous peoples since tourism could be carried out while insuring the culture of indigenous peoples remained intact. A challenge to improve the indigenous peoples' position lies with the appropriation of their culture in a manner without integrity. As a resource that has been identified in UN's 2008 publication, indigenous knowledge could be used to improve the people's socio-economic position. But it would be inadequate to use indigenous knowledge merely as a resource. The aspect of an indigenous form of hospitality needs recognition and application within indigenous-based tourism.

Tourism provides indigenous peoples and foreign visitors with the opportunity to create a relationship and exercise hospitality. Some tourism players have tried to create the relationship under the guise of ecotourism while others have tried to create it under culture tourism. The created relationship does not always benefit both groups of people. Indigenous tourism was established to realise tourism's benefits, but this was not guaranteed. As a result, indigenous tourism is likely to remain as an option rather than the main contributor to the relationship between indigenous people and foreign visitors.

The tourism literature contains a significant amount of documentation about the negative impact of the tourism commodification of culture. Empowerment, self-conscious awareness and indigenous identity improvement are only positive impacts of tourism commodification of cultural. What is *beyond* the authenticity and commodification of culture through tourism should be now be the question that tourism scholars should be thinking about (Cole, 2007). However, researchers would face problems when the question is placed in the context of the host-guest relationship.

A western perspective of tourism such as tourist's gaze and inter-cultural conflicts had provided scholars with a better understanding about the needs of the hosts and guests or tourists. This perspective has managed to improve our understanding about tourism. It gave us the understanding about hospitality. In the tourism academic literature, the hospitality concept seldom goes beyond a tourism object or product; sightseeing convenience dominates the current tourism perspective. But it did not aid the understanding of hospitality that belong to the indigenous peoples. Instead, a misconception about the indigenous notion of hospitality has emerged from the use of western perspective of tourism. This misconception has emerged because of the idea of a presumption about the demise of indigenous arts. Besides this, indigenous people are perceived as not being mobile. As a consequence, many tourism scholars only note western hospitality; indigenous hospitality is perceived differently and not recognised accordingly. Indigenous culture no longer seems to exist in certain places designated as tourism destinations.

Indigenous knowledge crosses many domains. Because of this, a communicator might find him or herself to be in a dilemma since he or she needs to decide which characteristic to communicate first and what is to follow. During the communication of indigenous knowledge, a communicator's first task is thus to improve the ability of the audience to be aware of the

knowledge's characteristics so that both readers and listeners can tell differences. Besides improving the ability of the audience, the communicators might need to craft a story around the indigenous knowledge that is to be communicated. The actions of the tourism developers could best be explained by Hans-Georg Gadamer. According to Gadamer (1985), interpretation should be contemporary. However, when an interpretation is carried out based solely on the interpreter's history, and without consideration of the current situation, there is no fusion of horizons or understanding. Hence, indigenous knowledge is systematically placed in the background of tourism. Generally, when a host has a positive attitude and a stranger is only wanting to visit, a host–guest relationship is created. But a host-guest relationship is not just about attitudes and intentions.

As explained in Chapter 2, the Dusun Sungai people are indigenous to the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, and they have with them a number of cultural and traditional characteristics that are unique to the Wetlands. Besides this, the people also have a tendency to adopt foreign cultures and traditions to further suit their presence in the Wetlands. Like all other indigenous peoples seeking to be part of modern civilisation, the Dusun Sungai people are challenged to improve their socio-economic position by moving away from their traditional activities into agriculture and tourism-related commercial activities. In the context of tourism, Chapters 3 and 4 described how the Malaysian government took a number of steps to develop tourism in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. The steps include developing and promoting the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands as a wildlife haven. As highlighted in the literature, indigenous peoples and the knowledge of the indigenous peoples, were seen and treated as tourism products and attractions. While we would have come to expect that culture and tradition commodification for tourism purposes is rampant, it is not in the case of the Lower Kinabatangan's Dusun Sungai community. Instead, since there is a tendency to typically associate Malaysian indigenous peoples as Malays, the country introduced a commodified Malay culture to represent the Dusun

Sungai people of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. As a result, the finding of this study showed that indigenous knowledge is not available in Kinabatangan's main tourism themes. In Chapter 5, I explained the problems associated with the communication of indigenous knowledge and how indigenous knowledge took up this role as a tourism product or attraction instead of being the basis for indigenous tourism.

Chapter 6 described *tápun* as the indigenous concept of hospitality of the Dusun Sungai people. *Tápun* is an indigenous knowledge system that is able to project the emphasis of indigenous knowledge. It comprises three aspects, namely, homage, vulnerability and reciprocation. It affects the host-guest relationship because it is the finishing part, or revealing part, of the Dusun Sungai people's hospitality. *Tápun* has achieved the role of communicating and sharing indigenous knowledge through reciprocation, homage and the acknowledgement of vulnerability between the Dusun Sungai individual and his or her guest. The characteristics of *tápun* enrich the Dusun Sungai host-guest relationship because they allow the communication and sharing of indigenous knowledge and the host enriches a human being.

The Dusun Sungai people, a sub-ethnic group of the largest indigenous group in Sabah (i.e., the Dusun ethnic group), resides in the major river systems of the eastern part of Sabah. One of them is the Kinabatangan river system. In the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, which is renowned for its natural resources, the Dusun Sungai people had been engaging with foreigners for hundreds of years. Within this engagement, there is an indigenous host-guest relationship that is free from common indigenous peoples' issues, such as colonial oppression. The Dusun Sungai community at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, and of course the Dusun people of Sabah, has a concept of hospitality that is different from contemporary conceptions of hospitality. This concept of hospitality appears indigenous, and it is known as *tápun*. With western forms of hospitality have dominated tourism in Malaysia, indigenous concept of

hospitality has been overlooked. But this should not have happened. Giddens (1984) stated that forgoing history makes research prone to misinterpretation, particularly when noting that indigenous peoples some are travellers too (Richards, 1990), and this is probable to the loss of indigenous hospitality as shown in the study of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands where many tourism studies have not drawn on history. Researchers like Azmi (1996), Hussin (2006), Zeppel (2006) and Fletcher (2009) could not visualise Dusun Sungai people's hospitality. Because history has largely been excluded from tourism studies at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands, the Dusun Sungai people were not recognized as hosts, and this eventually gave rise to a notion that Dusun Sungai people needed help to benefit from tourism. Among many, this study used history and proved the existence of indigenous hospitality.

Being an inseparable aspect of tourism, the concept of hospitality affects host-guest relationship. As introduced at the beginning of this thesis, the indigenous host-guest relationship has a few issues that needed resolving. The issues of the indigenous host-guest relationship are the inability of indigenous people to be hospitable and the inability of foreign visitors to sense genuine hospitality. In contemporary indigenous tourism, particularly the form where indigenous knowledge is either a tourism product or a tourism attraction, indigenous knowledge gets pushed into the tourism background. The communication of indigenous knowledge is really not complicated, particularly not after recognizing and acknowledging that indigenous peoples have an indigenous hospitality system. This system functions in the communication and sharing of indigenous knowledge. With this system, the aim of the communication and sharing of indigenous knowledge is not simply for the benefit of the host or guest; instead it is for both the host and the guest to comfortably exist in a tourism space like the ones of the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

Other than direct participatory activities, the other people's activities could only be noted in their remarks, comments or retells. A person's understanding is based on a fusion of different horizons, and the fusion between experiences and memory is a necessary aspect of interpretation. This is because the fusion articulates a text with the interpreter's background to create a sensible meaning, and eventually truth itself. The definition of indigenous hospitality was stated, and the context in which it operates was described. Indigenous hospitality is one of the indigenous knowledge systems that make up the knowledge of the indigenous people, and it relates to the formation and maintenance of a relationship between indigenous people and tourists. But, indigenous hospitality rests heavily on a person's ability to interpret the activities of other people in tourism. As with tourists misunderstanding the hosts and vice versa, there is also the possibility of a researcher to misunderstand the study. If there is a significant weakness in this kind of study, it would be the interpretation itself.

I began this thesis with a question regarding what actually happens to indigenous knowledge in tourism. Let me now attempt to answer that question. There are two things that happen to indigenous knowledge. The first is that it gets commodified, and the second is it gets overshadowed by western knowledge about the environment. In cases where indigenous knowledge and culture become commodified and/or overshadowed, the Dusun Sungai people have been rendered invisible. The emphasis on nature tourism does not enable them to express their knowledge, instead, tourism players exercise due diligence or authenticity by relying on western taxonomies and categorizations to communicate in a sight-seeing context. The typical issues were explored from the perspective of authenticity and control. However, this does not apply to all indigenous people. On the other hand, the exchange of indigenous knowledge occurs in ordinary spaces of engagement when indigenous knowledge is combined with the environment, thus enriching the perspective of both tourist and host through a fusion of horizons.

In this study, I argued that hospitality is a key element of indigenous knowledge. With the relationship between indigenous peoples and other peoples improving, this component becomes evident in the indigenous host-foreign guest relationship. I have argued that to communicate and share indigenous knowledge, one must take part in hospitality and must know some indigenous language. This is because indigenous knowledge is readily understood through indigenous language. When the knowledge of indigenous people comes through, they will move position into the foreground of tourism. In relation to the Dusun Sungai community, it has allowed them to emerge from the backgrounds of tourism or any of its niches that exist at the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands.

Instead of directly resolving issues of the indigenous host–guest relationship by considering the concept of an indigenous form of hospitality, scholars have opted to address the issues through the concept of authenticity and the concept of stakeholders. The concept of authenticity is about having a genuine view of a subject. First introduced by John Urry in the mid-1990s, the concept of authenticity describes the conditions that result in a tourist’s gaze, or otherwise, through the establishment of extra-ordinary products and services, or otherwise. The concept of stakeholders and many other similar concepts such as equitable benefit-sharing, are about having a platform to compromise on the expectations of both the indigenous hosts and the guests. Through the approach of addressing the indigenous host–guest relationship issues, scholars have uncovered participation as ownership factors. These factors are inconclusive since these factors do not apply to all indigenous host–guest relationships.

The existence of hospitality in an indigenous language is the first stepping stone that could transform society’s understanding of indigenous knowledge. My study highlights the manner in which indigenous knowledge is marginalized by, and excluded from, tourism products. The understanding that indigenous peoples have an indigenous form of hospitality is important for

understanding all those who are involved in tourism directly or indirectly. To do tourism, whatever form it is, hospitality is necessary. The need to further explore indigenous hospitality might not be relevant if it is only to improve the experience of visitors. However, since hospitality is necessary for the communication of knowledge - and it is necessary because it gives time and space for the internalization of knowledge - the role of the tourism scholar is now to provide society with tools or, rather, symbols which would support society's further appreciation of hospitality, particularly indigenous hospitality. This is the study's first point of originality. A second point of originality is that this is the first major study of the hospitality of Dusun Sungai people. This understanding could assist tourism planners and developers formulate indigenous-based tourism projects without being challenged by issues that are connected with the concept of authenticity. Furthermore, this understanding could help to enrich the host-guest relationship as it allows the communication and sharing of knowledge, particularly one that is of indigenous origin. I conclude that *tápun* as a concept of an indigenous form of hospitality to the Dusun Sungai people, resolves questions of authenticity in the indigenous host-guest touristic relationship in the Lower Kinabatangan Wetlands. With this understanding, tourism-based scholars might now have a new topic to consider.

Appendices

A. Basic Interview Schedule

Component	Scope
General demographic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age, gender, race, language spoken • Athletic ability (swimming focused) • Food preference • Attire preference • Transport preference
Education and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation, highest education level • Roles and responsibility in occupation. • Number of years in organization • Industrial experience (emphasis on tourism)
Interest and expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism attraction interest • Product expectation
Beliefs and emotions considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniqueness • Product and services uniqueness
Tourism protocols and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols familiarity • Product familiarity • Host/guest views, preference and involvement • Incentives • Role of indigenous knowledge
Communication approaches and preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication experiences and difficulties • Use of communication tools

**B. MOCAT's Local Tourist Guide Examiner Appointment letter for the
Kinabatangan region**

OCT-12-96 11:38 BORNEO WILDLIFE TEL: 088-219089 P: 81

SRT -12-OCT-96 12:18 BAHAGIAN PELANCONGAN KKMP 03 21 9089 P: 81

(MINISTRY OF CULTURE, ARTS AND TOURISM)
MALAYSIA,
TINGKAT 6, 21, 34-36, MENARA DATO' ONN,
PUSAT DAGANGAN DUNIA PUTRA,
45 JALAN TUN ISMAIL,
50694 KUALA LUMPUR

Telefon: 03-2937111 Tele: MA 28222 Fax: 03-2910951, 03-2941356

To: Danny Chow

Ruj. Tuan

Ruj. Kami: KKKP/PI.900-3/4

Tarikh: Jld. 3 (8'D)
12 Oktober 1996

Fax No: 088-219089

Pengarah Kursus
Borneo Wildlife Tourism
Institute Sdn. Bhd.
Lot 4, Blok L, Tingkat Bawah dan 3,
Kompleks Sinsuran
88000 Kota Kinabalu
SABAH.

Tuan,

Kursus Pemandu Pelancong Berkemahiran di Kinabatangan

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada fax/surat tuan bertarikh 11 Oktober 1996 berhubung perkara di atas.

2. Dimaklumkan bahawa dipersetujui perantukan Encik Robert Francis Peters sebagai salah seorang panel pemeriksa bagi peperiksaan tersebut.

Sekian, harap maklum.

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menurut perintah,

[REDACTED]

Bahagian Pelancongan
b/p: Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Kebudayaan, Kesenian dan Pelancongan
MALAYSIA.

MBA/WP/3006-43-5-SABAH/000

(Apakah sumbangan anda kepada Agama dan Negara?)

C. Explanatory Statement



MONASH University

An Explanatory Statement

for tourist

Project Title: **Indigenous Knowledge in Tourism**

Date: 05 June 2012

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Robert Francis Peters and I am conducting a research project with Associate Professor Dr Gil-Soo Han, and Dr Elizabeth Coleman in the Department of English, Communication, and Performance Studies, Communications and Performance Studies, Faculty of Arts towards doctorate degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis, which is the equivalent of a short book.

This research project requires input from tourists and you are chosen for this because you are a tourist at this location.

I invite you to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

Purpose and Benefits of Study

I am conducting this research to find out relationship between indigenous knowledge and tourism at an indigenous-based tourism destination. It aims to:

- a) to explain the extent to which tourism developers appreciate and assimilate indigenous knowledge to their own,
- b) to explore the quality of communication between indigenous tourism stakeholders, as well as to explore contexts and factors that may affect this quality,
- c) to describe the ways in which existing tourism procedures and guidelines enabled or restrained tourism stakeholders from gaining and using indigenous knowledge, and
- d) to describe the communication limitation and advantages of using tourism mediums on mediated indigenous knowledge in tourism.

By conducting this research, there will be better understanding of the communication of indigenous knowledge in tourism.

What Will Be Done

This study involves audio recording, video recording, surveys and semi-structured interviews. I am interviewing up to 30 tourists at Lower Kinabatangan-Segama Wetlands, Sabah, Malaysia. I will seek consent from potential participants before interviewing the participants using semi-structured questions about their tourism understanding and experiences.

During the interview, I will transcribe both verbal and non-verbal responses of the participant. Each interview can take up to 45 minutes and the participant has the choice of place and time. I will also carry out an audio recording of the interview and take note of the environment where the interview takes place. If permitted, I may also take photographs and do video recording. When the interview session is over, I will show the interview transcript to the participant.

Inconvenience/Discomfort and Compensation

This study is convenient participants. To avoid any inconvenience and discomfort on your part, you can choose your time and place for the interview. For this, you have my gratitude.

Withdrawal

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. In addition, you can choose to withdraw from the interview of this research project at any time by informing me. Withdrawal from participation does not need an explanation or a reason. Neither not participating nor withdrawing from participation will have a negative effect on you.

I will not publish any particulars that can identify any individual participant. For this purpose, I will use pseudonyms at all times.



Confidentiality and Data Storage

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to the interviewee's information. Additionally, the interviewed participant may view their respective information. To ensure full anonymity, this research will de-identify or code all personal information that may enable a person's identification.


The report of this research is for publication. However, since only de-identified or coded data is used, participants will not be identifiable in the report. Storage of the data will adhere to the Monash University regulations. The researcher will keep the data on University premises in a locked facility up to five years. Nevertheless, upon completion of the research project, the researcher will destroy all data.

Complaints


Should you have any complaint concerning the conduct of this research (Indigenous Knowledge in Tourism), please do not hesitate to contact;

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Supervisor:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research is being conducted, please contact:
Assoc Prof Dr Gil-Soo Han, School of English, Communications and Performance Studies (ECPS), Building 11, Clayton Campus, Monash University VIC 3800	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800
	

Queries

The findings are accessible until 2014. If you have any queries or would like information about the research findings, please contact Australian 

Thank you for your participation in this research.

.....
Robert Francis Peters
PhD Candidate 

D. Consent Form

Consent Form for tourist

Project Title: Indigenous Knowledge in Tourism
Note: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records
This informed consent form verifies that you are happy with the information you have been provided about the study, that you are aware of your rights as a participant, and to confirm that you wish to voluntarily take part in this study

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the *Explanatory Statement*, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	[<input type="checkbox"/>] Yes	[<input type="checkbox"/>] No
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped and/or video taped	[<input type="checkbox"/>] Yes	[<input type="checkbox"/>] No
I agree to make myself available for further interview if required	[<input type="checkbox"/>] Yes	[<input type="checkbox"/>] No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I will view the transcript of the interview for my confirmation before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the transcript and/or tapes will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period or when the research project ends.

Signature: Date:
Participant's name ()

E. Research Ethics Approval



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 29 August 2012
Project Number: CF12/1779 - 2012000969
Project Title: Indigenous knowledge in tourism
Chief Investigator: Assoc Prof Gil-Soo Han
Approved: From 29 August 2012 to 29 August 2017

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Elizabeth Coleman; Mr Robert Peters

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index.html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

F. List of interviewees

Date interviewed	Ethnic/Sub-Ethnic Group	Occupation	Pseudo-name
05/09	Dusun	Dusun - state government planner	Interviewee R26
05/09	Dusun	Dusun - state government planner	Interviewee R27
06/09	Indian	Academician	Interviewee R31
10/09	Dusun Sungai	State Civil Services	Interviewee R28
12/09	Dusun Sungai	State Civil Services	Interviewee R01
12/09	Filipino	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R22
13/09	Dusun Sungai	Teacher	Interviewee R04
13/09	Dusun Sungai	Entrepreneur	Interviewee R05
14/09	Dusun Sungai	Conservationist	Interviewee R08
15/09	British	Tourist	Interviewee R06
15/09	Spanish	Tourist	Interviewee R15
15/09	Spanish	Tourist	Interviewee R16
16/09	Filipino	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R13
16/09	Dusun Sungai	Community Leader	Interviewee R09
16/09	Dusun Sungai	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R07
17/09	Dusun Sungai	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R24
17/09	Dusun Sungai	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R11
17/09	Dusun Sungai	Local Tourist Guide	Interviewee R33
17/09	Dusun	Tourist Guide	Interviewee R23
18/09	Dusun Sungai	Entrepreneur	Interviewee R03
18/09	Bajau	Conservationist	Interviewee R32
18/09	Dusun Sungai	Tourism Employee	Interviewee R12
18/09	Dusun	State Government Enforcer	Interviewee R25
18/09	Dusun Sungai	Mechanic	Interviewee R02
18/09	Suluk	Trader	Interviewee R20
20/09	Dusun Sungai	State Civil Services	Interviewee R10
23/09	Dusun Sungai	Entrepreneur	Interviewee R21
28/09	Malaysian Chinese	Tourism Developer	Interviewee R14
20/09	Dusun Sungai	Tourist Guide	Interviewee R17
27/09	Malaysian Malay	Federal Government Enforcer	Interviewee R29
29/09	Malaysian Chinese	Tourism Developer	Interviewee R30
30/09	Dusun	Teacher	Interviewee R18
01/10	Bajau	State Civil Services	Interviewee R19
07/09	Dusun	State Civil Services	Interviewee R34

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