“THE PARK IS THE PEOPLE”: (MIS)REPRESENTATIONS OF NATURE AND INDIGENEITY AT GUNUNG MULU NATIONAL PARK IN MALAYSIA

by

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(Under the Direction of Amy Trauger)

ABSTRACT

Deforestation from timber and palm oil tycoons have displaced Indigenous communities throughout Sarawak, Malaysia in the past few decades. However, Gunung Mulu National Park, a World Heritage Site strictly protected from extractive industries, reproduces the same neoliberal logics that perpetuate the separation of Indigenous Penan people from their lands and livelihoods. This thesis explores the divergence between Penan land narratives and the nature narratives presented at Mulu Park. It uses qualitative research methods to ask how Mulu Park and the UNESCO World Heritage system perpetuate neocolonial structures of environmental governance that result in the misrepresentation of Penan narratives and continued dispossession of their livelihoods. It concludes that Mulu Park and the World Heritage paradigm are entrenched in neoliberal logics of conservation management, normalize “universal” knowledge, and employ anti-political approaches to community inclusion that produce a neocolonial conservation scheme that misrepresents and separates Indigenous Penan from their lands.

INDEX WORDS: Neocolonialism, Neoliberalism, Indigeneity, Nature, Universalism, World Heritage, Anti-politics, Dispossession

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the people of Long Iman and Batu Bungan who shared a piece of their story with me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Chapter One: Introduction

"It is vital that we mark out our land with our stories--and with our memories so that we can prove that this land belongs to us." -Mutang Urud (Pauser, 2017)

"The park is the people, and vice versa," wrote Gunung Mulu National Park manager Erik Bauer in an email correspondence in which I asked how UNESCO World Heritage influences the management of the park (personal communication, June 24, 2020). Bauer preached the importance of local Indigenous Penan inclusion, and expressed his pride in managing a park that achieved "full-fledged local participation" (personal communication, June 24, 2020). While Bauer's statement echoes the IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment that calls Mulu Park one of the most effectively managed World Heritage Sites in Asia (IUCN, 2017), my research in and around Mulu Park tells a different story. Gunung Mulu National Park (Mulu Park), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo, is the most studied karst landscape in the world for its abundant biodiversity and extensive cave systems. The park is safeguarded by the Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Borsarmulu Park Enterprise, and the World Heritage Convention for the protection of the planet's biodiversity and geological history for tourists to admire. However, the park's establishment and management reflect patterns of exclusion of Indigenous Penan people and culture commonly experienced in globally managed conservation projects worldwide.

Beginning in the early 20th century, British colonizers transformed forests in Sarawak into state controlled land for purposes of territorial expansion, resource control,

extraction, and conservation. Peluso and Vandergeest (2001) explain that "political forests," as they call them, were an essential tool of "colonial-era state-making" for "the institutionalization of forest management as a technology of state power" (p. 762). These imperial ideologies and agendas authorized colonial states to take land sovereignty away from Indigenous people, erasing their rights to land and livelihood. Moreover, "the idea of state forests not only revolutionized people's lives and livelihoods but created new, almost inescapable means of imagining land, resources, and people" (p. 762). In the context of Sarawak, the colonial project enclosed and categorized land for agriculture, timber, protected areas, and other means of exploiting territories in the market economy. The transformation of land into property allowed for the theft and dispossession of Indigenous people like Penan from their land (Nichols, 2020).

While Sarawak gained independence from the British crown and merged with the state of Malaysia in 1963, the deterioration of Indigenous land rights (Native Customary Rights) gradually worsened even after Sarawak's secession from colonial control. Classifications of property gradually evolved to a series of land codes. From permitting Indigenous land use (*adat*) in British state forests in 1941, to the virtual nullification of Native Customary Rights (NCR) with *Koncep Baru* or "New Concept" in 1980s and 90s, the state of Sarawak relinquished NCR land to multinational timber and oil palm companies (Bulan, 2006). The siege of NCR land resulted in the violent displacement of Penan and other *Orang Ulu* (Berawan, Kelabit, Lun Bawang, Kayan, Kajang and Kenyah) from their homes and livelihoods (Bending, 2006; Brosius, 1999; Bulan, 2006; Colchester, 1989). Considering the colonial legacy of state managed land in Sarawak, Indigenous dispossession in the wake of capitalism is entrenched in colonial histories and

ideologies (Coulthard, 2014). Therefore, it is appropriate to refer to capitalist development projects, including conservation and World Heritage projects (and the dispossession that ensues) as neocolonial (Buscher et al., 2014; Garland, 2008; Hodgson, D.L., 2011; Nelson, 2003; Trelka, 2020).

Penan have experienced (and continue to endure) the horrors of dispossession due to deforestation in Sarawak. As a neoliberal conservation project, Gunung Mulu National Park appropriates the same neocolonial processes that cause Penan people's dispossession in different ways. First, while some Penan settlements were established before Mulu was gazetted as a national park, the park's management plan outlines their course of action to gradually remove remaining nomadic Penan from the protected area, with restricted hunting and foraging privileges in place (Anderson, 1982; National Parks and Nature Reserves Ordinance, 1998, 2008; Gunung Mulu National Park Proclamation, 1974; Walsh, personal communication, 2020). Mulu Park's dispossession of Penan is neocolonial not only because of their physical removal from the park boundary, but because Penan lifeways and land narratives have been largely misrepresented or omitted from the park narrative.

Mulu Park's nomination to the World Heritage List in 2000 helped solidify the land's scientific value and the promise of its protection. However, for this research, I investigated how World Heritage conservation ideals and anti-political (Ferguson, 1994) management schemes influence Mulu Park's inclusion/exclusion of surrounding Penan communities and their situated values.

To this end, I seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What narratives do Penan, park management, and UNESCO World Heritage tell about the land in Mulu Park?
2. What are Mulu Park and the World Heritage program's roles in producing representations of nature and indigeneity, resulting in the misrepresentation of Penan narratives and continued dispossession of Penan livelihoods?
3. How does the World Heritage paradigm contribute to a neocolonial framework for environmental governance at Mulu Park?

In my research, I juxtaposed what Mulu Park prioritizes for conservation, scientific inquiry, and commercialism through the messages delivered to visitors, in opposition to what locals told me about their lifeways and values with regard to the same landscape. I found that Penan stories of the land reflect livelihoods, memories, and cultural meaning, while park narratives reflect UNESCO World Heritage Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) and neoliberal agendas of marketing nature and culture.

Furthermore, according to my informants, Penan communities surrounding Mulu Park are excluded from park management and decision-making. While UNESCO and the advisory bodies encourage local inclusion in decision-making at World Heritage Sites, they advocate anti-political solutions that sustain the current power structures. The park reflects scientific and World Heritage universal values and management strategies more than it reflects the situated values and livelihoods of local communities. Therefore, Mulu Park follows the universalized global approach to environmental governance that legitimizes certain forms of knowledge and environmental governance while excluding others.

Figure 1.0: Gunung Mulu National Park World Map (Google, n.d.)

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter Two

In this research project, I explore how differences in land narratives between Penan people and park management result in the dispossession of local Penan people from their narratives, land, and livelihoods within Mulu Park, and how World Heritage plays a critical role. Chapter Two provides a background of the Penan people, the history of land grabbing in Sarawak, the circumstances of Mulu Park's establishment, and the origins and role of World Heritage as an apparatus of globalization. The Indigenous Penan endured drastic transformations in Sarawak's economy and forest management, resulting in the loss of large expanses of their land to timber tycoons and oil palm plantations. The World Heritage program was established to promote the protection of spectacular areas like Mulu Park against destructive capitalist exploitation of natural resources. However, as this chapter reveals, the establishment of Mulu Park and

UNESCO and IUCN's technocratic support follow neocolonial and neoliberal logics of conservation that disregard the needs of Penan residents in favor of corrupt state and private property schemes.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three provides a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that I used in this research. The chapter includes theories of neoliberal conservation, dispossession, (anti-)politics of recognition, rights, and participation, and science and technology studies. These arenas contribute to the broader discussion about the roles of Mulu Park and the World Heritage program in reproducing colonial legacies of Indigenous dispossession.

First, I discuss neoliberal conservation to lay the groundwork for explaining how Mulu Park and the World Heritage paradigm follow neoliberal ideals of Western mainstream conservation (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020; Li, 2009; Salemink, 2016). This is followed by a review of the literature on dispossession as both a mechanism and an outcome of (neo)colonial natural resource management (Coulthard, 2014; Harvey, 2003; Nichols, 2020). Next, I examine (anti-)politics of recognition, rights, and participation as a technocratic tool used to propel conservation and development agendas, while avoiding addressing the local politics of a conservation area (Brosius, 1999; Coulthard, 2014; Ferguson, 1994; Youdelis, 2016). Finally, I explore how science and technology studies (Haraway, 1988) explains World Heritage universal values as a hegemonic approach to conservation that legitimizes certain forms of knowledge and invalidates localized knowledge. These sets of literature are necessary for the discussion about the roles of

Mulu Park and the World Heritage program in producing (mis)representations of nature and indigeneity that perpetuate Penan dispossession.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four I explain my research design, including the methodology and data collection techniques necessary for this research. In May through June 2019, I conducted fieldwork at Mulu Park and surrounding Penan communities, Long Iman and Batu Bungan. I used archival analysis, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and go-along interviews for data collection. I intended to explore the narratives that park management conveyed about the land compared to the narratives and values Penan locals described about the same land. In 2020, I conducted archival analysis of Mulu Park and World Heritage documents and carried out remote interviews with IUCN and Mulu Park staff. I used qualitative methodology to inquire about people's lived experiences, while study-up methodology was useful for examining institutions that wield power. My methods were necessary to determine how Mulu Park management and World Heritage conceptualize nature and indigeneity, and how these understandings generate conservation strategies that exclude Penan.

Chapter Five

Chapters Five and Six disclose my results. Chapter Five illustrates the narratives that Penan residents and park staff tell about the land at Mulu Park. During my time with Penan residents in Long Iman and Batu Bungan, I found that their narratives of the forest reflected past and present ways of life, memories, discoveries, and myths that described a collective Penan identity. In contrast, the narratives portrayed at Mulu Park reflected the "Outstanding Universal Values" (OUV) for which the park was nominated to the

UNESCO World Heritage List. These OUV include natural beauty, geological significance, and striking biodiversity. I also found that Penan culture was commodified and objectified, as most aspects of the park were centered from a business perspective. Furthermore, the absence of Penan tour guides impacts the knowledge conveyed to visitors, as Penan narratives are often misrepresented or missing. In brief, I observed that Mulu Park protects and promotes World Heritage values and conservation management approaches much more than they protect or recognize local Penan values and livelihoods.

Chapter Six

In Chapter Six, I discuss my findings regarding how World Heritage perpetuates neocolonial environmental governance at Mulu Park. I found two ways in which World Heritage contributes to a neocolonial and neoliberal framework. First, the park's tourism and education highlight the land's geological and ecological importance to the world, but exclude most of the narratives about the land significant to my Penan informants. In this way, UNESCO World Heritage dominates the knowledge production about natural resources at Mulu Park, and as a result, disconnects people and land within the park boundary. Second, when World Heritage advisory bodies like UNESCO and IUCN address matters of local participation at World Heritage Sites, they employ "antipolitical strategies to produce the appearance of inclusion and to naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority in ... traditional territories" (Youdelis, 2016, p. 1374). I provide evidence of how the World Heritage program's technocratic support perpetuates a culture of exclusion and dispossession for Penan at Mulu Park.

Chapter Seven

Chapter seven is a discussion of the implications of my findings, and suggestions for future research. My results raise important implications about how Penan are excluded from park management, the influence of Big International Non-Governmental Organizations (BINGOs) in which aspects of the park are valued and protected, and which narratives are emphasized or omitted. In my discussion, I argue that Mulu Park is a neocolonial conservation project. Mulu Park follows the one-size-fits-all approach to environmental governance that legitimizes Western forms of knowledge and land use practices while excluding the knowledge and livelihoods specific to the area (Rodriguez et al., 2007). On the other side of the same coin, Mulu Park is entrenched in neoliberal logics of conservation. In every experience I had with the park, I found that park management had neoliberal agendas that prioritized tourism profit over all else. I explain that Penan inclusion reflects what Salemink (2016) calls "heritagisation as disconnection," which is a derivative of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2001). Mulu Park commodifies nature, culture, and people, separating the culture/skills/lifeways from the people who embody them in the same way that capitalism separates the producer from the product.

In answering the final research question, I found that the World Heritage program contributes to a neocolonial framework for environmental governance by employing anti-politics in their support of sites. UNESCO and IUCN wield anti-political language in their Operational Guidelines, State of Conservation reports, and Outlook Assessment documents. Anti-politics--under the guise of technical support, participation, capacity building--takes political decisions and denies the political nature of those decisions in

order to move development agendas forward (Ferguson, 1994; Mosse, 2004). I found that anti-political strategies for park management are present at Mulu Park and in UNESCO and IUCN's language around the involvement of local communities at World Heritage Sites. While local inclusion is often intended to improve the well-being of marginalized groups and residents impacted by the presence of a protected area, these management schemes avoid local politics and serve to "naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority" (Youdelis, 2016, p. 1374). In this way, anti-political approaches to park management furthers neocolonial agendas that deepen unequal power dynamics.

Ultimately, Sarawak maintains a long history of displacing Penan and other native groups and selling their land to multi-national timber and palm oil corporations. However, capitalism and mainstream conservation share the same process of enclosing land in ways that separate people from their land, and transform social relations with land (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). Furthermore, the World Heritage Convention causes dispossession by appropriating Mulu Park as a place of global concern, suggesting that Mulu belongs "to all the peoples of the world" (UNESCO, n.d.-d). This notion disregards Penan people's possession and association with the land, and instead promotes a false united humanity and opens up opportunities for capitalist development that does not necessarily benefit local residents (Sachs, 2010).

I conclude that as a neocolonial and neoliberal conservation project, Mulu Park dispossesses Penan people because capitalism needs dispossession in order to exist and thrive (Nichols, 2020). While Penan have experienced processes of dispossession through state territorial expansion and resource exploitation, the conservation of Mulu Park dispossesses Penan because capitalist development coerces people into exploitative

relationships with land that disconnect them from their particular knowledges and attachments to their land. Furthermore, the governor of Sarawak's family owns Borsarmulu (the Mulu Park tourism company) and owns shares in several palm oil corporations, including Radiant Lagoon directly outside of the Mulu Park boundary. One of my informants clarified that this connection allows the Mulu Park tourist admission fees to circulate back to palm oil corporations that devastate the little remaining rainforest left in Sarawak. These processes of natural resource exploitation and conservation are essentially dependent upon each other. While international agencies like UNESCO and IUCN aim to help protect Mulu Park, the diamond in the rough of palm oil wastelands, they ultimately help bolster the global neoliberal project that dispossesses Indigenous peoples in extraction and conservation projects alike.

Chapter Two: Background

Penan

The Penan, one of the last remaining nomadic peoples of Sarawak, eastern Malaysia, are likely to "eventually vanish as a distinct group of people," Rodney Needham says (Lebar, 1972). Needham's claim emerged as a result of a decades-long struggle that the Penan have faced with the onset of modernization and economic development, as well as restrictions on forest use in statutory and internationally protected areas of Sarawak. The population of Penan between the watersheds of the Baram and Rejang rivers was about 9,237 as of Jayl Langub's report in 1989 (Langub, 1989, p. 170). In 2011, only 945 Penan remain between the boundaries of Gunung Mulu National Park and Pulong Tau National Park, and less than five percent of Eastern Penan were reported fully nomadic by 2011 (Langub, 2011).

The Penan were (and a small number at present are) a traditionally nomadic people, and occupied camps throughout the year that vary in permanence (Langub, 1989). Penan rely on various forest materials for their livelihood. Penan practice a sustainable form of forest resource management called *molong*, which reflects the importance of maintaining the land for future generations. They have depended on the sago palm as a staple source of food and livelihood, harvesting the pith of *Eugeissona utilis*, young sago, and the edible palm leaf-bud (Brosius, 1986). The forest provides them with their main meat source, the bearded pig, and other fruits and vegetables. The forest is their home and

they treat it as such. Penan take meticulous care to account for all resources in an area, as they are "aware that natural resources are a limiting factor to development and quality of life" (Langub, 1989, p. 181). Aside from subsistence resources, the forest provides essential trading products including rattan, rubber, resin, and medicinal stones for the *tamu* trading post (p. 174). Subjects of the English Brooke family reign organized these trading events for one hundred years between 1860-1960, but the *tamu* ceased after independence when Sarawak merged with Malaysia in the 1960s (Nanik, personal communication, June 6, 2019).

Penan have strong kinship ties to the land inside and around Gunung Mulu National Park. Eastern Penan are all believed to be descendants of three brothers--Ta'ang, Usai and Tring--from where these ancestors lived and died (Langub, 2011, p. 87). Specific landmarks and campgrounds are often named after deceased, and are "used as an idiom for historical and genealogical information linking descendants to the landscape" (p. 93). Not only do Penan genealogies and burial grounds serve as landmarks, they also function to establish customary land rights (*adat*), claiming rights to the resources of the domain of a buried ancestor (p. 95). The camps that Penan leave behind, referred to as *la'a*, have a powerful place in Penan memory. Memories associated with a *la'a* they call *uban*. Langub explains, "Penan regard la'a as their uban--footprints--scattered across the landscape of home river systems" (p. 96). *Uban* alludes to "cultural significance, past events, connections, relationships, and rights" within particular locations of the forest (p. 96).

Land features, especially rivers, have significant value for Penan. Langub articulates the importance of rivers in several vivid ways. He says,

> it is via the complex system of rivers that they organize the geography of the landscape … Weaving their way through the forest, Penan would use the river systems to determine their precise location relative to hills and other landmarks. Rivers are akin to streets in urban settings, and when an individual gets disoriented in the forest, the first thing he does is walk to the nearest river or stream and works out his location and way out. (p. 90)

Langub continues, "Rivers are not simply rivers; they have stories to tell, and they keep records of past events" (p. 91). Rivers are important in Penan history and identity, and are vital for navigation, memory, and subsistence.

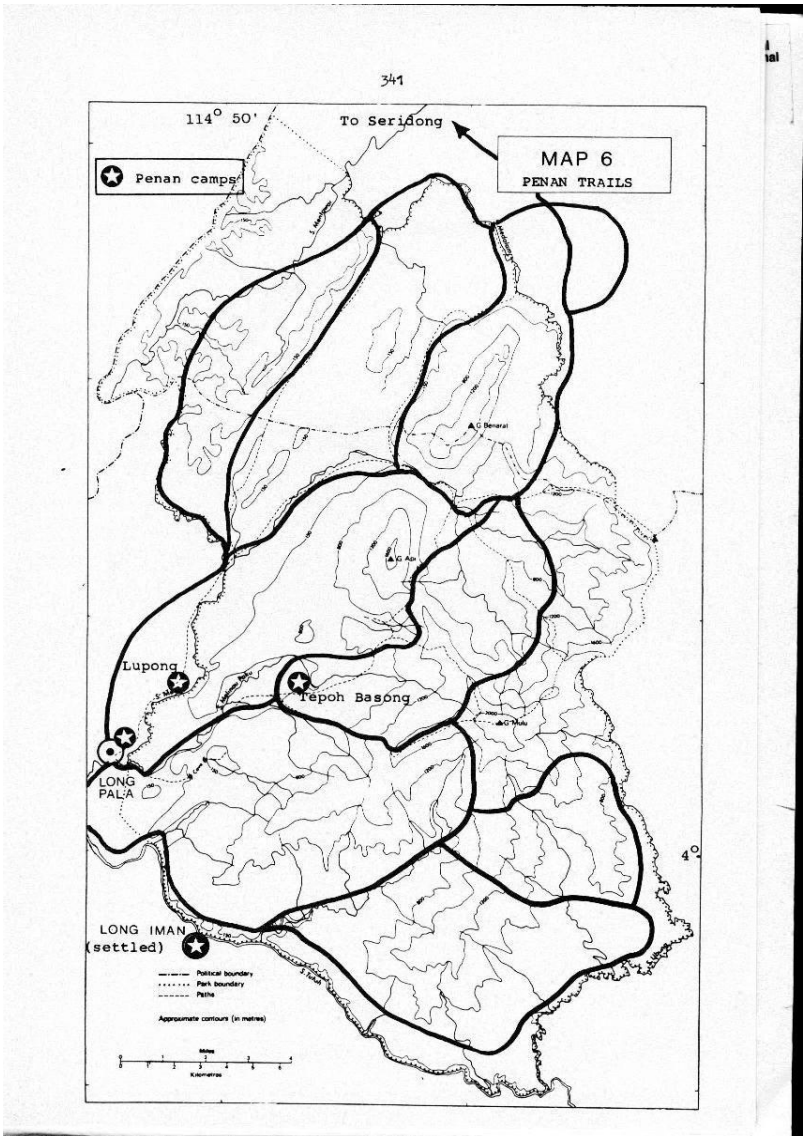


Figure 2.0: *Penan trails* (Anderson et al., 1982)

Native Customary Rights (NCR) and Land Grabbing

Native Customary Rights (NCR) for Penan and other Indigenous groups in Sarawak are traditionally called *adat*, and have existed long before Sarawak's colonial period. *Adat* is a system of customary laws that regulate social norms, traditional practices, and managing rights to land use for cultivation, hunting, fishing, harvesting forest resources, as well as for burial and ritual purposes (Nelson et al., 2016). Bulan (2006) describes the gradual annihilation of Indigenous land rights--from Sarawak's establishment as a British colony in 1841 to the 1990 alteration of the Land Code, which permitted domestic and international corporations to buy NCR land for private agricultural and timber projects.

Sarawak was established by the Brooke family from Britain as an independent fiefdom in 1841. The ruling family did not interfere with native customary law and allowed locals significant autonomy over land. James Brooke established uncultivated land as state land, but respected residents' primary governance over these areas (Bulan, 2006, p. 46). He divided the land tenure into a codified land system and *adat*. The colonial interpretation of *adat* "was created to preserve the traditional land use and farming systems … [of] natives whereas, the codified land system legally recognized the private land ownership and supported the commercialization of agriculture" (Nelson et al., 2016, p. 84). Sarawak became a Btitish protectorate in 1888, and the Brooke family formally introduced British law in 1928 via L-4, or the Laws of Sarawak Ordinance, which altered the course of customary land rights in colonial and post-colonial Sarawak. Customary rights were formalized after Sarawak became wholly subject to the British Empire as a British colony in 1946, establishing the Land (Classification) Ordinance,

which categorized land tenure according to customary and non-customary land (Bulan, 2006, p. 47).

Indigenous people were given the opportunity to stake claims to land for customary use; however, they were considered "licensees of the Crown" (Bulan, 2006, p. 48), eliminating local rights to legitimate land ownership and weakening any reliable protection by colonial authorities. By the time the Sarawak Land Code of 1958 was established, British authorities only recognized rights to land according to the existence of a title, with only six exceptions to this rule cited under Section 5(2) of Native Customary Land:

- the felling of virgin jungle and the occupation of the land thereby cleared;
- the planting of land with fruits;
- the occupation of cultivated land;
- the use of land for a burial ground or shrine;
- the use of land for rights of way; and
- by any lawful method (as found in Land Code, 1958)

Indigenous land that met any of these requirements before January 1, 1958 automatically gained NCR status and were guaranteed protection. After 1958, ownership of primary forest was only validated with a permit, which was granted to (mostly multinational) timber and palm oil companies and rarely to Indigenous communities or individuals (Bending, 2006). As hunter-gatherer Penan lived on land that did not fall under any of the official Native Customary Land categories, the Penan were excluded from regulations protecting NCR. Therefore, forests inhabited by Penan became state property and were subject to state interests.

While Section 5(2) protected some native rights to resource tenure, several amendments were made to the Land Ordinance through the remaining decades of British rule and arguably worsened with Sarawak's independence and merge with Malaysia in 1963. Amendments were intended to eliminate ambiguity of customary land rights for the sake of "legal certainty," and under some circumstances, omitted Indigenous land rights altogether. Land Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2000 Section 7A(1) for example, reduced land rights into fewer categories and "deleted 'any lawful methods' under Section 5(2)(f)." This restricted Indigenous people's ability to defend land rights in court (Bulan, 2006, p. 49). These restrictions eliminated the possibility of expanding additional categories of customary rights in the future, and intentionally limited people's rights in favor of state interests (p. 50), particularly for extractive industries.

The 1980s and 90s saw new legislation that made land protection even more difficult for Indigenous Sarawakians, virtually nullifyng NCR. The Land Code was again altered, this time by the Dewan Undangan Negri (empowering the Land Consolidation and Development Authority), in the image of Sarawak's agricultural (and other economic) development initiatives. *Konsep Baru* (New Concept) permitted domestic and international corporations to buy Native Customary Land for private agricultural and timber projects. The LCDA had the authority to take any land--state-owned or customary--for private investors allocating shares in land development (Bulan, 2006, p. 52).

During this time, "Sarawak became a major supplier of tropical hardwoods on the international market and experienced one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world" (Brosius, 1999b, p. 39). The timber industry wreaked havoc on Penan territory

and gutted the rainforest of which they depend for their livelihood and identity as a distinct population. A devastating amount of the forest resources that the Penan regulated and used for generations through *adat*, including sago palm, game, fruit trees, rattan, and ancestral graves, was gone, forcing many to abandon their livelihood. "Logging not only undermines the basis of Penan subsistence but, by transforming sites with biographical, social, and historical significance, also destroys those things that are iconic of their existence as a society" (p. 39).

The exclusion of Penan land and foraging rights in particular from NCR is to a great extent a result of the state's ethnic discrimination. Government policy toward the Penan is "a thoroughly modernist ideology of development" (Brosius 1999b, p. 38), and aims to force them into the modern sedentary economy. Brosius (2003) describes development in Malaysia as a mechanism for "colonizing the future and transforming people" (p. 102), which catalyzes a crusade by the state to reverse any perceived backwardness in society. In effect, Sarawak government authorities have a patronizing regard for the hunter-gatherer Penan and feel an obligation to bring them into mainstream society. Sarawak government officials often trivialize Penan struggles and infantilize them, such as Sarawak Chief Minister (now Governor) Taib Mahmud's statement regarding his perceived responsibility to Sarawakian society:

> We are belted with one philosophy and this is to build an equal society. How can we have an equal society when you allow a small group of people to behave like animals in the jungle …. I owe it to the Penans to get them gradually into the mainstream so that they can be like any other Sarawakian (Brosius, 1999b, p. 39).

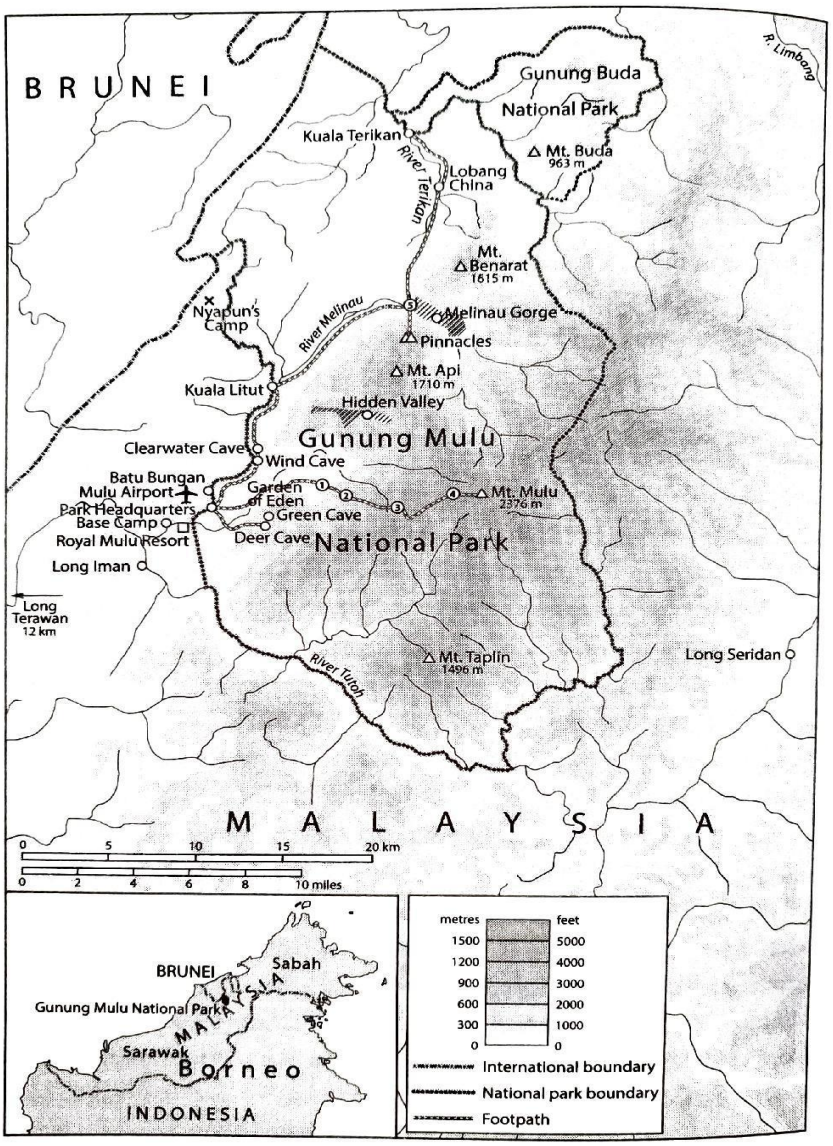
Other officials, such as Lim Keng Yaik, former head of the Ministry of Primary Industries, described "weaning" Penan out of the forest (Brosius, 2003, p. 105). The

former head of the Ministry of Federal Trade and Industry, Rafidah Aziz, asserted that she believes in the protection of particular cultures, "so long as their practices are not harmful to themselves," stating that "natural attrition" will destroy them without government intervention (Brosius 2003, p. 105). Although the majority of Indigenous groups in Sarawak struggle for rights to land and self-determination, the Penan were excluded from most forms of legal protection. The history of natural resource management and Native Customary Rights in Sarawak is useful for understanding the impact of (post/neo)colonial forest governance on Indigenous dispossession.

Mulu Park

Gunung Mulu National Park (Mulu Park), established in 1974, is located in northern Sarawak, an eastern Malaysian state on the island of Borneo. The park lies between the Tutoh and Medalam rivers (tributaries of the Baram and Limbang rivers), and shares its northernmost border with the country of Brunei (Anderson et al., 1982). The lands are home to Indigenous Penan and Berawan people. The park is 130,630 acres, and consists predominantly of primary old-growth rainforest, with 17 vegetation zones, 40% lowland rainforest and 20% montane rainforest (IUCN, 2000, p. 57). By the Park's nomination to the World Heritage List in the year 2000, approximately 3,500 species of vascular plants were discovered within Mulu Park, and is the site of the most diversity of palm species in the world (p. 57). By that time, 80 species of mammals, 270 bird species, and 200 species of cave fauna were recorded. The park's caves are well known as habitats for very large bat colonies, including "3 million wrinkle-lipped freetail bats [that] inhabit Deer Cave alone" (p. 57). Mulu Park is also considered important for geological research due to its diversity of karst features and containing some of the largest caves in

the world. Sarawak Chamber, for example, “which is 600m x 415m and 80m high, is the largest known cave chamber in the world” (p. 57). Mulu Park, along with neighboring World Heritage Site Kinabalu National Park in Sabah, are considered by IUCN “as the two most important conservation areas on the island of Borneo” (p. 58).



Gunung Mulu National Park, *c.*1977.

Figure 2.1: Mulu Park, 1977 (Hanbury-Tenison, 2017, p. 8)

The Forest Department of Sarawak conducted a botanical expedition in 1961, which prompted the recommendation to commission the area as a national park (Anderson et al., 1982, p. 1). At the establishment of Gunung Mulu National Park, like most national parks at the time, international policies for protected area management followed the 1964 American Wilderness Act framework, which echoed an ideal of a "wilderness untouched by human interference" (Taylor, 2009, p. 11). As a result, the management plans for Mulu Park included plans for the gradual removal of nomadic Penan from the park and their rehabilitation into settlements.

Management Plan

The *Gunung Mulu National Park: A Management and Development Plan* (Anderson et al., 1982) was jointly compiled by the Sarawak Forestry Department and the Royal Geographical Society in the UK (Gill, 2001, p. 2). The document explains the long-term conservation objectives of the management of the park, including to conserve biodiversity, populations of flora and fauna, and geological integrity (Anderson et al., 1982, p. 117). The document also articulates the project goals for the rehabilitation of nomadic Penan, and the terms of their hunting and foraging privileges within the park boundary. By the time the management plan was finalized in 1982, approximately 140 Penan people from communities surrounding the Melinau River made "full use of the park" (p. 117). The Sarawak government intended to facilitate the transition of the whole Penan population into a "settled mode of existence," and the government ethnologist, Peter Kedit, provided recommendations for the gradual relocation of nomadic Penan inside Mulu Park (p. 167). The plan advised that Penan "should be given agricultural

training" (p. 301), "develop their skills in their traditional handicrafts so as to enable them to earn ready cash," and to "teach them basic house-keeping and hygiene" (1982, p. 302).

The management plan asserts that "the protection of the park itself, and the fauna and flora therein, must be the primary consideration," and declares that "the most difficult problem concerning the management of the Park is the regulation, or overseeing, of the privileges of the local people." It also proclaims that the perscribed hunting and foraging privileges of locals "must be respected," and at the same time they must find ways "through consultation, education" to help them abide by the hunting/foraging terms and "appreciate the park, not only as a conservation area, but as something of direct value to themselves" (Anderson et al., 1982, p. 162). Furthermore, the plan states that as Penan become more sedentary and rely less on the park as a source of subsistence livelihood,

> it is recommended that the reduction of the privileges of the Penan might be gradually implemented as follows: Closure of part or parts of the Park, particularly in lowland areas traversed by visitors, to the hunting of the more threatened species, notably monkeys and gibbons; Extension of the areas closed to the hunting of specified mammals and birds, and the number of protected species to be increased. (p. 168)

Today, Penan and other local communities have varying degrees of privileges to hunt deer and boar, fish in the rivers, and collect certain produce (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020).

The RGS Mulu Expedition

The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) led the Mulu Expedition from 1977-1978, in which British scientists explored rainforest and caves over a 10-month period, putting Mulu on the map as an area "full of superlatives," and launched opportunities for

scientific discovery for researchers worldwide (Hanbury-Tenison, 2017, p. 231). For example, “Sarawak Chamber is the biggest cave chamber in the world; Deer Cave is the largest cave passage; the Clearwater Cave System may contain the largest volume of cave anywhere.” The cave biodiversity at Mulu is also some of the most prolific in the world, with 3 million bats of 28 species, and more than 500 species of plants relying on them for pollination. 12 species of bat inhabit Deer Cave, “the highest number of species occupying a single cave ever recorded” (p. 231). Beyond caves, this tropical rainforest contains extraordinary biodiversity. “Half of all life on the planet is to be found in rainforests, which only cover 2 per cent of the earth’s surface, and much of it is in Mulu” (p. 232). The Mulu Expedition discoveries “led directly to the designation of this unique habitat and ecosystem as a protected reserve and World Heritage Site” (p. xviii).

Mulu Land Disputes

The Sarawak Forestry Corporation manages the Wilderness Zone (90% of the park), while Borsarmulu Park Management is responsible for the Tourism Zone (Mulu National Park, n.d. -b). Raziah and Robert Geneid, Malay sister and Australian brother-in-law of Governor Taib Mahmud own Borsarmulu management agency. While attending his birthday party at the Mulu Marriott Resort in 2014 (Figure 2.2 & 2.3), Robert boasted about the “world-class” rainforest experience he created: “What many people don’t realise is how accessible the Mulu rainforest is. It’s just a 30-minute plane ride away from Miri. It’s easier to travel to Mulu than to the Amazon, where you then have to trek for thousands of miles and go through a raggedy experience,” (Ong, 2015). However, Sarawakians, the Bruno Manser Fund and other international Indigenous rights

organizations have accused Governor Taib and his family of illegal land grabs within and surrounding Mulu Park over the past 30 years. According to the *Sarawak Report* (2010), "[Taib] passed a decree that declared that the entire area was 'state land', which he could therefore personally confiscate and hand to his own family." The decree granted Borsarmulu and other connected shareholders the ability to build on Native Customary Rights (NCR) land and develop environmentally destructive projects in and around the

Figure 2.2: *Jungle playground and 'eco' resort* (*Sarawak Report*, 2017)

park. By 1991, Taib handed Borsarmulu Bhd. private ownership of this state-owned national park, for which Taib is a significant shareholder. In fact, Taib is the director of Mesti Bersatu Sdn. Bhd., the investment company with interests in major shareholders of Mulu Park tourism including Borsarmulu and Kenyalang Cergas (Bruno Manser Fonds, 2014; *Sarawak Report*, 2014). Raziah and Robert Geneid of Borsarmulu Bhd. built the Royal Mulu Resort (now Marriott Mulu Resort) on arguably stolen Berawan land with

little compensation. The *Sarawak Report* states that Taib Mahmud called Berawan landholders "greedy" for not agreeing to forfeit their territory for development purposes. "Their peaceful protests in the 1990s were brutally put down by army and police and their leaders were imprisoned." Berawan people have been protesting the injustice of this land loss since 1994 (*Sarawak Report*, 2010). Furthermore, Borsarmulu "[blew] off the top of a sacred mountain" on more native land to build an airport close to the resort (2010). The *Sarawak Report* commonly calls the resort the Taib/Mahmud "jungle playground" (2010; 2014; 2017).

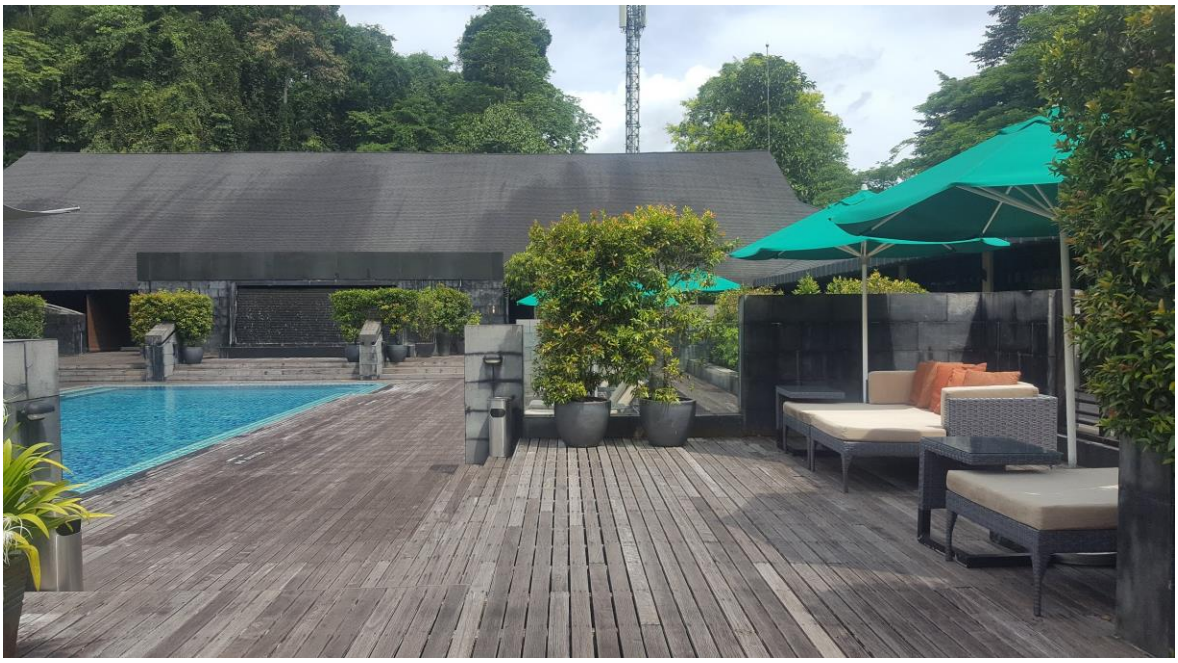


Figure 2.3: *Mulu Marriott Resort Pool Area* (DeLoach, 2019)

In addition to park construction on NCR land, Governor Taib Mahmud and his family sponsored logging and palm oil developments that stripped most of the forest surrounding Mulu Park. Taib passes laws that weaken NCR, and continues to take forest away from Indigenous land owners (*Sarawak Report*, Feb. 19, 2019). "He authorized the logging of thousands of square miles of virgin rainforest surrounding the tiny Mulu

National Park, eradicating most of the wild-life of the region, including inside the Park itself" (*Sarawak Report*, 2010). In 2008, Taib secretly gifted his son Abu Bekir's oil palm company, Radiant Lagoon, over 11,000 acres of Berawan and Penan NCR forest bordering Mulu Park (Figure 2.4) (*Sarawak Report*, May 3, 2019; May 5, 2019). Taib never informed, consulted, negotiated, or compensated residents for the land he took, and

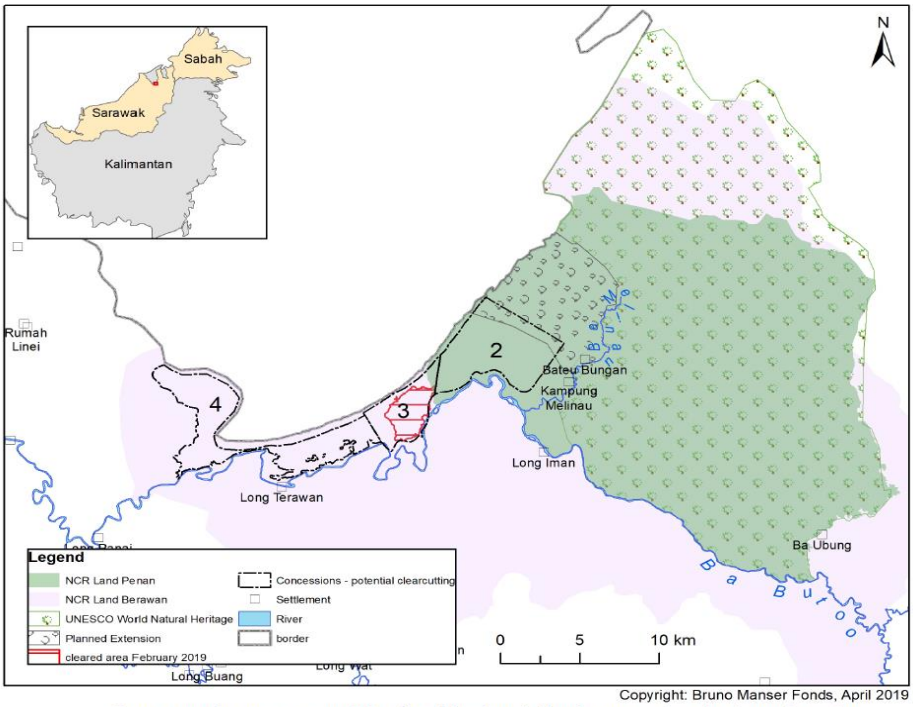


Figure 2: Native Customary Rights (NCR) land and oil palm concessions in the Mulu region

Figure 2.4: *NCR land and oil palm concessions in the Mulu region* (Bruno Manser Fonds, 2019)

timber and oil palm projects began in 2018 (May 5, 2019). In May 2018, Radiant Lagoon sent an announcement of their intended development to headmen of Berawan communities (who were bribed into supporting the project), but never consulted Penan communities, even though Batu Bungan is one of the largest stakeholders (*Sarawak Report*, May 6, 2019).

In response to questioning about Radiant Lagoon's potential threat to Mulu Park, Len Talif Salleh, former head of the Sarawak Forestry Department declared, "we are going to issue a directive that one kilometer buffer zone will be imposed" (*Sarawak Report*, May 31, 2019). Malaysian lawyer YB See Chee How responded, "the normal buffer zone for such an area would be 25 kilometers and that a petition of 45,000 signatures has been risen against the destruction of the region" (*Sarawak Report*, May 31, 2019). Talif Salleh "sneeringly replied" that Indigenous people

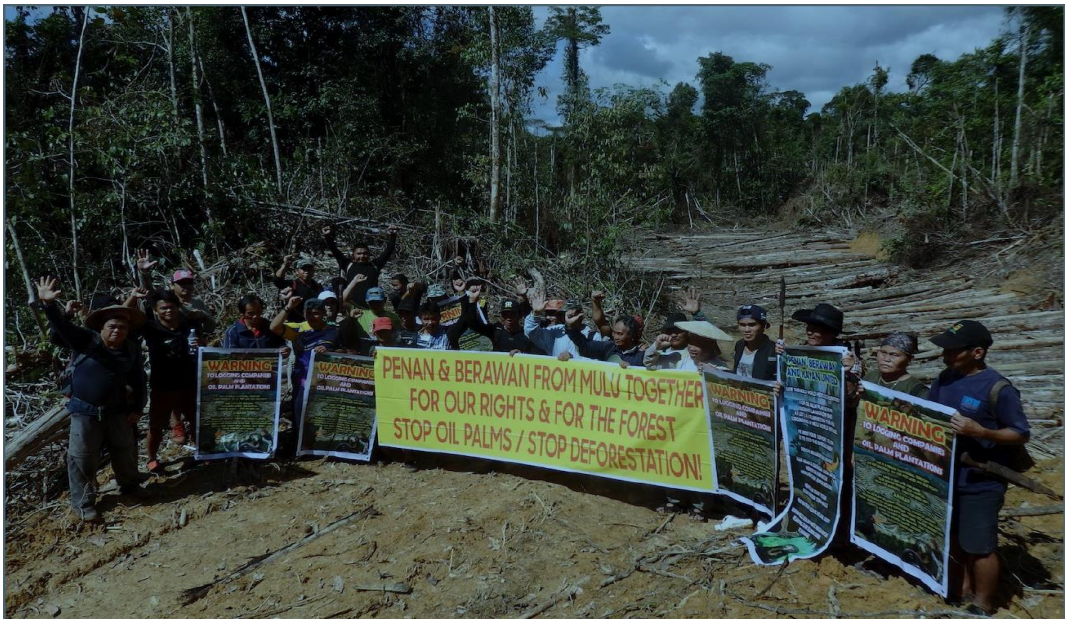


Figure 2.5: *Protesters of Mulu Blockade 2019* (Bruno Manser Fonds, 2019)

"would allegedly be 'digging their own graves' if they resisted oil palm, insisting the crop is the only 'lifeline' for natives" (*Sarawak Report*, May 31, 2019). Furthermore, according to the Mulu Park Management Plan, buffer zones at Mulu Park have no legal status (Anderson et al. 1982, p. 143). Penan and Berawan protested and erected blockades in opposition to Radiant Lagoon's illegal conversion of rainforest into oil palm monoculture, causing a standstill in the project in May 2019 (Figure 2.5) (*Sarawak*

Report, May 31, 2019). By April 2019, Radiant Lagoon destroyed almost 2,000 acres of forest since beginning work in January, totaling around 16% of the area (Environmental Justice Atlas, n.d.). However, the *Sarawak Report* notes that "the Sarawak state government plans to convert another 600,000 hectares of rainforest and community lands into oil palm plantations by 2023" (Bruno Manser Fonds, 2019).

World Heritage

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded shortly after World War II in a pursuit to unite all nations for "a genuine culture of peace" (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 72). UNESCO was created with ideals of globalization in mind: "globalization allows geographic constraints on socio-cultural relationships to recede in the minds of individuals. By eliminating traditional boundaries and reordering time and space, this phenomenon can alter individual identities to include conceptions of a more global self" (p. 72). In other words, UNESCO purports to recede the boundaries of the nation-state, "fostering peace and humanitarian efforts that developed out of the universalist aspirations for global governance envisaged by the League of Nations" (Meskell 2013, p. 156). UNESCO is not as powerful as other agencies within the United Nations, but is instead seen as the "cultural arm, the visionary agency, and the 'ideas factory' for the larger organization (Meskell, 2013, p. 158).

The World Heritage Convention was adopted in 1972, and became one of the most well-known departments of UNESCO. UNESCO is the only institution to promote cultural heritage on a global level (Meskell, 2013, p. 158). The World Heritage mission

includes but is not limited to, encouraging states parties "to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List," encouraging states parties "to establish management plans and set up reporting systems" for their World Heritage Sites, providing "technical assistance and professional training," and encouraging states to consider "participation of the local population" (UNESCO, n.d. -d).

By developing a list of World Heritage Sites (WHS), the World Heritage system[1] is "[charged] with identifying and protecting sites deemed to be of importance to the history and culture of the human race" (Di Giovine, 2009, p.76). World Heritage is meant to create a new kind of "placemaking … one based on mutual ownership and communal celebration of those tangible places regarded as integral to the identities of individuals and societies throughout the world" (p.76). In other words, "the ultimate aim is to provide [global] citizens with a sense of a common narrative" (Trelka, 2020, p. 106).

The World Heritage paradigm is a global process that emerged after the industrial revolution, and was "informed by the relationship between modernity and time, the idea of 'risk' or threat, and the role of ordering, classifying and categorising in modernity" (Harrison, 2013, p. 13). Put differently, the World Heritage program is a series of policies and technocratic procedures in response to tensions between societal development for the future and preservation of the past. UNESCO makes this concern clear in the World Heritage Convention:

[1] Throughout this paper, I reference the World Heritage Convention (WHC), the World Heritage Centre, the World Heritage List (WHL), and the Operational Guidelines to the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (OP). When alluding to the World Heritage paradigm as a whole, I borrow the term that Pocock and Lilley (2017) call the "World Heritage system." They refer to the World Heritage system as "all the government and non-government bodies and their associated charters, frameworks and operational guidelines, linked with the operation of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention" (p. 171).

> Noting that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction… (UNESCO, 1972, p. 1)

This statement asserts that social and economic development are damaging to natural and cultural heritage globally, and that steps must be taken to protect these places. The statement situates this destruction within the conditions of global development, implying that the current form of capitalist development is inevitable. As a result, the World Heritage program works within the destructive context that the Convention aims to protect against.

The World Heritage List

The World Heritage List (WHL) showcases the world's most outstanding places, categorized under "Cultural," "Natural," "Mixed," and "Cultural Landscape" World Heritage Sites (UNESCO, n.d. -f). State governments are able to complete an application process to nominate places of importance to the WHL. "To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria." The selection criteria are made up of six "cultural" and four "natural" criteria, and sites may be nominated based on one or any combination of Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) (UNESCO, n.d. -c). Sites that have been submitted for nomination are evaluated independently by one or two of the World Heritage advisory bodies assigned by the World Heritage Convention. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) evaluates and approves sites that are nominated based on cultural OUV (to be inscribed as a cultural site), and the International Union of the

Conservation of Nature evaluates and approves sites nominated for natural OUV (to be inscribed as a natural site). If a site is nominated based on a combination of cultural and natural OUV, it is evaluated by both ICOMOS and IUCN, and is potentially inscribed as a Mixed World Heritage Site. After a site is nominated and evaluated by the advisory bodies, the World Heritage Committee (WHC) reviews the application and evaluations to make the final decision on the site's inscription to the World Heritage List (UNESCO, n.d. -g).

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

IUCN is an independent organization, but serves as an advisory branch of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC). Because Mulu Park was inscribed as a "natural" World Heritage Site, IUCN played a significant role in Mulu Park's nomination. In addition to approving nominations, IUCN offers guidance for management, technical support, and periodic reporting and evaluations for natural and mixed World Heritage Sites. IUCN is based in Gland, Switzerland and is made up of an "assembly of 77 states, 114 government agencies, innumerable conservation NGOs, and over 10,000 scientists, lawyers, educators, and corporate executives from 181 countries" (Dowie, 2009, p. xvi). The organization calls itself "a democratic union that brings together the world's most influential organizations and top experts in a combined effort to conserve nature and accelerate the transition to sustainable development" (IUCN, n.d. -a). Mark Dowie (2009) declares, "To those who believe that ecological health trumps all other measurements of human security, IUCN stands among the most important international organizations in the world" (p. xvi).

Mulu Park World Heritage Nomination

The Gunung Mulu National Park was nominated as a World Heritage Site in 2000. At first the Sarawak Forest Department turned down the proposal to apply for World Heritage status, as they were reluctant to allow "foreign interference" in the management of national parks (Gill, 2001, p. 1). Because of increasing biodiversity threats in the 1980s and 90s, the Sarawak Forest Department constructed wildlife management plans, which led to the eventual construction of Mulu Park's application for World Heritage nomination in 1998. (p. 1). Dr. Jim Thorsell and Peter Hitchcock of IUCN reviewed the Mulu Park application, and David Gill from the UK prepared the final proposal for submission (and successful nomination) to the WHL (p. 2).

Gunung Mulu National Park was nominated and inscribed to the WHL because it met all four natural OUV criteria for selection. Mulu Park earned its place on the WHL because it falls within all of the following categories:

> (vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
>
> (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
>
> (ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
>
> (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation (UNESCO, n.d. -a).

The IUCN Technical Evaluation for Mulu Park's nomination records a detailed summary and list of the site's natural values (Appendix B), comparisons with other sites, an overview of the site management structure, security of boundaries, and threats to the site (IUCN, 2000).

In regard to management, the report confirms that, as Mulu Park is managed at the state level through the National Park Ordinance of 1998, the state of Sarawak (not the federal government of Malaysia) is responsible for implementing the World Heritage Convention (WHC) at Mulu Park. The nomination feedback also claims that the park requires more adequate staffing and expertise, suggesting that the privatization of the park would be the best management strategy (Gill, 2001, p.2; IUCN, 2000, p. 59).

The report lists threats that could compromise the integrity of the park, namely local hunting privileges and logging outside the park for oil palm plantations. IUCN mentions that around 300 Penan live nomadically inside the park boundary, and states that the park "has been intensively hunted over the past decade" by Penan and Berawan, and that it requires further investigation. The evaluation points out concerns regarding palm oil plantations impacting vital bird and bat habitats, as well as water quality from erosion (IUCN, 2000, p. 59).

They list their demands for the state of Sarawak to revisit plans to strengthen management, minimize negative impacts, and address local people's use of and benefits from the park (p. 60). The report concludes that based on evaluations by IUCN, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and other conservation organizations, Mulu Park meets all criteria to be considered for the WHL, and compared to similar areas on the Asian continent, Mulu Park is "ranked as one of the top priorities" (IUCN, 2000, p. 59).

Conclusion

This chapter provided a background of the Penan people, the history of land grabbing in Sarawak, the circumstances of Mulu Park's establishment, and the origins and role of World Heritage as an apparatus of globalization. The Indigenous Penan endured drastic transformations in Sarawak's economy and forest management, resulting in the loss of large expanses of their land to timber tycoons and oil palm plantations. While the establishment of Mulu Park was intended to combat extraction from this ecologically and geologically significant area, it did very little to protect the livelihoods of Penan residents. As the Mulu Park Management Plan clearly states, they implemented a plan to remove Penan from inside the park barrier and restricted their activities within. In addition, the RGS Mulu Expedition led to Mulu's inscription on the World Heritage List on the basis of scientific data collected from the area. As a result, park management, UNESCO, and IUCN prioritize conservation based on the assessment of European scientists, instead of situated livelihoods and values.

The World Heritage program was established to promote the protection of spectacular areas like Mulu Park against destructive capitalist exploitation of natural resources. However, the establishment of Mulu Park, and the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and IUCN's technocratic support, follow neocolonial and neoliberal logics of conservation that disregard the needs of Penan residents. While the World Heritage Committee and advisory branches advocate for local inclusion in park decision-making, they maintain an anti-political role that allows for the protection of the national park and the devastating Mulu land scandal to occur simultaneously. As I explain in the next chapter, Mulu Park management and the World Heritage program do not protect land and

people from capitalist development, but instead bolster global processes of enclosing and commodifying land in favor of corrupt state and private property schemes.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

In Sarawak, Malaysia, political ecologists (Brosius, 1999a,b; Peluso & Vandergeest, 2001) have discussed in depth the relationship between (post-)colonial natural resource management and Indigenous land loss. Scholars have also discussed Indigenous resistance to logging and palm oil, and advocacy work with international conservation organizations in response to logging of Native Customary Rights (NCR) land in Sarawak (Bending, 2001; Brosius, 1997; 1999a,b; Selvadurai et al., 2012). However, scholars have yet to explore how environmental conservation schemes play a role in Indigenous dispossession at Mulu Park.

I use theories of dispossession, neoliberal conservation, (anti-)politics of rights, recognition, and participation, and science and technology studies (STS) to inform the broader discussion about the role of World Heritage in reproducing colonial legacies of Indigenous dispossession. First, I discuss neoliberal conservation, and how the World Heritage paradigm follows neoliberal ideals of Western mainstream conservation. Second, I discuss literature on dispossession as a process employed for the creation of enclosures and a tool for neoliberal/neocolonial natural resource management. This is followed by the (anti-)politics of local inclusion in conservation and development projects, and how BINGOs use anti-politics to push conservation agendas at the expense of local voices and livelihoods. Finally, I explore how science and technology studies

adds necessary context into how the hegemony of "universal values" perpetuates colonial legacies through the concept of World Heritage and its management.

Neoliberal Conservation

> "We are critically impoverished as human beings if the best we can come up with is money as the mediator of our relationship with the nonhuman world." -Sian Sullivan (2009, p. 26)

According to Bee et al., "Neoliberalism is the dominant political philosophy of the past thirty years that 'argues for the desirability of a society organized around self-regulating markets, and free, to the extent possible, from social and political interventions.'" Nature has become a focal point in the neoliberal project (Bee et al., 2015), but the connection between capitalism and conservation only became mainstream starting in the 1990s (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). Current dominant approaches to conservation harness the economic value of nature in order to incentivise preservation (McAfee, 1999). Mainstream conservation, Buscher & Fletcher (2020) argue, "is fundamentally capitalist and steeped in nature-people dichotomies, especially through its foundational emphasis on protected areas and continued infatuation with (images of) wilderness and 'pristine' natures." They explain further that "mainstream conservation does not challenge the hegemonic, global capitalist order" (p. 8).

The Conservation Debate

Literature critical of mainstream forms of conservation question their colonial legacy (Coulthard, 2014; Neumann, 1998; Peluso & Vandergeest, 2001), address the

consequential disenfranchisement and displacement of rural or Indigenous communities in the name of conservation initiatives (Anderson & Berglund, 2003; Chapin, 2004; Colchester, 2003; Corson, 2011; Jacoby, 2001), or critique the different transformations of environmental governance in a globalizing world (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020; Corson, 2010).

Specifically, Buscher and Fletcher (2020) address two branches of Western mainstream conservation, "neoprotectionism" and "new conservation", which evolved from the opposing "fortress model" and "people in parks" initiatives. Neoprotectionists support the Yellowstone Model for conservation in which "pristine wilderness areas" are set aside, and people are kept out with the exception of tourism (Gomez-Pampa & Kaus, 1992). This approach is also termed "fortress conservation," which proposed to enclose pieces of land for protection from human destruction. "It often did so by removing human inhabitants, erecting fences around the newly cleared plots, and imposing fines or other forms of punishment for illegal entry" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 14). Derby et al. (2015) declare, "The wilderness that we know of the backcountry is predominantly wild beyond our wanting and doing, it is self-arising and unpredictable; we have not tamed it or turned it into a delightful display of aesthetics" (p. 385). However, "new conservationists" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020) criticize this notion, asserting that neoprotectionists have a heavy hand in managing and maintaining the environment in ways that reflect the pristine wilderness they imagine. Wilderness must be "intensely managed to appear as if unmanaged" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 68).

New conservationists recognize the harm fortress conservation can have on people living in and around protected areas (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020; see also Robbins

et al., 2009), and view capitalist development and inclusion of people into nature and resource management as an opportunity to face the challenges of protecting natural resources and solving global poverty (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). Conservation initiatives following the "new conservation" approach is a "fundamentally social endeavor" because instead of protecting nature "*from* people," new conservationists strive to protect nature and resources "*for* people" (their emphasis) (Corson et al., 2014, p. 191). "New conservationists" embrace the combining of humans and nature though initiatives such as ecosystem services and community-based conservation.

However, both the neoprotectionist and new conservation approaches fail to center the problem of capitalism in their debates. While neoprotectionists generally do not support the mix of capitalism and nature, asserting that pristine wilderness and capitalist economy should remain separate, the separation of humans and non-humans reinforces the fundamental and harmful binary (to humans and non-humans) produced in capitalism (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). It is unrealistic to believe that humans can save the planet by sectioning off pieces of the earth between people and protected areas, when "it is this same capitalist development that is intent upon continually transgressing such boundaries in search of new spaces and sites for accumulation" (p. 44). Furthermore, while many neoprotectionists (Suckling, 2012; Vale, 1998; Wilson, 2016) accept that no environment past or present was ever completely free of human influence, by advocating for pristine nature they consequently foster the erasure of livelihoods. "Only by writing people out of landscapes could protected areas also discursively take on the semblance of 'untrammeled' wilderness" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 59).

In addition, some scholars recognize that the strict protectionist philosophy creates the same dispossessive harm toward humans as capitalism. Kelly (2011) points out the similarities between protected areas and primitive accumulation:

> protected area creation, like primitive accumulation, is a violent, ongoing process that alters social relations and practices which can be defined by the enclosure of land or other property, the dispossession of the holders of this property and the creation of the conditions for capitalist production that allow a select few to accumulate wealth. (p. 687)

The establishment of protected areas dispossessed people from their subsistence livelihoods, catalyzing and supporting the creation of the sources of labor that industrialization needed (Igoe, 2004). Li (2009) takes this notion a step further by identifying the presence of "surplus populations," populations of displaced people who are not displaced for capitalist labor. Li indicates that this phenomenon is very common in Asia, where rural dispossession has no "intrinsic link to the prospect of labour absorption" (p. 71). Vehicles of dispossession include "the seizure of land by the state, or state-supported corporations, a practice that is widespread in China, India, and Southeast Asia [...] [and] the closing of the forest frontier for conservation" (Li, 2009, pp. 71-2).

In response to new conservationists, capitalism is inherently unsustainable. Capitalist conservation is a paradox because capitalism is inherently unsustainable and forces the nature-people dichotomy (Foster et al., 2010; Foster & Burkett, 2017; O'Connor, 1994). Buscher and Fletcher (2020) synthesize O'Connor's argument that there is "tension between the need for continual growth to stave off overproduction crisis and the inherently finite nature of the material resources upon which this growth depends" (O'Connor 1988, 1994, cited in Buscher & Fletcher 2020, p. 81). In this sense, the marrying of conservation and capitalist development is a contradiction because

"capitalist mechanisms are promoted to address problems that are in large part caused by capitalist development itself" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 29; Buscher, 2012).

In addition, Sullivan (2009) identifies neoliberal conservation as a form of "crisis capitalism," claiming that "capitalism thrives on crisis" (p. 18). While new conservationists purport to solve both economic and environmental crises at once, Sullivan argues that it is "in times of crisis that new forms of capitalist value, new frontiers of accumulation, and new enclosures and dispossessions, are created" (2009, p. 18). While new conservationists support the reintegration of humans and non-humans, this attempt is not possible, since capitalism by nature enforces the separation. "It is conceptually incoherent and untenable to embrace capitalism-for-conservation while arguing that this necessitates abandoning the same human-nature dichotomies that capitalism constructs and normally thrives on" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 44). In fact, in the cases of biodiversity offsets and ecotourism, in an attempt to bring people closer to nature, these projects often further alienate people from the environment (Fletcher, 2009). This is because while new conservationists attempt to close the gap between nature and people generated by the Yellowstone model, "they commonly risk reinforcing this same divide through the boundary-making promotion of capitalist logics" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 76).

International Support for Neoliberal Conservation

According to Brockington et al. (2008), mainstream neoliberal conservation refers to a "particular historical and institutional strain of western conservation" of which Big International NGOs (BINGOs) play a significant role. Although capitalist conservation is unsustainable, it is both materially and hegemonically supported and propelled forward

by international agencies, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (MacDonald, 2010; Sullivan, 2009). While scholars like Bulan (2006) describe how the state of Sarawak consolidates and manipulates environmental policy to fit the state's self-interested agendas, scholars also employ this argument to BINGOs. Scholars critique BINGOs as "bureaucratized and capitalized organizations" (Larsen, 2016, p. 24). Holmes (2011) says, "the roles of NGOs, corporations, and the state are increasingly indistinguishable" (p. 1).

IUCN is "the world's oldest and largest environmental organization" (Sullivan, 2009, p. 22), comprised of a collaboration between governments, intergovernmental financial institutions (such as the World Bank) and notable corporations, most of which are "the most environmentally destructive capitalist corporations in the world" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 21). As a result, BINGOs have a reputation for collaborating with and promoting business interests" (p. 18). Furthermore, BINGOs embody capitalist ontologies of nature, as Sullivan (2009) quotes the Deputy Head of IUCN's Species Program, "[i]t's time to recognize that nature is the largest company on Earth working for the benefit of 100 percent of humankind—and it's doing it for free" (p.19). However, in the case of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), "payments for the environmental services produced by nature's labour do not go to the environment itself, but to whoever is able to capture this newly priced value" (Sullivan, 2009, p. 20). Igoe and Brockington (2007) and Corson (2010) assert that these organizations do not build alternatives, but instead "produces images, enclosures and commodities ready for capitalist up-take" (Larsen, 2016, p.25).

World Heritage and Neoliberal Conservation

The World Heritage paradigm, run by UNESCO and IUCN, reflects the neoliberal nature of mainstream conservation and generates the same environmental and social consequences in favor of capitalist outcomes. First, World Heritage, like mainstream conservation, has origins in "'a particular historical and institutional strain of western conservation', practised and promoted especially by large, powerful international conservation organizations and agencies" (Buscher & Fletcher 2020, p. 18). Many scholars (Harrison, 2013; Labadi, 2013; Taylor, 2009) recognize that world heritage, developed and run by Western international agencies, risks producing dominant narratives for thinking about the human experience, and what deserves protection and why.

Second, World Heritage is rooted in the ontological distinction between nature and culture/people, in the same way that mainstream conservation intentionally, and at times, inadvertently maintains separations between them in protected area management. One of the most widely discussed issues of World Heritage in critical heritage scholarship is the separation of nature and culture embedded in the OUV criteria, which excludes ontologies where there is no distinction between nature and culture (Harrison, 2013; Taylor, 2009). In many World Heritage properties worldwide, the local community connections with Natural World Heritage sites "were omitted, or worse, even obliterated" (Taylor, 2009, p. 15). Scholars have criticized that these narrow binaries prioritized and emphasized aspects of a particular Western idea of heritage that excluded diversity in perspectives, experiences, and values in the context of specific spaces.

Site inscription on the WHL is connected to economic development, as the World Heritage label is often seen as an opportunity to gain international support and increase tourism (Pocock & Lilley, 2017, p. 172; Meskell, 2012). Furthermore, World Heritage safeguards capitalism instead of protecting people and environments against it, viewing heritage conservation as an opportunity for local community development. The World Heritage program includes the promotion of ecotourism and other forms of capitalist development, in the same way that the aim of mainstream conservation interventions "was to harness the economic value of in situ resources in order to incentivise their preservation" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 19; McAfee 1999). According to Pocock and Lilley (2017), "There is a common assumption that everyone, including or even especially local/Indigenous communities, will benefit from such economic growth" (p. 179). However, Indigenous people rarely reap the economic benefits of World Heritage Site inscription, and the purported benefits of World Heritage are instead costly to their culture and livelihood (p. 179).

In addition to the social cost of site inscription to Indigenous peoples, World Heritage Site tourism often appropriates and commoditizes them as well. As Salemink (2016) explains, World Heritage works as a process of "resourcing," when

> state- and market-operated incorporations of heritage sites, objects, people and practices link spatially marginal people to central agents and agencies that articulate an 'authorised heritage discourse' (cf. Smith 2006) which marginalises the people living close to, or embodying, the heritage. (Salemink, 2016, p. 339)

In this way, UNESCO and the act of heritagization work to appropriate Indigenous people's land and identity through a neoliberal/neocolonial mission of economic development and resource control. The similarities between World Heritage and mainstream conservation suggest that World Heritage can be equally harmful to

environmental protection and Indigenous livelihoods. As Buscher & Fletcher (2020) assert, capitalist development, instead of solving it, has "long produced, and continued to produce, poverty, exclusion, marginalization and inequality" (p. 99).

Dispossession

Dispossession is an outcome of both capitalism and colonialism experienced by Indigenous people (Coulthard, 2014; Nichols, 2020; Simpson, 2014). Coulthard (2014) defines colonialism as a "form of structured dispossession" (p. 7), and Simpson (2014) describes it as "an ongoing structure of dispossession that targets Indigenous peoples for elimination" (p. 74). In this sense, according to Nichols (2020), "dispossession is thought of as a broad macrohistorical process related to the specific territorial acquisition logic of settler colonialism" (p. 5). In this section I review several definitions of dispossession and processes that create dispossession of Indigenous people. I then explain the role of environmental conservation in Indigenous dispossession, and close with an example of dispossession as a result of cultural commodification at a World Heritage Site. Mulu Park and UNESCO's World Heritage program create narratives and representations of nature and indigeneity that result in the dispossession of Penan people, their narratives, and livelihoods.

Defining Dispossession

Marx (1967) understood dispossession as a subfield or consequence within capitalist processes. More recent scholars such as Coulthard (2014) and Harvey (2004) assert that dispossession is not only a consequence or "stage" of capitalism but a process

within continued colonialism (Nichols, 2020). Marx asserted that dispossession is rooted in exploitation and relationships of power. “A relationship of exploitation is, in part, an asymmetrical relationship of governance in which subordinate partners have little effective control over determining the conditions of the relation and thus over the conditions of their own lives” (Nichols, 2020, p. 55). Marx described the term “primitive accumulation,” claiming that the peasant commons, lands depended upon for access and use, were enclosed and privatized, restricting peasants’ ability to depend on these lands for their livelihoods. “In these moments, they were subjected to *dispossession* [their emphasis]--that is, they lost their immediate relation to the means of the reproduction of social life” (2020, p. 60). This transfer of land and accessibility resulted in the transformation of people’s productivity from a direct producer-product relationship to the producer’s work through wage labor, resulting in a market economy.

Furthermore, Marx (1967) stressed that primitive accumulation has roots in violence and will always be violent. Nichols explains that the state used violence to forcibly detach “immediate producers” from their direct access to “primary means of production.” As a result, workers “sell their labor under deeply asymmetrical conditions, effectively contracting into their own exploitation” (Nichols, 2020, p. 61-2). Coulthard (2014) clearly explains this process as follows:

> It was this horrific process that established the two necessary preconditions underwriting the capital relation itself: it forcefully opened up what were once collectively held territories and resources to privatization (dispossession and enclosure), which, over time, came to produce a ‘class’ of workers compelled to enter the exploitative realm of the labor market for their survival (proletarianism). The historical process of primitive accumulation thus refers to the violent transformation of noncapitalist forms of life to capitalist ones. (p. 7-8)

While Marx (1967) perceived primitive accumulation as inherently violent toward "immediate producers," including peasants and Indigenous peoples, one of his most important claims for critique is the notion that primitive accumulation is an "inevitable" and even "beneficial" part of the capitalist process (Coulthard, 2014, p. 10), "a historical stage, overtaken and superseded by the true, mature, general law of accumulation once a full and complete capitalist system is in place" (Nichols, 2020, p. 63). In other words, primitive accumulation is over with fully actualized capitalism.

Many scholars argue against the Marxist claim that primitive accumulation and dispossession are a stage before a fully perfected capitalist society. Federici (2004), Luxemburg (2015), Guha (1983), and Coulthard (2014), for example, all share the perspective and show evidence that capitalist dispossession and violence is still very much present in the global economy and societal processes today:

> A return of the most violent aspects of primitive accumulation has accompanied every phase of capitalist globalization, including the present one, demonstrating that the continuous expulsion of farmers from the land, war and plunder on a world scale, and the degradation of women are necessary conditions for the existence of capitalism in all times. (Federici, 2004, p. 12-13, cited in Nichols, 2020, p. 66)

In other words, capitalism depends on dispossession to exist and thrive.

David Harvey (2003) refers to primitive accumulation as "accumulation by dispossession" (p. 45). Capital accumulation "creates systemic inequalities (by dispossessing some to allow others and the system to accumulate)" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 100). According to Nichols, Harvey equates dispossession with "privatization" (Nichols, 2020, p. 67). Harvey defines privatization as:

> the transfer of productive public assets from the state to private companies. Productive assets include natural resources. Earth, forest, water, air … to snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history. (Harvey, 2003, p. 161)

Harvey also focuses on dispossession as the result of "colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources)" (p. 145) and "intellectual property rights" (p. 148). They describe the commodification of cultures and histories (such as the music industry) as causing dispossession of people from particular identities and knowledges. Harvey also critically draws attention to the role of the state in propelling processes of privatization at the expense of people's labor and resource autonomy (p. 148).

Coulthard (2014) shifts the discussion of primitive accumulation from a critique of capitalism to an argument that primitive accumulation and dispossession are entrenched in colonialism. According to Coulthard:

> A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of *domination;* that is, a relationship where power--in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power--has been structured into a relatively secured or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority. (2014, p.6-7, original emphasis)

Coulthard's perspective is important because while many Western scholars such as Marx refer to dispossession as a "separation-process that separated 'immediate producers' from direct access to the means of production" (Nichols, 2020, p. 27), specifically within capitalist society, Simpson draws our attention to the fact that "the opposite of dispossession is not possession, it is deep, reciprocal, consensual attachment" (Simpson, 2017, p. 43). In other words, the concept of the possession of property/land is not universal.

As Nichols (2020) points out, “millions of people on earth still do not consider the land to belong to them, but that they belong to it” (p. 151). They continue, instead of viewing land as conflicts over property distribution, “we must also think of them as struggles over the very meaning of the relationship between human societies and the broader ecological worlds in which they are situated.” Coulthard (2014) conveys this notion with their theory of “grounded normativity,” articulating that “Indigenous struggles against capitalist imperialism” should be interpreted as struggles of what land is and the meaning behind it. It is “deeply informed by what the land as a mode of relationship ought to teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, non-dominating and non-exploitative way” (p. 13). In this sense, dispossession is connected to colonialism because colonizing bodies not only displace Indigenous people from their land for territorial expansion and control, but also reify exploitative interactions with land in ways that separate Indigenous people from their particular relationships with land.

Conservation and Dispossession

Protected areas and other enclosures for environmental conservation have deep roots in violent dispossession. The 1964 United States Wilderness Act, which began the environmental conservation movement in the U.S., and spread globally, states that “wilderness is a place where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (as cited in Gomez-Pampa & Kaus, 1992, p. 272), with the exception of tourism (Buscher & Fletcher 2020, p. 14), perpetuating the global view of nature as an isolated space unaffected by humans, and propagating a false idea that humans are naturally damaging to the environment. The establishment of protected areas worldwide resulted in “the expulsion

of millions of conservation refugees globally," and Indigenous people forcefully evicted and excluded from lands for the sake of wildlife conservation (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 15). This notion that humans are damaging to the environment, unless regulated by the state or capitalist mechanism, changed the way we define landscapes and criminalizes those who use natural resources outside of hegemonic state policies.

Enclosure does not simply refer to "a physical fencing of land but the extinction of common and customary use rights on which many people depended on their livelihood" (Wood, 2002, p. 108). As a result, "many sacred natural sites that had been central to the well-being and worldviews of Indigenous and local communities were destroyed or left dysfunctional" (Verschuuren, 2016, p. 9). In discussing colonial ecological care, Nichols points out that the establishment of protected areas "risk[s] reifying 'nature' as a static object that can be protected and preserved rather than a dynamic set of living relations that exceed any particular legal codification, or as a 'subject' who must prove its worth through the moral evaluation of personhood" (Nichols, 2020, p. 157). Delgado Shorter reiterates this idea in criticizing the values assigned to natural resources and aesthetics. "Calling something 'spiritual' or 'sacred' to win a land claim in a colonial court of law is an absurd tactic as the precedent in American courts has tended toward the capitalist, and thereby object oriented, use and production of land for profit" (2016, p. 444).

In Sarawak, Malaysia where people and animals "survive an extractive economy with unequal exchange" (Parrenas, 2018, p. 133), Parrenas' *Decolonizing Extinction* discusses the concept of the "enclosure" in Sarawak, not only as a cause of human displacement and dispossession but also as a place of alleged refuge for the displaced.

Parrenas interweaves the narratives of dispossession for humans and non-humans, describing the enclosure (for conservation or wildlife rehabilitation) as "a shared interface of loss between displaced wildlife who have nowhere else to go and displaced people with few options but to work for wages to survive" (p. 18). In this sense, Parrenas proceeds to describe the enclosure--as a place of recovery and wage work--as a form of "arrested autonomy," or un-freedom under the guise of freedom. For orangutans at rehabilitation centers in Sarawak, arrested autonomy is the appearance of having the ability to roam freely, "but are actually constrained in a space shaped by colonial interventions on the land" (p. 23). For displaced Sarawakian people, it is the promise of independence while experiencing perpetual dependence on insufficient wage labor at the site of displacement (orangutan rehab centers). In sum, enclosures for conservation are "arrested decolonization in the face of ongoing colonialism when colonialism is supposed to be over" (p. 23).

Dispossession and World Heritage

The commodification of nature and culture contribute to Indigenous dispossession at World Heritage Sites in two ways. First, commodification causes dispossession because people are forced into exploitative colonial relationships with land that erases their own connections to land. Second, capitalism dispossesses people, as producers, from their subsistence or cultural product. In drawing connections between World Heritage and accumulation by dispossession, Salemink (2016), summarizes Harvey's (2005) idea that "heritagisation can be interpreted as another form of accumulation by dispossession in a neoliberalising world that attributes financial value … [to] everything" (Salemink, 2016, p. 339).

Salemink (2016) offers an example of how the commodification of culture dispossesses producers from product. They describe "heritagisation as disconnection" regarding the inscription of Vietnamese gong music on the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' (ICH) list. Salemink uses Debord's (2002) Marxist concept of 'spectacularization' to convey how the inscription of gong music on the World Heritage List resulted in the separation between the instrument or skill (object of knowledge) and the people who embody that skill. Haraway's concept of nature hegemony reflects Salemink's theory of heritage:

> [H]eritagisation constitutes an appropriation of the past and thus an attempt to control the future by certain elites that alienate other groups in the process, as well as an attempt to control the economic value of the commoditised heritage. (Salemink, 2016, p. 314)

While Haraway claims that local people lose ownership of situated knowledges for the advancement of hegemonic scientific and neoliberal processes. Salemink similarly argues that the process of heritagisation transfers ownership of the interpretation of the past to the most powerful and benefits a neoliberal agenda. In other words, the interpretation of the past--with heritage as the product--is the result of the "dominant system of production" (Salemink, 2016, p. 313; see also Debord, 2002).

Salemink further explains that heritage separates people from their culture in the same way that production is separated from consumption, or "Marx's alienation of workers from the product of their labour" (2016, p. 313). Haraway (1988) says that the object of knowledge, in order to be owned by the dominant knower and exploitater, cannot be treated as an agent (p. 592). According to Salemink, heritage is simply commoditized culture, and those who practice culture become spectacles to be consumed

(2016, p. 339). Put differently, when cultural practices become a part of official heritage discourse, cultural practitioners lose their agency and are portrayed as passive images of the past. Salemink also uses the term "narrative monopolisation" to describe heritage as an "attempt to control the future by certain elites at the expense of other (alienated) groups that become disconnected from the present and the future through the portrayal of them as the 'living past'" (p. 338). In the case of natural heritage sites where local narratives are often ignored entirely, the narratives of sites like Mulu Park become centered on the geological and ecological legacies valuable to Western science. Local narratives of interest to UNESCO and state parties, if any, are revalued as commodities and spectacles rather than active creators of narratives about the landscape and its meaning.

(Anti-)Politics of Recognition, Rights, and Participation

Significant opposition regarding the social consequences of protected environments led to international interventions outlining the rights of Indigenous peoples to their customary land and resources. International agreements such as the Earth Summit of 1992, stress the importance of the support and recognition of Indigenous peoples as distinct groups, and to recognize the value of local knowledge in sustainable resource management (Colchester, 2003). Initiatives that involve local/Indigenous 'inclusion', 'recognition', 'consultation', and 'co-management' (Coulthard, 2014; Youdelis, 2016) are commonly implemented into protected area management plans to meet the social needs of a development or conservation project.

However, these initiatives of inclusion serve to maintain current power structures. Even when Indigenous people and culture are included in protected area management, there is a focus on showcasing "*past* Indigenous land use [as a] tool that helps evade present-day Indigenous politics" (Youdelis, 2016, p. 1377, their emphasis; see also Cameron, 2008). As a result, the state is able to maintain the unequal colonial-capitalist relations between the state and Indigenous people. Scholars who critique anti-politics (Brosius, 1999b; Buscher, 2010; Ferguson, 1994; Myers et al., 2018; Youdelis, 2016) discuss the consequences of anti-politics in capitalist development and conservation projects, especially as a means to "improve the condition of the dispossessed" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 99). In this section, I discuss what anti-politics is and how it operates in conservation projects, including World Heritage, to reinforce existing inequalities and support neoliberal and neocolonial agendas.

Development and Anti-Politics

Anti-politics in development can be understood as problem-solving through technocratic means that separate political domains from organizational work. Ferguson in *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), argues that development interventions produce the "anti-politics machine, depoliticising everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power" (p. xv). Capitalist development projects amplify the power of the state, and use anti-political strategies by rendering issues, such as poverty, into issues with solutions that focus on "personal reform over political struggle" (Williams, 2004, p. 558). Ferguson states:

> By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the suffering of powerless and oppressed people, the

> hegemonic problematic of 'development' is the principle means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized in the world today. (Ferguson, 1994, p. 256)

Ferguson continues that by universalizing and mainstreaming development models, projects "can end up performing extremely sensitive political operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object" (p. 256). Buscher (2010) adds that this strategy is necessary in order for organizations "to justify their intervention" (p. 31-32).

Conservation and Anti-Politics

Many scholars assert that the theory of anti-politics in development also applies to environmental governance. International conservation and development agencies use anti-politics to "conceal ideological differences" to push conservation agendas that displace political and social ties to the work they do (Myers et al., 2018, p. 316). They avoid the moral/political aspects of environmental governance, potentially to "an extent that it is regarded as disruptive or irrelevant, or can no longer be heard at all" (Brosius, 1999b, p. 51). Li's study on conservation in Indonesia, for example, discusses what Li calls "rendering technical," the process in which "experts tasked with improvement exclude the structure of political-economic relations from their diagnosis and prescriptions" (Li, 2007, p. 7; see also Nadasdy, 2005).

Buscher (2010) discusses the role of neoliberalism in maintaining and increasing inequality in development initiatives in conservation. While Buscher recognizes that authority in development projects are not always "unilateral" or top-down, they argue that neoliberal, commoditized conservation settings are "convenient for those who start

from more advantageous positions of power," which actually "legitimates a further widening and entrenching of neoliberal/development interventions" (2010, p. 49). This is because, as Escobar (1995) argues, anti-political conservation regimes "structure and determine what constitutes valid knowledge about development, thereby replacing (local) alternatives, leading time and again to … the structural dominance of the first world over the 'third world'" (Buscher, 2010, p. 32). Buscher & Fletcher (2020) also note that conservation organizations "essentially seek to detach conservation from specific political, economic and social contexts and to advocate a universal blueprint of a classical protected area to ground conservation efforts throughout the world" (p. 91). In sum, "anti-politics in the context of neoliberalism puts both implementers and subjects of conservation and development projects under similar pressures to avoid the realm in which inequality could be addressed" (p. 48).

(Anti-)politics of Indigenous inclusion often appears in the form of "development," in which "organizations set up 'people-and-parks' or 'community' departments and started emphasizing the many benefits that communities can or should derive from conservation" (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 91). These benefits usually fall under the language of "participation," "recognition," "consultation," and the like (Coulthard, 2014; Youdelis, 2016). The language of inclusion allows environmental organizations to mitigate "social" issues involved in a project, while propelling their conservation agendas forward in a way that legitimizes their own knowledge and authority (Myers et al., 2018, p. 315). While capitalism is often the cause of poverty, inequality, and dispossession of Indigenous people, there is a "contradiction between the promotion of capitalist processes and concern to improve the condition of the

dispossessed" through capitalist means (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 99). For the reasons discussed above, neoliberal conservation initiatives, such as ecotourism and World Heritage (Larsen, 2012; Salemink, 2016; Trelka, 2020), perpetuate and exacerbate inequalities in favor of state and neoliberal agendas.

Coulthard (2014) conveys that the politics of recognition serve to reconcile historical colonial harm and displacement of First Nations people, but instead reproduces and supports the power of the Canadian nation-state. Youdelis (2016) articulates Coulthard's argument as follows:

> the very pursuit of recognition from a colonial oppressor is self-defeating, as First Nations have to implicitly concede that the Crown's sovereign reign over all lands in Canada is just and legitimate, and thus the Crown has the power to either bestow or disallow recognition (Youdelis, 2016, p. 1375).

Youdelis (2016) applies the politics of recognition to First Nations consultations at Jasper National Park. Youdelis explains that their approach to including First Nations' input into their management plans relies on "antipolitical strategies to produce the appearance of inclusion and to naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority in First Nations' traditional territories" (p. 1374). Youdelis concluded that the consultation forums established with Indigenous groups were ineffective because park management employed "strategies to neutralize political challenges" (p. 1381). The park's responsibility to consult was very loosely defined, and consultation was difficult and inconvenient for First Nations people to arrange. Further, these consultations only provided periodic opportunities to voice concerns, mostly after decisions were already made, and ultimately the "assumed superiority of scientific knowledge [was] presupposed" (p. 1387). The existence of the forum normalized and justified colonial hegemony (p. 1375), and left park inclusion efforts unquestioned. In other words, inclusion was a tool for silencing.

BINGOs and Anti-Politics

Neoliberal conservation initiatives from global organizations have consequences both for environmental destruction and human dispossession and inequality. Conservation giants such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) promote global approaches to environmental governance that elicit questions and grievances from local communities in and around protected areas (Chapin, 2004; Corson, 2011; Fairhead et al., 2012; Ojeda, 2013; Rocheleau, 2015). Multi-lateral governance involving neoliberal state and non-state actors can have harmful impacts on local communities, expanding private and international control of protected areas, while also claiming to be 'apolitical' or powerless to state processes (Chapin, 2004; Corson, 2011). Conservation organizations' indifference to social effects of protected area conservation perpetuates the displacement of Indigenous people and livelihoods in favor of global neoliberal conservation agendas. In this way, conservation appears to protect capitalism (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020).

Brosius (1999b) suggests that these organizations, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), are likely to take on the interests of states for the sake of moving conservation and sustainable development agendas forward. Brosius explores the interactions between local, state, and international relationships within the anti-logging movement in Sarawak, spearheaded by Penan who fought to defend their lands from deforestation. He argues that in the process of ameliorating conflict between the state and international environmental organizations that use Penan environmental campaigns to advocate for their own conservation agendas, these NGOs displace the

fundamental human rights and environmental issues in favor of the "contingent" (1999b). Processes of "sustainable development" and "sustainable forestry" were considered necessary strategies moving forward. Brosius explains:

> through the early 1990s a consensus began to build among Northern NGOs that they should move away from simple boycotts and instead participate in efforts to define sustainability, a strategy that would allow them to declare moratoria on timber that was not certified to have been sustainably harvested. (p. 44)

These organizations recognized that the only way to progress in their conservation agendas was to find ways to cooperate with state governments and timber corporations (p. 45). Brosius asserts that the problem with this approach is that the issues move "away from the moral/political domain and toward the domain of governmentality, managerialism, and bureaucratization" (p. 49). Through this process, what was initially a fight to secure Penan rights to land and livelihood, reverted back to top-down environmental governance to the advantage of the state and global economy.

Brosius (1993) further articulates that the "institutionalization" of environmental governance in this way generates "institutional deafness." He quotes Rappaport, defining institutional deafness as "the unwillingness or inability of authorities to understand messages encoded in terms other than those of the dominant economic discourse" (1993, p. 300, cited in 1999, p. 50). For example, NGOs such as IUCN may promote local and Indigenous actors to integrate into "statist projects of environmental governmentality." As a result, Indigenous actors are often marginalized in the anti-political process of joining environmental initiatives that use "affectless, faux-inclusive language of 'participation,' in which a range of 'stakeholders' are brought together to work toward the resolution of some environmental concern" (1999b, p. 50).

These processes of institutionalization of environmental governance "inscribe and naturalize certain discourses" and disregard others, and "often obstruct meaningful change through endless negotiation, legalistic evasion, [and] compromise" (Brosius, 1999b, p. 38). This is true both for post-colonial structures of environmental exploitation and for international initiatives working toward environmental conservation. Opportunities for change, equality, and Indigenous sovereignty are undermined in favor of external regimes of environmental governance that maintain current power structures and serve the neoliberal global economy.

World Heritage and Anti-Politics

UNESCO and the World Heritage system was founded on a mission to support marginalized groups disenfranchised by conflict or oppression (Meskell, 2013, p. 158). They purport to "adopt a human-rights based approach" (UNESCO, 2019, para. 12) to World Heritage management, and insist that local and Indigenous communities must have a "shared responsibility" in the protection of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO, 2019, para. 123). However, Pocock & Lilley (2017) assert that although the World Heritage system presents an "anti-colonial character" in their discourse and mission, "such anti-colonial sentiment and rhetoric does not extend to advancing Indigenous interests" (p. 175).

The Operational Guidelines for UNESCO's World Heritage program (OG)--which establishes guidelines and expectations for worldwide management of World Heritage Sites--states that World Heritage projects should "promote and encourage the effective, inclusive and equitable participation of the communities, Indigenous peoples and other stakeholders concerned with the property" (UNESCO, 2019, para. 119). State

Parties of the World Heritage Convention are encouraged to use this document as a reference, as it includes instructions for both submitting a property for nomination and guidelines for the management of sites. While the WHC began to urge States Parties to include Indigenous and local stakeholders in site management in 2011, Indigenous people were not mentioned in the OG until a document amendment in 2015 (UNESCO, 2015, para. 40 & 123). The WHC now advocates for local participation and approval of management decisions. The OG prescribes:

> States Parties to the Convention are encouraged to adopt a human-rights based approach, and ensure gender-balanced participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, Indigenous peoples, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties. (UNESCO, 2019, para. 12)

UNESCO acknowledges the importance of recognizing Indigenous people's intellectual and territorial rights.

IUCN also advocates strongly for Indigenous recognition and rights, as demonstrated in their conservation policies and practices (Trelka, 2020). The IUCN document, Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples, states, "Indigenous peoples are guardians and interpreters of their cultures, arts, and sciences and have the right to determine the 'traditional owners' of their own heritage" (Posey, 1996, p. 92). Trelka (2020) adds that IUCN policies give local communities and Indigenous peoples "equal footing with experts," instead of top-down management which often regards communities as "passive recipients of education programmes" (p. 105).

However, scholars criticize that despite organizational processes purported to include Indigenous communities, the World Heritage system fail to support Indigenous peoples in their pursuit of recognition, rights, and self-determination at sites (DeVries, 2014; Harrison, 2015; Logan, 2001; Meskell, 2012; Pocock & Lilley, 2017; Trelka, 2020). In fact, the term "local community" wasn't introduced to World Heritage until 2000, as a result of Indigenous peoples' concerns regarding lack of Indigenous representation and participation in decision making (Trelka, 2020, p. 103; UNESCO, 2000, Annex 5). During the 2011 session of the World Heritage Convention, "[a] decision was adopted urging States Parties to involve Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision making, monitoring and evaluation of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and their OUV" (Trelka, 2020, p. 105). Nevertheless, "the conceptual solutions proposed by academia and the heritage industry when analyzed on a case study basis have shown that influencing heritage practice is not enough" (Trelka, 2020, p. 105). Local inclusion was discouraged at the establishment of the WHC (UNESCO, 1994, para. 14), and later amendments to the Convention have arguably done little to reverse the original authoritative heritage discourse (Trelka, 2020, p. 111).

For example, Larsen (2012) conducts a study of IUCN's ability to monitor and evaluate States parties' inclusion of local/Indigenous rights in WHS management. He found that IUCN only offers technical support, and has no responsibility to evaluate or assess rights issues prior to IUCN's engagement with the WHS; that IUCN's engagement with rights issues is highly reliant upon reports of rights violations; and a "lack of a concrete set of policy principles and performance indicators on community and rights issues" for influencing WHS nomination decisions (Larsen, 2012, p. 11, 18; Trelka, 2020,

p. 111). In sum, guidelines and indicators for the fulfillment of Indigenous rights are ambiguous, and Indigenous peoples' rights do not play a part in determining the legitimacy of WHS nominations.

Similarly, the criteria for threats that put World Heritage Sites on UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger List (for both natural and cultural sites) all involve threats to the integrity of the physical property itself. None of the criteria include threats to people inside or surrounding the site (UNESCO, n.d. -e). In other words, while the World Heritage Committee can encourage state parties to advocate for local participation and the rights of local communities (within and surrounding sites), human rights and local politics are considered beyond the scope of UNESCO and IUCN's authority, and therefore irrelevant to their greater conservation agenda.

While the World Heritage system aims to be more inclusive, UNESCO and their advisory bodies dominate the World Heritage discourse and policy, which perpetuates Eurocentric, neocolonial environmental and cultural management schemes that they purport to dismantle (De Cesari, 2010, p. 301). There is still a sense of paternalism in heritage management and misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures (Meskell, 2013, p. 157). They employ "Authoritative Heritage Discourse," in which "heritage workers" have more decision-making authority at world heritage sites than local communities (Trelka, 2020, p. 101). Sites worldwide fail to consult Indigenous peoples in nomination procedures, struggle to give free, prior, and informed consent, and violate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Meskell, 2013; Pocock & Lilley, 2017). According to Meskell (2013):

> To date there is little official input from Indigenous authorities to the World Heritage Committee. Their primary involvement remains as stakeholders (named

> or not, consulted with or not) in the nomination dossiers or state of conservation reports prepared by States Parties and brought before the Committee. (p. 161)

The lack of Indigenous representation in World Heritage processes suggests that the politics of inclusion are little more than performative, serving to help retain the conservation project's legitimacy even when organizational intentions for local inclusion fail (Buscher, 2010). Pocock & Lilley (2017) sharply illustrate the World Heritage system as an outdated Western idea, with a fixation on "European and Orientalized non-European monumental heritage, a strong legacy of empire and colonialism," and the embodiment of top-down conservation governance (p. 172; see also Byrne 1991; De Cesari 2010; Harrison 2015; Logan 2001).

It is also important to note that, as an agency that works largely on the scale of the nation-states that apply for site nominations, discussions of World Heritage "tend to explicitly deny Indigenous concerns and, in some cases, to deny the existence of Indigenous people altogether" (Pocock & Lilley, 2017, p. 175). It is also noteworthy that often African and Asian state parties to the WHC who have most firmly retained and progressed an anti-Indigenous stance (Pocock & Lilley, 2017, p. 175; Logan, 2013; Meskell, 2013). The reason lies in one of the contradictions of the World Heritage mission. While the World Heritage system intends to tear down cultural boundaries, it actually reinforces tensions in cultural difference because nation-states use World Heritage to create a unified national narrative that often conflicts with Indigenous narratives. Indigenous narratives and claims of sovereignty and self-determination are commonly considered a threat to post-colonial non-Western states that have fought for their own national legitimacy (Pocock & Lilley, 2017, p. 175-6; Aykan, 2016; Harrison, 2010; Labadi, 2007; Lilley, 2000; Meskell, 2013). In effect, World Heritage constructs

and reinforces national heritage and neocolonial structures of governance that squander Indigenous peoples' pursuits of autonomy and self-determination (De Cesari, 2010; Pocock & Lilley, 2017).

Situated Knowledges and Universal Values

UNESCO World Heritage was established to promote universalism as part of a movement against racism, fascism, and other forms of ethnic violence. The World Heritage system relies upon the idea that universal human values exist in the world, and global acceptance of universal values validates the protection of properties that represent humanity on the international level (Di Giovine, 2009; Harrison, 2013). However, the concretization of UNESCO's Outstanding Univeral Values (OUV) risks overlooking values that are significant to human and non-human inhabitants at specific sites. In this section, I discuss how dominant Western discourses of nature serve to support the agendas of those in power under the guise of objectivity. I first address Haraway's (1988) argument that all knowledge is situated, followed by the role of universal ideologies in environmental governance (Sachs 2010), and how World Heritage synchronizes with these neocolonial forms of international governance (Pocock & Lilley, 2017; Santamarina & Beltran, 2016). I conclude with a critique of the World Heritage system's promotion of "reiterative universalism" (Harrison, 2013; Labadi 2013), which allows for culturally appropriate interpretations of OUV on the level of the nation-state.

In discussing neoliberal natures in relation to universal approaches to addressing climate change, Bee, Rice, and Trauger (2015) point out that "dominant approaches" to

these forms of environmental governance "often construct knowledge of the problem through narrowly defined scientific and technocratic means, rendering the issue as both universal and distant, instead of differentiated and embodied" (Bee et al., 2015). Rodriguez et al. (2007) similarly claim that BINGOs are ineffective at conservation because of their "generalized global approaches" (p. 755). Haraway (1988) exposes necessary ways of thinking that reshape the concept of nature, and reveals the significant political and material consequences of conceptualizing nature from Western/colonial perspectives. Haraway says, "boundaries in knowledge are theorized as power moves, not moves toward truth" (p. 576). In addition, Haraway refers to the proclaimed "objectivity" of Western science as a "God-trick," which they define as "seeing everything from nowhere" (p. 581). In other words, the "Western scientist continues to speak for the earth" (Escobar, 1995, p. 194).

Haraway's (1988) notion that all knowledge exists in situated ways, and her argument that Western science is a form of knowledge hegemony, contribute to the broader argument that the ideology and management of World Heritage works to advance a neocolonial agenda that separates marginalized people from their lands and knowledges for the benefit of power-laden systems. The World Heritage paradigm works as a form of knowledge hegemony. In particular, World Heritage holds "ideological underpinnings of the scientific project" (Haraway, 1988), categorizing and ranking places based on particular cultural or scientific significance. OUV nomination criteria and management guidelines establish order using Western ontologies and epistemologies to determine what is valuable enough to protect (Harrison, 2013). The OUV framework serves as what Buscher and Fletcher (2020) call a "universal blueprint of a classical protected area to

ground conservation efforts throughout the world" (p. 91), by defining the most objectively important places on the planet.

Universalism is "Eco-Colonialism"

"Eco-colonialism," as described by Wolfgang Sachs (2010), is a contributing factor in the spread of universal ideologies in environmental governance and World Heritage. The global solution of environmental destruction "calls for an outcome in which 'all peoples converge' into an 'ahistorical and delocalized universalism of European origin'" (2010, p. 114). Under the One World model of humanity, environmental issues call for international intervention and "political coherence which would match the biophysical interconnections" (p. 117). Similar to UNESCO's notion that social and economic progress is considered an urgent necessity to ensure peace among nations, strategies for the planet's survival takes priority over "political autonomy or cultural diversity" (p. 118). Sachs asserts:

> In the face of the overriding imperative to 'secure the survival of the planet', autonomy easily becomes an anti-social value, and diversity turns into an obstacle to collective action. Can one imagine a more powerful motive for forcing the world into line than that of saving the planet? Eco-colonialism constitutes a new danger for the tapestry of cultures on the globe. (2010, p. 118)

Buscher & Fletcher (2020) similarly point out that "the concept conceals the reality that different groups of people have vastly different environmental impacts behind the image of a generalized 'humanity'" (p. 4). They bring to light the weaknesses of generalizing one model of humanity and its impact on non-human natures. The World Heritage paradigm and mainstream conservation policies often utilize a one-size-fits-all model of conservation that obscures diverse ways of living and uneven impacts on the

environment. Eco-colonialism is an underlying process that characterizes World Heritage policies for protected area management, which prioritizes consolidated, centralized governance at the expense of situated livelihoods.

World Heritage as Knowledge Hegemony

The World Heritage system employs universality for its mission to promote peace, highlighting the world's similarities, as "a reminder of all that unites humanity" (Labadi, 2013). Borrowing Sachs' (2010) idea of eco-colonialism, World Heritage burdens humanity with an expectation that they must protect the earth in the same Eurocentric way. In thinking about the heritage phenomenon, it is crucial to understand the power of the World Heritage "experts" (UNESCO, IUCN, and State Party experts) as effectively disempowering non-dominant knowledge holders through the mask of objectivity. UNESCO's claim to objectivity through defining universal values works "to distance the knowing subject from everyone and everything in the interest of unfettered power" (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). In the context of a World Heritage Site, local knowledge holders, lose ownership of knowledge of a situated place (Heritage Site Mulu Park) for the sake of universalized hegemonic environmental governance of World Heritage as the best way forward for conservation and sustainable development.

At the core of the World Heritage system is the homogenizing idea that some places are so important that they "belong to all the peoples of the world" (UNESCO, n.d. d). However, Pocock and Lilley (2017) point out that this is all "despite the enormous cultural, historical and geographical diversity amongst which such sites are situated" (p. 172). Santamarina and Beltran (2016) describe heritagization as an act of "generating a

global and institutionalised system of, supposedly, unquestioned values" (p. 398). They go as far as to say that there is no "heritage object," only "heritagisation agents." In other words, heritagisation is socially constructed and creates "hierarchies, selection, ranking, and categorisation" for what should earn the heritage status. As a result, these "hegemonic distinctions become authorized heritage discourses" (p. 398).

The categorization and universalization of spaces produces the paradigms on which the World Heritage system was founded upon: the division between nature and culture, and the differentiation between "normalized knowledge and marginalized knowledge" (Santamarina & Beltran, 2016, p. 397). World Heritage institutionalizes a narrow Western perspective which values properties that fit the Western heritage ontology, while excluding and rendering invisible more localized significance (Harrison, 2013; Lundahl, 2017; Pocock & Lilley, 2020). By assigning ownership of particular places to a globalized community, World Heritage endangers Indigenous people's pursuits of sovereignty and self-determination (Cunningham, 2012; Dove, 2006; Pocock & Lilley, 2017).

"Reiterative" Universalism?

Many critical heritage scholars do not view UNESCO as a neocolonial superstructure of international environmental governance (Harrison, 2013). Sophia Labadi (2013) for example, argues that the Convention's implementation of OUV does not push purely universalist values onto state parties, but instead provides opportunities for "reiterative universalism" (Labadi, 2013, p. 18). "Reiterative universalism," in the context of the World Heritage Convention, is the incorporation of OUV with the relative values of state parties. State parties interpret and apply OUV through "one's own culture

and frame of reference to make sense" (p. 19). In other words, the Guidelines and OUV are meant to be applicable to all perspectives of heritage, and are not meant to be interpreted in any strict fashion. Labadi claims that, as a result, "the World Heritage Convention is thus not a neo-Orientalist or neo-colonialist system … Indeed, this system is above all the result of the visions and agendas of the States parties, and not of a monolithic or overbearing international structure" (Labadi, 2013, p. 20).

Put simply, Labadi argues that the notion that UNESCO controls the production of heritage knowledge assumes that States parties have no ability to adapt or redefine UNESCO's heritage concepts. The categorization of sites allows for those on the periphery of representation to appeal their exclusion, and holds UNESCO accountable to readjust their categories (Harrison, 2013). This relationship between the World Heritage Committee and States parties allows for communication and cooperation in a global effort to protect the world's most valuable sites. As critics and state parties continue to critique exclusion and alienation of cultures in World Heritage policy, UNESCO is devoted to constant improvement and inclusivity (2013).

This perspective absolves the World Heritage Committee of responsibility or political influence in the transfer of World Heritage ideals and practices onto national and local levels of environmental governance. While Labadi (2013) analyzes the translation of OUV to national levels of interpretation, she doesn't take into account the cultures that states intend to exclude. For example, as previously discussed, the Chief Minister of Sarawak described Penan as "animals in the jungle" (Brosius, 1999b, p. 39). The state of Sarawak generally does not see Penan as valuable members of their society. As UNESCO is a diplomatic agency that only works with nation-state parties, it is difficult for them to

account for the pieces of heritage that a particular country does not want to protect. In this sense, the World Heritage Committee enables the mistreatment of people and nature that states like Sarawak have no interest in protecting.

Conclusion

Post-Colonial Natural Resource Management (NRM) in Sarawak, theories of dispossession, neoliberal conservation, anti-politics, and feminist science studies contribute to a broader discussion about how World Heritage inscription perpetuates colonial legacies at Mulu Park. Scholars who discuss Post-Colonial NRM in Sarawak address the relationship between NRM and Indigenous land loss, Indigenous struggles, resistance and advocacy work with international conservation organizations in response to logging. However, the literature omits Indigenous dispossession and land loss due to protected area management in Sarawak. Furthermore, scholars like Peluso and Vandergeest (2001) offer analyses of post-colonial resource control, but do not account for the influence of international conservation superstructures such as UNESCO as a form of neocolonial environmental governance.

I argue that World Heritage reflects neoliberal conservation ideologies and management plans, resulting in the World Heritage program prioritizing capital accumulation over people. I frame UNESCO's World Heritage operation through the lens of dispossession, and show how colonial processes and neoliberal conservation projects often result in the misrepresentation of Indigenous narratives and livelihoods. Furthermore, I incorporate theories of anti-politics to explain the unequal inclusion of Indigenous people in conservation projects to which no one can object. Finally, I use

Feminist Science Studies and Haraway's (1988) concept of universal knowledge hegemony to argue that World Heritage pushes Western ontologies of nature and culture to advance a neocolonial agenda that separates marginalized people from their lands and knowledges. The theoretical frameworks discussed here situate Mulu Park within literatures which identify it as both a product of hegemonic neoliberal conservation and a producer of Indigenous dispossession. Mulu Park is a reflection of Sarawak's colonial history of environmental governance, and as a World Heritage Site, tells the nation's ideal story of economic progress and ecological gems, at the expense of Indigenous narratives.

Chapter 4: Methods and Methodology

After Sunday church with members of my host family, Mosen, Vina, and Jopi, I went for a walk with Wawan, one of my informants, in the forest surrounding the Long Iman village. We hiked to a waterfall while he pointed out different plants that Penan use for food, medicine, tools, and construction materials. Wawan explained that unlike the old-growth forest within the Mulu Park boundary, this is a secondary forest, regrowth from timber extraction in the twentieth century. The community want to protect it, but he worries that palm oil companies will destroy it all in the next few years, without consequence (personal communication, June 2, 2019). This go-along interview with Wawan was one of several ways that I learned about the narratives that Penan people tell about the land in order to answer my research questions:

1. What narratives do Penan, park management, and UNESCO World Heritage tell about the land in Mulu Park?
2. What are Mulu Park and the World Heritage program's roles in producing representations of nature and indigeneity, resulting in the misrepresentation of Penan narratives and continued dispossession of Penan livelihoods?
3. How does the World Heritage paradigm contribute to a neocolonial framework for environmental governance at Mulu Park?

In order to answer my first research question, I employed qualitative methodologies, interviews, and participant observation to understand the narratives that Penan, park staff,

and UNESCO tell about the landscape, and explore the varying representations of nature and indigeneity produced there. To answer my second and third questions, I used study-up methodology, interviewed dominant actors at the park and IUCN, and reviewed Mulu Park and World Heritage documents to determine the Mulu Park and the World Heritage program's roles in creating representations of nature and indigeneity that result in a neocolonial framework of environmental governance.

In this research, I used 3 methodologies. Study-up methodology is useful for this project, as this method is often used to study groups who wield power in society. It requires the use of "techniques of following actors, policies, etc., and relational situations in which mobilization and assemblages happen" (McCann & Ward, 2012). I also employed qualitative methodology because it involves participating in, observing, and inquiring into the lived experiences of the people affected by Mulu Park's reification of nature. Qualitative approaches provide the best context for issues of identity and experiences of space and place. My third methodology, Feminist methodology, is also essential to this project because it calls attention to situated knowledges and politics.

In May through June 2019, I conducted fieldwork at Mulu Park and surrounding Penan communities to find out what narratives the park management tells about the land compared to the narratives and values Penan locals describe regarding their home terrain. In 2020, I carried out archival analysis of Mulu Park and World Heritage documents and conducted remote interviews with IUCN and Mulu Park staff. My intent was to determine how conceptualizations of nature and indigeneity are understood and produced by UNESCO, and how their understandings contribute to the production of a neo-colonial national park management paradigm that misrepresents and/or excludes indigeneity

within and beyond the boundaries of the park. Because few data sets exist illuminating the differences between UNESCO and local Mulu residents' conceptualizations of nature, finding primary sources of data is the best method for understanding the lived experiences of people subjugated to the consequences of these discrepancies.

Methodology

Qualitative and Feminist Methodologies

Winchester & Rofe (2016) identify qualitative research in human geography as a methodological tradition "concerned with elucidating human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks," and aims to answer essential questions that address "social structures or … individual experiences" (p. 5). They emphasize the importance of addressing both individual experiences and the structures and processes that influence them. "Qualitative geographers must be aware that an overemphasis on structures and processes rather than individuals could lead to a dehumanized human geography" (p. 6). Specifically, human geographers tend to focus on the ways in which structures are "built, reproduced, and reified" (p. 6), while also acknowledging and highlighting that "individuals experience and understand the same events and places differently" (p. 7).

I used qualitative research methods because this research involves participating in, observing, and enquiring about the lived experiences of the people who are affected by global conservation governance. I intended to discern where UNESCO's conceptualizations of nature originated, how they are produced, and how they are translated and practiced in particular spaces. In addition, my research required that I

addressed differences in perspectives and experiences among various groups subject to conservation politics and practices. Qualitative methods in human geography provide me with the framework to observe experiences which "could not be analytically separated from the structures that form the context for [those experiences]" (p. 8).

Feminist methodology is also critical to my research because of its engagement with situated knowledges, particularly because it is based on the "liberation of subjugated knowledges" (Moss, 1993, p. 49). Similarly, Bee et al. (2015) explain that feminist methodology is important because it focuses on "the production of knowledge and feminist attention to everyday practice," and calls attention to everyday experiences as "the actual stuff of power and politics" in situated spaces (Bee et al. 2015). In relation to the science and politics of climate change, for example, they argue that focusing on situated experiences and knowledges reveal that neoliberal environmental policies "actually work to fix capitalist logics onto differently situated bodies." In other words, feminist methodology sheds light on the everyday, "which shifts the universal, depoliticized discourse to one of the particular and the political-economic" (2015).

Studying Up and "Studying Through"

Studying-up overturns the questions researchers often ask about the 'subordinate' and shifts the research focus to those subjects who wield power in society. Nader (1972) challenges "the abundant literature on the poor, the ethnic groups, the disadvantaged," and proposes that researchers "study the colonizers rather than the colonized, the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless" (p. 5). Studying-up is often used to study organizations, corporations, governments, and socioeconomic groups, their relationship to power, and to determine how policy is mobilized.

Most importantly, for the purposes of understanding the lived experiences of Penan and Berawan subjected to Mulu Park management, it is crucial to examine the state and international bodies that normalize and enforce neoliberal governance of nature. In other words, we must study "bureaucracy and its culture" (p. 11). Nader adds, "the conservatism of such major institutions and bureaucratic organizations probably has wider implications [for social science theories] than for conservatism of peasantry" (p. 6). To ask questions only about the marginalized would produce wildly incomplete presumptions about mechanisms of society, and often serve to "help manipulate rather than aid those we study" (p. 11). McCann & Ward call attention to the idea that the increasing focus on the "movement and mutation of policies" means that we must understand "how researchers might best move *with* the 'transfer agents' and other policy actors who produce, circulate, mediate, modify, and consume policies through their daily work practices" (McCann & Ward, 2011, p.46, their emphasis). I intend to utilize studying-up to understand how UNESCO's conceptualizations of nature and culture inform environmental policy.

However, the mobilization of policies between multiple powerful institutions as they trickle down to practice is complex. Studying-up alone is not enough to observe the movement of environmental ideals and conservation policy globally. Furthermore, some critical heritage scholars assert that to peg UNESCO as a hierarchical structure above the state members of the World Heritage Convention would be a simplification and misrepresentation of the institution (Di Giovine, 2009; Labadi, 2013). Studying UNESCO as an overarching global regime would disregard the authoritative roles of state parties in nature-culture knowledge production, translation, and policy implementation.

Therefore, in addition to studying up, I intend to engage in 'studying-through', which entails "tracing ways in which power creates webs and relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space and following the source of a policy—its discourses, prescriptions, and programs—through to those affected by the policy" (Wedel et al., 2005, cited in McCann & Ward, 2011, p. 40). In my research I trace the formulation and application of the nature-culture ontological binary between UNESCO and the Sarawak Forestry Department beneficiaries.

Archival Analysis

I conducted archival analysis of UNESCO's World Heritage nomination criteria, Outstanding Universal Values, World Heritage Operational Guidelines, and evaluation reports of Mulu Park. I also reviewed Sarawak Forestry's conservation policies and Mulu Park's application and management plan for World Heritage nomination. This method is a useful way to theorize how values and perceptions of nature and culture circulate, and how Mulu Park management applies these policies. Through these documents I "studied up" and through the archives of UNESCO's neocolonial heritage paradigm that defines and shapes nature conservation politics and practices.

I used Stoler's (2009) approach to archival analysis, "archiving-as-process rather than archives-as-things," to understand the kind of work UNESCO does through "the principles and practices of governance lodged in particular archival forms" (p. 20). I also looked at UNESCO documents through Stoler's lens of colonial archives as a tool and product of "epistemological and political anxieties" (p. 20). Stoler explains:

> … epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order, because papers classified people, because directives were properly acknowledged, and because colonial civil servants were schooled

> to assure that records were prepared, circulated, securely stored, and sometimes rendered to ash. (2009, p. 1)

In other words, colonial ontologies were assembled in documents to solidify their control. UNESCO, I speculate, is no exception. UNESCO was created after World War II as a response to the destruction of cultural artifacts and architecture during the war. One might say that the process of developing agreements and guidelines to protect the works of the imperial world is a result of the epistemic anxieties that Stoler describes. Further, the World Heritage List itself can be interpreted as an archive of colonialism's most prized possessions all over the world, and forms the epistemological and geopolitical boundaries of the spaces worth protecting.

Data Collection and Methods

I received funding from the Office of Global Engagement at the University of Georgia, a research permit from the Sarawak Forestry Department, and University of Georgia IRB approval (PROJECT00000406) to conduct fieldwork at Gunung Mulu National Park from May through June 2019. I sought to find out how Mulu Park's conservation practices impose limits to residents on "the possible ways of being and becoming in the world by establishing normative meanings, attitudes, and practices" (Hay, 2016, p. 305). This endeavor required multiple data sources and qualitative research methods. These sources included residents and leaders of communities in the Mulu area, Mulu Park administrative staff and tour guides, and guesthouse owners. I conducted participant observation of visitor experiences, 'Go along' interviews on park tours and with Penan residents in their communities, and unstructured interviews with

Penan community members at Long Iman and Batu Bungan (Figure 4.0) about land features of importance and memory inside the park border (Table 4.0).

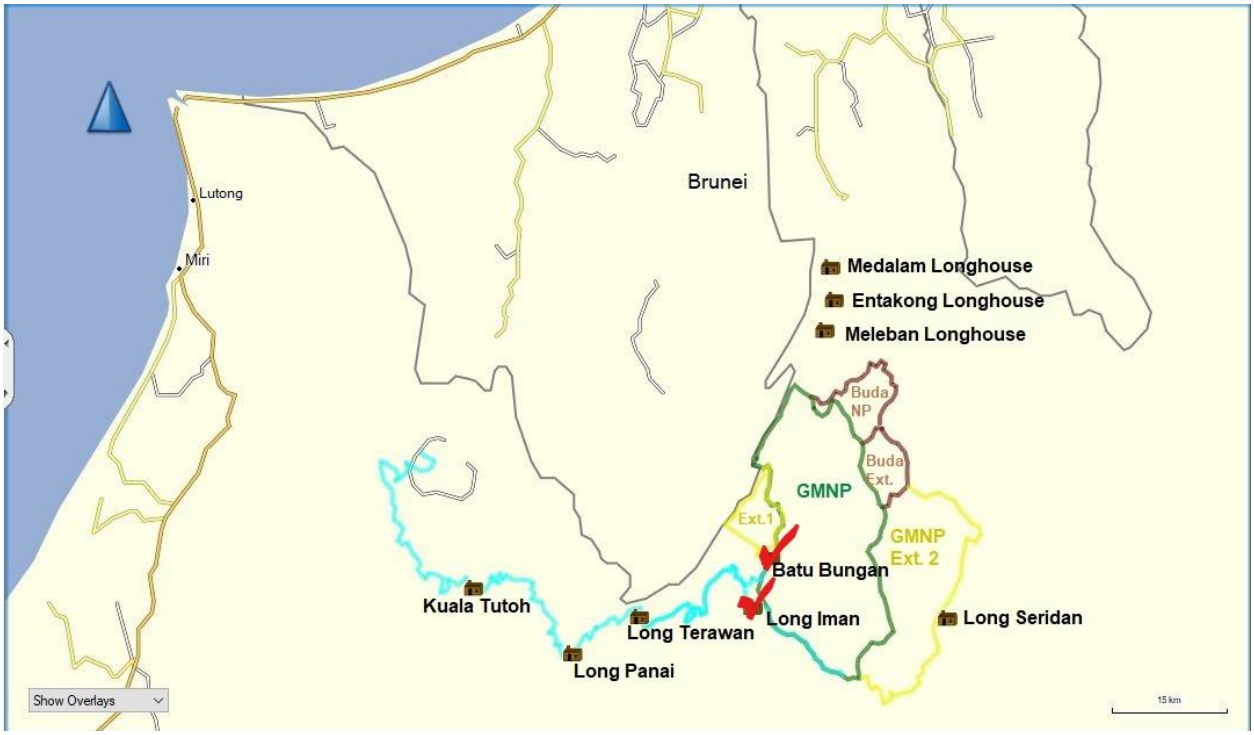


Figure 4.0: Local Communities around Gunung Mulu National Park (GMNP) (Walsh, email communication, June 19, 2020; red checks added to show communities I visited)

Table 4.0: Interviewees

Name	**Location**	**Description**	**Interview**	**Language of Interview**	**English Language Translator**
Balqish	Long Iman	Middle-aged Penan woman; expert knowledge about edible and medicinal plants	Go-along interview in medicinal garden	Penan	Vina
Cara Walsh	Mulu Park	Community Education and Research Liaison Officer at Mulu Park; origin unknown	Email interview	English	
Chris	Batu Bungan	Penan male adult; freelance tour guide	Semi-structured interview	English	

Christine Gomez	UK	IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer	Zoom interview	English	
David	Long Iman	Penan male approx. 30 years old; freelance tour guide	Go-along interview in forest at night	English	
Dimas	Batu Bungan	Penan male elder; leader in Batu Bungan community; land activist	Semi-structured interview	Penan	Chris
Erik Bauer	Mulu Park	Middle-aged male from South Africa; Mulu Park Manager	Email interview	English	
Kus	Long Iman	Penan middle-aged male; land activist	Semi-structured interview	Penan	Wawan
Mosen	Long Iman	Penan middle-aged male; leader in Long Iman	Semi-structured interview; let me stay in his home	Penan & Malay	David
Nanik	Long Iman	Penan elder woman; musician	Unstructured interview	Penan	Vina, David
Samuel	Mulu	Berawan middle-aged male; homestay owner	Unstructured interview	English	
Vina	Long Iman	Penan woman approx. 30 years old; owns weaving shop	Unstructured interview; let me stay in her family home	English	
Wawan	Long Iman	Penan middle-aged man; freelance tour guide; land activist	Go-along interview in forest	English	
Tourists	Mulu Park	3 adults; from European countries	Informal interviews	English	

Mulu Park Methods

I participated in ‘go along’ interviews of 4 tours led by tour guides employed by Mulu Park. ‘Go-along’ interviews are used in qualitative geographic research because they provide “spatial cues that stimulate discussion and reveal much about the relationship between location and subjectivity” (Anderson, 2004; McMorran, 2012, p. 3).

I chose to attend the most popular and accessible tours because I wanted to know which information and experiences were reaching the widest audiences. 'Go along' interviews gained traction as a qualitative research method due to the logic that "the experience of investigation proves that an in-depth interview only takes its actual meaning in 'context', meaning the place and time of the interview" (Beaud, 1996; Mahoudeau, 2017). The 'go along' interview "is less a conversation than an observation," in that it allows for a more natural encounter within the social and spatial context. They are also advantageous for fieldwork because they produce opportunities for easily formulated information (Mahoudeau, 2017). The 'go along' interview is the most organic approach to collecting data at national parks because the majority of the park experience involves guide-visitor interactions while moving through the landscape.

I participated in 4 tours at Mulu Park: Clearwater Cave and Cave of the Winds Tour, the Night Walk, Garden of Eden Tour (Deer Cave), and the Canopy Walk. I also took advantage of unguided hikes and activities. I chose to participate in these tours because they were the most popular and accessible tours at the park, with tours running almost daily and manageable for most fitness levels. This means that the information shared on these tours reach the widest audiences. All of these tours I attended were led by Berawan guides employed by the park, and between 6-12 tourists participated in each. One of the tours included a visit to the Penan "Handicraft Market" in the Batu Bungan community, where Penan residents (men, women, and children) sold handicrafts to the passing tourists. I participated in two self-guided activities: one hike to a waterfall and one sighting of the "bat exodus," the place where visitors can witness millions of bats stream out of the mouth of Deer Cave every evening at sunset. Participatory observation

as a tourist in the park was useful for gaining insight into what administrators and staff want visitors to understand about the park. Visitors' experiences reflect the administrators' priorities, mission, and future objectives. I looked deeper into the information provided to me as a visitor to discern for whom the park was established and meant to benefit.

Using archival research methods, I examined the park's public content including educational information, advertisements, and recreational activities offered to visitors. My intention was to determine the degree of UNESCO's presence at Mulu Park through its website, brochures, visitor maps, and recreational activities. Specifically, I wanted to know if, and to what degree, park materials and activities reflect the World Heritage OUV for which this World Heritage Site was nominated.

Local Community Methods

In order to find out what narratives locals tell about the land, I asked Penan community members about places of importance within the park boundary. With permission from village headmen, I conducted 7 unrecorded, unstructured interviews in Batu Bungan and Long Iman to learn about their perspectives on the land and how it is important to them. The purpose of my interviews was threefold: to find out about community relations with Mulu Park management, to ask about places of memory and significance within park boundaries, and to participate in the tourism opportunities led by Penan in their community. I attempted to grasp as much information as possible with the least amount of interference into their lives, and made an effort to contribute to the local economy as a tourist as much as possible to offset any disturbance I may have caused in

taking up their time. I also paid each of my interviewees and translators between 20-100 ringgit (or between 5-20 USD).

When I first arrived in the Mulu area, I used the snowball effect to recruit participants for my interviews, asking members of each community to initially identify potential respondents. Most of these initial contacts I employed as translators for the interviews. I conducted my fieldwork within 2 Penan communities just beyond the Mulu Park boundary. Each interview or activity took between 1-2 hours, either in someone's home or walking in the forest or around the community garden. These interviews were informal, with a translator if needed, and I took notes while the respondents spoke. My questions were largely dependent on the individual with whom I was speaking, as the purposes of each interview varied. I use pseudonyms for both in person interviewees and email correspondents in my thesis to follow IRB privacy and confidentiality protocol (PROJECT00000406).

I spent one day at Batu Bungan, the Penan community on the Melinau River closest to Mulu Park headquarters, including the Handicraft Market where park visitors receive guided tours. I conducted a joint interview with a community leader, Dimas, and his son Chris, a freelance tour guide at the park. Chris translated for his father (personal communication, May 27, 2019). Next, I spent one week at Long Iman, a Penan community on the Tutoh River several miles up-river from park headquarters. I conducted 3 semi-structured interviews and participated in 2 'go along' interviews with community leaders and respected community members. I interviewed Wawan, a man who gave me a tour of the surrounding forest; Balqish (with Vina as translator), an older woman with knowledge of plants and their practical and medicinal uses; Nanik, an

elderly woman skilled at Penan musical instruments (Vina and David as translators); Vina, a 30 year old woman who owns a business selling traditional Penan weavings in the city of Miri; David, a freelance tour guide; and 2 community leaders, Kus and Mosen (with Wawan and David as translators).

World Heritage and Park Management Methods

I again received funding from the University of Georgia Office of Global Engagement and a research permit from Sarawak Forestry for additional fieldwork in the summer of 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I found alternative ways to conduct the second stage of my research. This stage of my research involved archival analysis of Mulu Park and World Heritage documents, including the Mulu Park management plans, the UNESCO State of Conservation reports for Mulu Park, the IUCN periodic reports for Mulu Park, the World Heritage Criteria for Selection for the nomination to the World Heritage List, the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention, and IUCN World Heritage Outlook website materials.

I also conducted remote interviews with Mulu park administrative staff and an IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer. During all interviews, I used the snowball method to ask for referrals of other potential informants privy to my research. For the IUCN interview, I searched for contact information on the IUCN and UNESCO World Heritage websites, and emailed staff to request remote interviews. I chose to email contacts who had knowledge and responsibility in World Heritage Site nomination, monitoring and evaluation processes. I also chose staff who work most closely with World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia. I conducted a Zoom interview with IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer Christine Gomez (May 6, 2020). The interview was not

audio or video-recorded because she denied consent. Gomez's main role was to support the monitoring of natural World Heritage Sites, so we discussed the IUCN Outlook monitoring and evaluation process, stakeholders included in evaluations, and other ways in which IUCN contributes to the valuation and management of sites.

I also emailed Mulu Park administrative staff to request remote interviews. I conducted email interviews with the Mulu Park manager Erik Bauer to discuss how World Heritage influences park management plans and guidance. I also conducted an email interview with the park's Community Education and Research Liaison Cara Walsh to discuss the park's local community inclusion practices. My intention for the archival analysis and interviews was to understand IUCN and UNESCO's role in World Heritage Site management and the organizations' discourse surrounding local involvement in park decision-making. These methods were useful for understanding organizational impacts on Mulu Park management and their potential effects on local politics.

The Sarawak government has a reputation for neglecting the rights of marginalized Indigenous populations, so I conducted these interviews and carried out archival analysis of park and UNESCO/IUCN documents to gain a better understanding of how world heritage and Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) impact the conservation and management of Mulu Park. I focused on how UNESCO, a leading international super-structure of conservation, scientific and cultural knowledge, contributes to Indigenous dispossession, and how universalizing values in "natural" heritage produce conservation interventions that normalize the organization's own environmental values in diverse worldwide contexts.

Chapter 5:

Results Part I: Discrepancies in Penan and Park Narratives

"You can still find sago at Long Besanan. My uncle was buried there. Palm oil has already compromised half of the area. It is still a threat." -Kus

I hitched a ride on a longboat up the Tutoh River to Long Iman, a Penan community 45 minutes south of park headquarters. When we arrived on the bank of Long Iman, the guide told everyone to notice how brown and muddy the river looked compared to the same river closer to park headquarters (Figure 5.0). He explained that the murkiness of the water is from soil erosion due to deforestation from palm oil plantations in the area**.** The river was clearer before palm oil production in the region. As a result, catching fish became more difficult, and the river is at risk of being poisoned from oil palm pesticides.

Figure 5.0: *Muddy Tutoh River* (DeLoach, 2019)

Around 300 people called Long Iman home, and a dozen of them were employed at Mulu Park. Many of the residents lived part-time in the city of Miri, where they worked. The younger kids went to the elementary school at Batu Bungan (about 45 minutes away by longboat), while high school students went to a boarding school about 2 hours away by longboat. The community consisted of a longhouse, housing close to 30 families, and about a dozen free-standing houses surrounding it. There were bathhouses behind each longhouse apartment. Behind the bathhouses were pig and chicken pens, and beyond that were the paddies where they grow rice in September and harvest in February. It was a school holiday for the children, so many were playing on the volleyball court. I stayed with a community leader, Mosen, his daughter Vina, and Vina's 2-year-old son, Jopi. The purpose of my visit to Mulu Park and Penan communities was to find out what narratives Penan people and park officials tell about the land, and how Penan narratives are excluded from the park.

Figure 5.1: Long Iman (DeLoach, 2019)

Contradictory Narratives

Penan Narratives Reflect Ways of Life

Penan are traditionally a nomadic hunter-gatherer people. While there are arguably fewer than 200 nomadic Penan left in Sarawak, the settled Penan surrounding Mulu Park still view their historic nomadism as a significant part of their identity (Langub, 2011). This was clear in my observations and interviews with residents of Long Iman. During go-along interviews with a freelance Penan tour guide named Wawan, a woman knowledgeable of medicinal plants named Balqish, and a musically skilled elder named Nanik, I found that their narratives of the forest reflected ways of life that were important to them, both individually and as a collective Penan heritage, in the past and present.

For Wawan, the forest is essential for all aspects of Penan daily life, and he expressed concern about deforestation threats. Wawan spoke English, so no translator was needed. Wawan took me on a hike to a waterfall, and told me about hunter-gatherer lifeways while pointing out different forest materials that Penan people use (Figure 5.2). For example, he explained which trees have the best wood for building huts, and which leaves were used for the roof to shelter them from the rain. He emphasized the importance of these huts for both nomadic life and death. Families would live in these huts for weeks or months at a time, then migrate in particular patterns. He explained that when a person dies, they leave their body in the hut and move camp, never to return, signifying a burial ground not to be disturbed. He pointed out edible flowers, ferns, and fruit trees (personal communication, June 2, 2019).

Figure 5.2: A walk with Wawan (June 2, 2019)

Wawan described our surroundings as a secondary forest. The primary forest was logged in the 20th century and the area was mostly regrowth. However, he explained that palm oil companies are likely to buy out Long Iman and the surrounding rainforest within the next few years. While Long Iman is considered Native Customary Rights land (NCR), the status holds very little merit without a land title. He told me about his work with international NGOs to protect Penan land against government-supported oil palm plantations, but he expressed fear for the future of Long Iman and the forests surrounding Mulu Park.

To Balqish (personal communication, June 5, 2019), the medicinal plant expert, the forest sustains health and vitality. With Vina as translator, Balqish walked me through her garden and the edges of the community, identifying medicinal plants and the ailments that they treat. She named plants that treat and cure everything from nose bleeds to

cervical cancer. Nanik, the musician, explained the inextricable connection between the forest and music. She told me a person would play the *oreng*, a pencil-sized flute with a string taut against the length, if they were lost in the forest. If they got lost, it was because a spirit made them lose their way. They would need to play the *oreng* and then leave a similar-sized stick behind so that the spirit would try to use the stick to imitate their music and become distracted. Only after that would they find their way home. The *keringut* is a nose flute used to communicate through the forest to those whom they miss. Nanik said that she was saddened that very few people know how to play these instruments anymore (personal communication, June 6, 2019).

Reflecting on the Past

My informants described the forest's importance both in terms of their livelihood and as a vital component of their identity and memory (Vina, Mosen, Kus, personal communication, May-June 2019). Community members of Long Iman mentioned historical events, trading points, burial grounds of loved ones, places of discovery, and legends. For example, an elder and leader in the community, Mosen, described collective memory and identity associated with the forest. He said, "this land is important to us because we've been here forever. We originally began right here on the Tutoh River, and divided and spread out looking for rhino." He said this is the story of how the different Penan lineages formed (personal communication, June 3, 2019). Vina one day reminisced about her childhood when her grandparents would take her on trips in the forest. She said sometimes people of the older generation would take 1-2 week trips in the rainforest to collect fruit or sago. They would build huts and sleep on the hard raised floor made of

sticks. “I would wake up stiff and sore but it didn’t matter because it was so much fun,” she said. Vina said she missed those times when her grandparents were alive. She explained that very few people take these trips now because they have better access to rice than sago palm, and can import tapioca sago (personal communication, June 4, 2019).

Nanik and Mosen told me about the *kubu*—the location for the *tamu*, a trading point on the Tutoh River. They reflected on their experience growing up attending the *tamu*, where Penan would meet government workers every 3 months to trade goods. They traded woven baskets, mats, *damar* (tree resin for marine varnish) with the government in exchange for sugar, salt, fabric, guns, and other supplies (Nanik, personal communication, June 6, 2019; Mosen, June 3, 2019). Mosen remembers how big the cigarettes were, that they had to roll it in a leaf. It usually took Penan one month to travel to and from the *kubu*, but they stopped and spent time at many familiar camps along the way. On a longboat ride, Mosen pointed to the bank of the Tutoh where the *kubu* used to be, but there was no evidence of it.

My informants also talked about rivers and other landmarks, their names, and the meanings behind the names. Most of these names signify the area’s subsistence use or personal and collective memories. According to Mosen, Penan have names for every single river they encounter (personal communication, June 3, 2019). Rivers are vital for navigation, memory, and subsistence (Langub, 2011). Another informant, a community elder named Kus, described a sharp “V” between mountain peaks visible from Long Iman. He said he would always fish in view of that “V”. “You see the 2 mountains and know where you are between the Tutoh and Melinau rivers,” he explained. Mosen also

told me the stories behind the names of rivers and landmarks. *Ba Rupa* (*ba* meaning "river") is a river where Penan would collect fruit. They harvested bamboo along *Ba Bolo* (*bolo* meaning "bamboo"). He explained that *Ba Apoh* means "river of sago powder," because a long time ago some Penan were carrying sago powder and accidentally dropped it in this river. Kus described the importance of sago palm in their diet. Mosen told me the story behind the Tutoh River, named in honor of a fight to protect their territory (personal communication, June 3, 2019).

Place Names

Mosen told me the story behind the main river inside the park where tourists cruise by longboat for the Clearwater Cave and Cave of the Winds Tour. Mosen said the Melinau River was named after a beautiful Penan woman who bathed in that river, named Linau. Similarly, Mosen described the legend of Bungan, a beautiful woman spirit whom no man could attract. A man shot her with a blowpipe, and she went into the limestone cliffs across the Melinau River to die. It was believed that the spirit of Bungan comes to some men in their sleep and gives them the power to attract any woman they wish. Batu Bungan, the Penan community where tourists visit the handicraft market, is the site of the Bungan legend.

Kus listed other place names: *Ba Paku* (*paku* meaning "fern") is a river inside Mulu Park where Penan would harvest ferns on the banks (Figure 5.3). While visitors cross *Ba Paku* on tours, guides do not mention its significance. Kus said that growing up he lived close to Deer Cave, currently a popular tourist attraction in the park, because there were many sago palm trees in the area to harvest. Sago is more difficult to access

within the park because of foraging restrictions, and is threatened by palm oil deforestation outside of the park (Kus, personal communication, June 2, 2019).

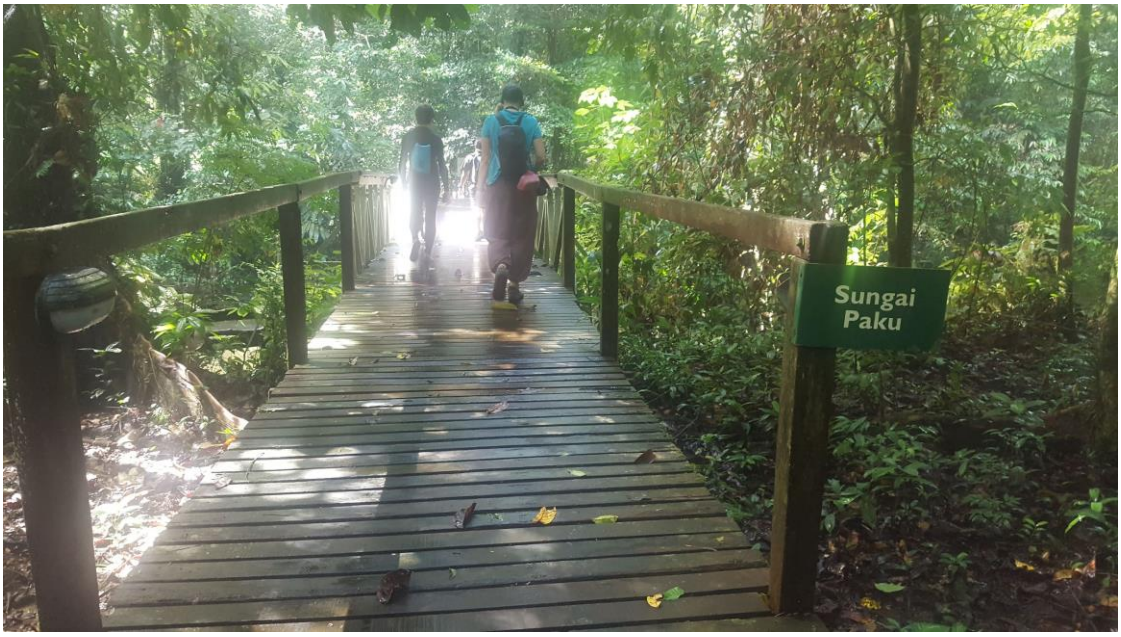


Figure 5.3: Crossing Sungai/Ba Paku *(Fern River)* on tour (DeLoach, 2019)

Deer Cave, or *Luvang Payau*, was named because a Penan person saw a deer leap into the cave. Kus explained that Lang Cave, or *Luvang Lang* in Malay and *Luvang Palakei* in Penan, was discovered by another Penan, meaning Eagle Cave. He described a similar story with the discovery of Cave of the Winds. Penan discovered the cave while paddling down the Melinau River. They felt a strange breeze coming from the forest and went to investigate. They found the cave and named it *Luvang Kapu*, or Cave of the Winds. He also mentioned a cave visible from Camp 5, a cabin where overnight hikers sleep. At the park it is known as Tiger Cave. Penan call it *Luvang Tepun*, or Tree Leopard Cave. Kus said that a Penan saw a leopard jump into the cave while they were hunting. As the story goes, if you take fruit from around the cave, the leopard will find and eat you (Kus, personal communication, June 2, 2019).

Both Kus and Mosen described the story of Mount Mulu (*Gunung Mulu*), the mountain after which the park is named, and a challenging summit trek offered to tourists. However, Penan do not call this summit Mulu. Penan call it *Belukih Mohong*, which Kus translated it as "crouching" summit, or to lay on one's stomach, because it looks like a predator ready to pounce. The mountain's two different names reflect a disconnect in narratives between the park and Penan people.

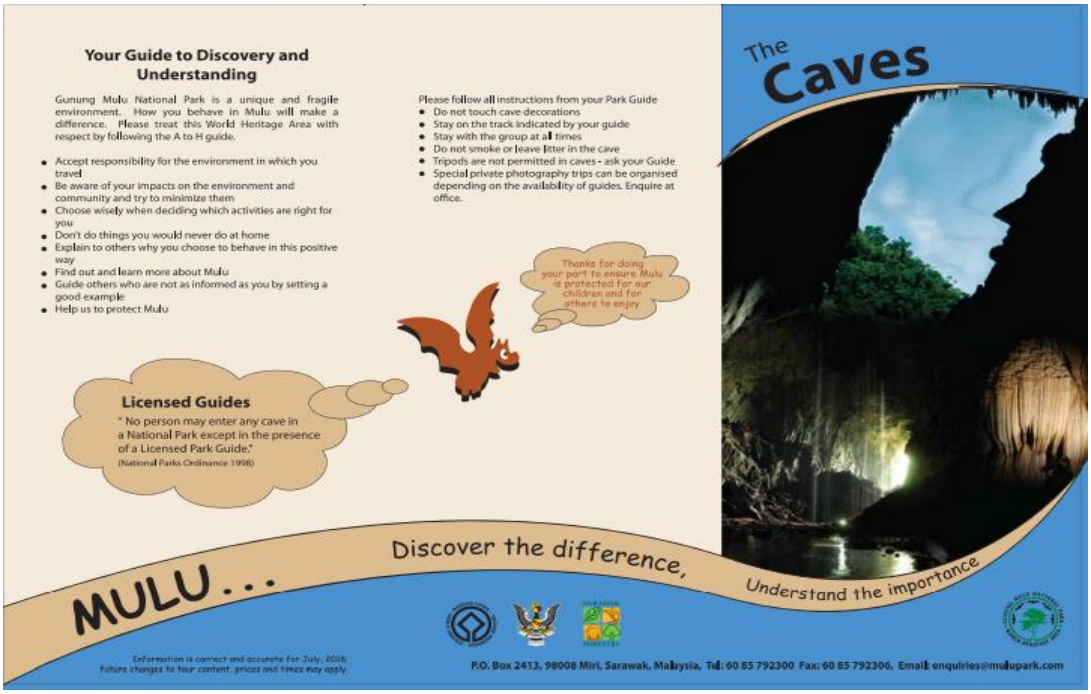
Park Narratives Reflect World Heritage "Natural" OUV

Immediately upon arrival at Mulu Park, I could see the walls of the modest airport lined with photographs from the 1977 Royal Geographical Society's Mulu Expedition, which drove Mulu's nomination to the World Heritage List, and shaped the justification for its protection (Hanbury-Tenison, 2017). Signs and banners at the park headquarters list the World Heritage OUV criteria for which the park was nominated, displaying the UNESCO World Heritage brand as a symbol of the park's distinction on the world stage. As Mulu Park was nominated as a "natural" heritage site, no cultural OUV criteria were listed or recognized.

I went to the information office for brochures of available tourism opportunities. I picked up "The Adventures," describing adventure caving, "Guided Walks" and "Unguided Walks" for hiking, "Caves" for easy-access show caves (Figure 5.4), "The Pinnacles" for a challenging 2-day trek to spectacular limestone formations, and a "What is World Heritage" brochure describing UNESCO World Heritage and Mulu's OUV. The World Heritage brochure explained the criteria for which this site was nominated and talked about biodiversity and geomorphology. Each other brochure showcased the

different opportunities to see these features of the park. The cover of each brochure framed the slogan, "Understand the Importance," conveying that these elements of the park are important for "all humankind." All of the tourism opportunities listed in the brochures were related to the "natural" World Heritage values for which Mulu Park was nominated for the World Heritage List. The park did not display any brochures for opportunities to learn about local history, or culture values, and none of these documents mention the local or cultural significance of these natural features. Through these brochures, banners, and displays, park management clearly informs visitors which aspects of the park they think are important to emphasize and protect.

I took a walk through the Mulu Park Gallery, which is the museum located in the park headquarters building. The museum showcased displays charting and describing ecological and geological processes that happen in the park, especially the processes that



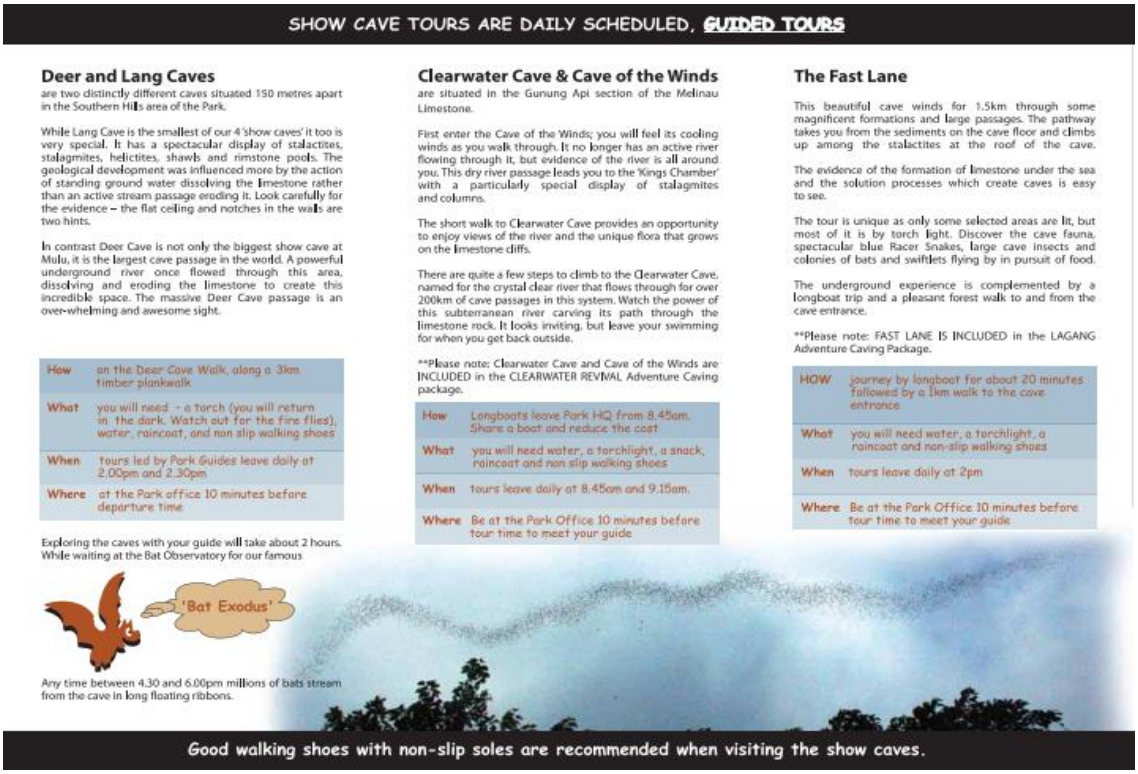


Figure 5.4: "The Caves" Brochure (https://mulupark.com/plan-your-trip/)

earned Mulu its World Heritage status. The first room when I entered the Gallery displayed photographs of Penan from the 1970s Royal Geographical Society Mulu Expedition, describing Robin Hanbury-Tenison's relationship with Penan people and how they helped him with his scientific discoveries (Figure 5.5). All of the other rooms in the Gallery were intended to be scientifically educational about natural processes (Figure 5.6). The museum perpetuated the nature-culture dichotomy driven by mainstream conservation (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020) and UNESCO World Heritage, separating Penan and the "scientific" aspects of the landscape. The Gallery depicted a narrative in which Penan were part of the park's beginnings, but do not have an important place in it now.

Figure 5.5: First gallery room (DeLoach, 2019)

Figure 5.6: One of the rainforest rooms in the Gallery (DeLoach, 2019)

Cultural Significance of Tourism at the Park

One early morning at Mulu Park, I signed up for the Clearwater Cave and Cave of the Winds Tour. We started early in the morning on the Melinau River and stopped at Batu Bungan to visit their handicrafts market where Penan women, men, and children

sold keychains, jewelry, blowpipes, woven mats and baskets made from forest rattan, and other handmade traditional Penan goods (Figure 5.7). There were information boards in front of the market describing Penan culture and history, including a version of the Legend of Bungan. The panels were text heavy, troublesome to read, and full of scratches and cracks (Figure 5.8). Our guide did not summarize or explain anything displayed on the boards. After the tour, I asked a tourist what he thought about the market. He replied that he wished he knew more about local people and culture, that the handicraft market made him uncomfortable: he said, “I thought, who are they? Why are they here? Why don’t we know?” I asked him if he read the information boards. He shrugged his shoulders in dismissal, “I wasn’t impressed.” While my Penan informants described the significance of these places in their culture and history, Mulu Park included Penan in ways that their culture could only be seen through capitalist consumption.

Figure 5.7: Batu Bungan Handicraft Market (DeLoach, 2019)

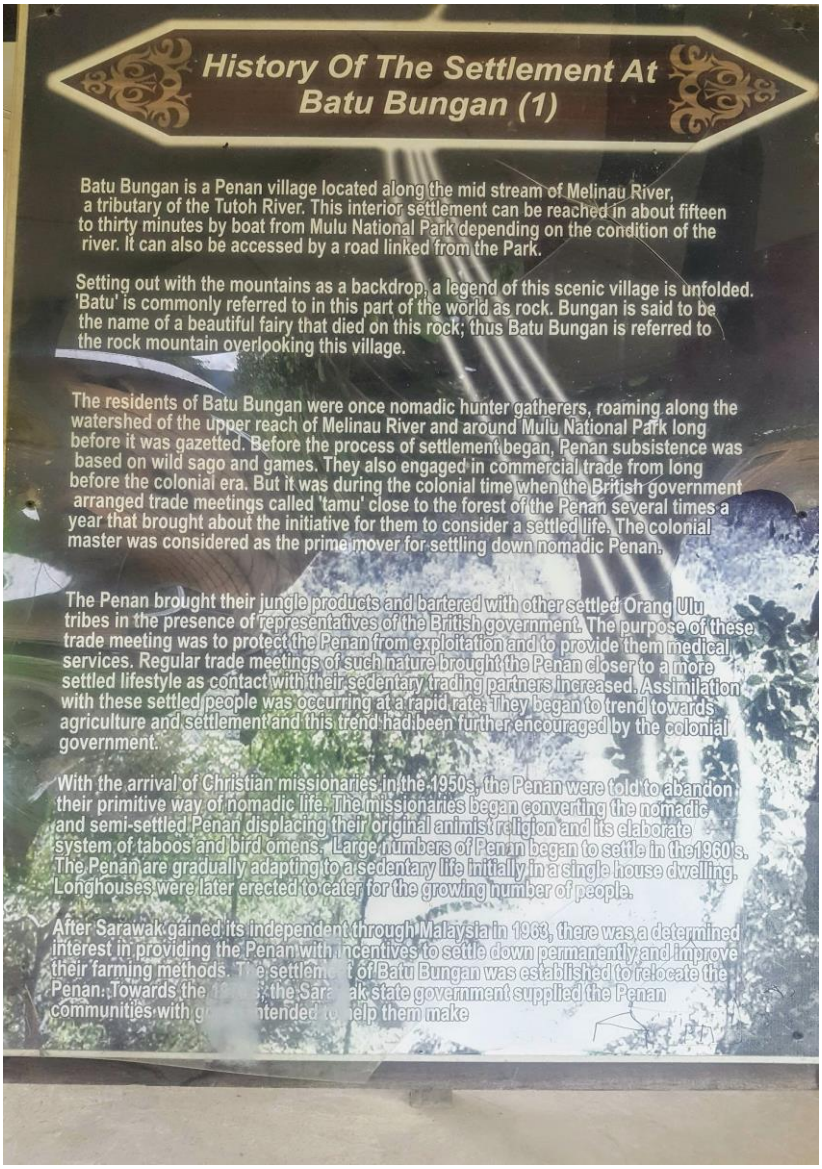


Figure 5.8: A Batu Bungan Cultural Information Board (DeLoach, 2019)

Neoliberal Representations of Nature and Indigeneity

The park represented nature and indigeneity in several ways that commodified or objectified them. As previously reported, the Clearwater and Cave of the Winds Tour commodified and dehumanized Penan people through the selling of their traditional goods, and reduced their culture and history to run-down information panels. This tour

included a longboat ride down the Melinau River, a stop at the Batu Bungan (Penan) Handicraft Market, tours through Cave of the Winds and Clearwater Cave, and the opportunity to wade in a swimming hole at the end.

After visiting the Handicraft Market, we rode further upriver until we reached a dock attached to a long flight of stairs cascading up a cliff to a platform at the entrance of the cave. Informational signs and panels were erected on the boardwalk, explaining the geological history of the cave and how it formed (Figure 5.9). Our guide gave us a minute to read them, and then explained the history of its discovery. He said it was discovered by locals in the 1800s, an expedition in the early 1900s, and then an expedition with the Royal Geographical Society of England in the late 1970s. He then announced that we were all standing on top of 2 human remains. The boardwalk was built on top of them. I tried to look underneath the platform, but all I could see were some scraps of sheet metal strewn on the ground. I asked our guide where the burials were, and he said that they were underneath the scraps of metal.

Figure 5.9: Cave of the Winds platform (May 26, 2019)

According to Mosen, while most nomadic Penan remains were left in huts, sometimes people left the remains of their loved ones in a cave if one was nearby. Our guide did not describe the cultural significance of cave remains, only that they were beneath our feet. I asked one of the guests at my hostel, who was going on the same tour the next day, to let me know if her guide told her group about the remains. When she returned from the tour, she informed me that her guide did not mention the burial. From this informal interview, I learned that this information is not provided on all tours, and there is nothing publicly written about it. This scene on the boardwalk at the mouth of Cave of the Winds reflects park priorities that value profit over people, geological education and entertainment over respect for human remains. For the remainder of the tour we walked through Cave of the Winds and Clearwater Cave, and our guide provided information about cave formations. During the course of a single tour, indigenous culture was treated as something to be consumed, and their bodies were covered and rendered invisible for the convenience of paying customers of a cave experience.

One of the most famous attractions at Mulu Park is the "Bat Exodus," in which millions of bats stream out of Deer Cave almost every day between 4-6pm. I took the mile-long boardwalk through the rainforest to the entrance of Deer Cave, where benches in a mini amphitheater formation were set up for tourists to watch the bats fly out. There was a snack bar at the back of the platform with beer, soft drinks, snacks, and noodles. It was spectacular to witness the bats leave the cave in ribbon-like formations. While the display impressed tourists, it was set up in a way that explicitly commodified the landscape as something to be consumed in exchange for money.

Figure 5.10: View from “Bat Exodus” Viewing Platform (DeLoach, 2019)

Cultural Aspects of Tourism

According to Mulu Park administrative staff, there are several ways in which tourists can learn about local people’s history, culture, and livelihood. The Community Liaison, Cara Walsh, said that visitors can learn from local guides, the Batu Bungan handicraft market, and the informational display at the market. She said, “The park management has also hired some local people with knowledge of history and culture to give lectures to guides.” Park management implemented these lectures as part of guides’ formal training through the Park Product Course in April 2018. Another administrative staff member said, “we encourage visitors to express an interest in local culture,” offer tours of the Penan community at Long Iman, and inform people of cultural opportunities in the brochures (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2019).

Figure 5.11: “Authentic Penan Artifacts” in park headquarters (DeLoach, 2019)

In regards to cultural training and the use of guides as a medium through which to convey cultural knowledge to tourists, I found cultural information on the tours to be sparse, superficial, and often referred to their culture in the past tense. For example, a piece of Penan culture is programmed into the Garden of Eden tour. On our mile walk to the cave, we passed a large tree on the bank of a stream. The tree had slash marks crisscrossed on the trunk. Our guide stopped in front of the tree and told us that it was a poison dart tree. He explained that Penan put the poisonous sap on the tip of their blowpipe darts for hunting. I asked if Penan still took the sap from this particular tree. He said no, that Penan do not use this tree anymore because it is now for display for tourists. By exploiting a single tree as part of a cultural exhibit, the park simplifies and represents Penan and their livelihood as an object in space, detached from the people. In addition, this particular tree is no longer used for its ascribed purpose, further alienating the people from the land, and prioritizing a tourism experience over livelihood. While park

management hired locals to teach guides about cultural values, these local people share their traditional knowledge without reaping the benefit or ownership of their story.

Concerning the encouragement of tourists to take an interest in local culture and visit Long Iman, I mentioned previously that none of the brochures mention cultural opportunities, not even the Handicraft Market. I found it peculiar that an administrative staff member would make these claims. Upon hearing a woman at my hostel express interest in learning more about culture and visit local communities, I suggested that she ask park headquarters about opportunities to learn about local culture or even to visit Long Iman. Later that day she returned to the hostel and informed me that when she asked the main office about cultural opportunities, they told her that there are none.

"The Park is the People"

An email with the park manager, Erik Bauer, who is from South, depicted the park's priorities and their representations of nature and indigeneity as a tourism asset Africa (personal communication, June 24, 2020). Bauer, experienced world heritage manager from South Africa, spoke about nature, culture, and local participation strictly in terms of their value in tourism, and feasibility to integrate them into tourism agendas. He also regarded Mulu Park as having a strong and positive relationship with Penan. His perspectives on successful park management and community relationships reflect neoliberal ideals that conflict with Penan points of view about the park.

Bauer explained that Borsarmulu, the company that runs the Mulu tourism zone, "holds the cultural aspects of the Park in high esteem." However, he addresses the importance of cultural and local aspects only in terms of its value to tourism and

economic development. For example, in terms of UNESCO's nomination and management guidelines, he explained, "the Park is mainly scored/evaluated on its natural values rather than its cultural assets, with limited references to the Indigenous people and how to manage or rather integrate them into the tourism effort." He used vocabulary that identified and measured the cultural and human aspects of the park in terms of "values" and "assets," and referred to both "managing" Indigenous people and "integrating" them into Borsarmulu's prescribed tourism agenda. The intent to "integrate" Indigenous people into tourism plans assumes that the tourism objective is happening regardless of local people's interest in being involved. There was no implication of local leadership, influence, or collaboration in this exchange.

He continued, "there were *(sic)* a lot of uncertainty whether [local integration] will *(sic)* even work – from a business perspective. The risks involved were great. Also, whether the Penan were willing to be part of a tourism effort or not." He shared his thoughts from a business standpoint, the language of which suggests that local inclusion is risky and could create obstacles for the Borsarmulu enterprise. While he claimed that the park management plan "states clearly that it is a key function of the Park's tourism activities to benefit the locals and to act as a responsible growth node in the Upper Baram area," he really only suggested that locals can benefit if they are not a detriment to the tourism agenda. Furthermore, identifying tourism as a "responsible growth node" is another way to control people's interactions and lives within the park. He implies that tourism is the best and most "responsible" economic option for local people in relation to Mulu Park.

Furthermore, Bauer praised the integration of local people into Mulu Park's tourism economy as a success compared to other parks around the world: "In my opinion and with previous experiences in Africa in terms of heritage management, Mulu is ticking a lot of boxes that other properties are still striving for in terms of fully fledged local participation, but struggle to attain." Bauer suggests that Mulu is relatively successful in the way of "fully fledged local participation," but does not specify what this total integration entails. Again, he demonstrates the achievements of local participation according to how well the outcome synchronizes with tourism goals.

The manager also explained that Mulu is in a unique position because the Sarawak government trusts Borsarmulu, a private company, to manage a world heritage site. He attributes the park's success to management from the private sector:

> The Mulu situation is not that unique (a WH [World Heritage] property and Indigenous locals in close proximity), but the agreement to manage the Park and inherently the relationships, is quite special. For a government to fully vest its trust in a private company to develop, manage and oversee a WH property which includes a sensitive hunter-gatherer people, is not common practice and might not work in other parts of the world (personal communication, June 24, 2020).

First, the idea that managing the park "inherently" manages the relationships between people and the park naturalizes and justifies the current management structure. Second, he bears a particular mindset that relationships, like business, should be managed. He is also implying that the protection of the World Heritage property naturally results in the protection of the people. He follows a conservation model that is capitalist in character, and differs from the rhetoric and values that Penan expressed.

Bauer also asserted, "We have arrived at a point where the Park is the People and vice versa." In other words, these attributes of Mulu Park's management framework, from local participation in tourism to private capitalist governance, has allowed the park

to reach a pivotal point in which the park and the people merge. He conveyed positive messages about the human and cultural aspects of the park. However, he mentioned the spatial proximity of Penan communities to the park without any specificity to the interconnections and merge between the park and the people that he promoted. The declaration that "the Park is the People" fails to connect people to the land, and instead reduces people into a tourism exhibition.

Absence and (Mis)Representation of Penan Stories

At Mulu Park, Penan culture is recognized only as a tourism product, which leaves Penan narratives mostly absent from the park. I observed a lack of representation of Penan stories and perspectives on tours, and the presence of obstacles hindering Penan to be able to share their stories at the park. Specifically, their narratives are neglected through the trivialization of Penan culture, scarcity of Penan guides, and insufficient collaboration with Penan communities. As a result, other narratives are more visible at the park that overshadow, and sometimes conflict with Penan narratives. In addition, park management keeps local hunting and foraging privileges secretive from the public, serving to maintain a pristine image that the park management wants to project to the world. In these instances, Mulu Park's narratives are at odds with, and dominate, Penan narratives.

Community Relations and "Local" Hires

Based on my observations, interviews, and the views of local informants, there is a significant disconnect between the park administration's views of satisfactory local

participation in tourism and Penan's perspectives on their insufficient engagement at the park and with the land. As described previously, Penan narratives reflect livelihoods and places of memory within the park. In addition, I asked my informants what they thought about the park and its management. Most voiced satisfaction that the land inside the park border is protected, but were also displeased with their low level of involvement and decision-making power.

Dimas, upon answering my question about his involvement with park decision-making, explained (with Chris as translator) that the park only consults with him when the decision involves the Batu Bungan (Figure 5.12) community in some way, mostly if it is about hunting inside the park. When I asked Dimas and Chris if they are satisfied with park management, Chris replied, "We are happy that the park is here because it is protecting the forest, but community relations could be better" (personal communication, May 27, 2019). When I asked Kus at Long Iman his opinion of the park, he said, "I scheduled a meeting with Brian Clack [the old manager around 2010], with a translator, and asked him to contribute 2 - 5 ringgit [0.50 - 1 USD] per park guest to the Long Iman community. He never gave me an answer and it never happened." While local residents with whom I spoke expressed tension and dissatisfaction with their relationship with park management, the park manager has a confident outlook on these relationships. This ideology is contrary to the Penan narratives that I heard.

Figure 5.12: Batu Bungan (DeLoach, 2019)

Park management determined that 82% of park employees are local, defining "local" as residents of particular communities listed in the 1974 Park Proclamation (Table 5.0) (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020). Walsh defined local as "originating from villages outside the boundaries of the park and longhouses listed in the attached Proclamation 1972. Also, those married to locals and currently residing in the surrounding villages are considered as locals." The defined local communities determined by the Park Proclamation are Kuala Tutoh, Batu Belah, Long Panai, Long Terawan, Long Melinau, Sungai (Long) Iman, Sungai Abang, Sungai Ubong, and Sungai Tapin (1972). Out of 18 guides who work for the park, 5 are Penan. Out of the 67 total licenced guides (including freelance), a total of 12 are Penan (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020).

Park management takes pride in the number of locals who work at the park. When I asked one of the administrative staff how UNESCO influences park management, he pointed out all of the staff in the office exclaiming, “He’s Penan! She’s Kayan! We have lots of local staff working here.” I found this to be a curious interpretation of my question, but it makes sense considering UNESCO reports that say Mulu Park had conflict with local communities in 2010 (UNESCO, 2010). However, park administration and some residents of the Mulu area have different views about what it means to be “local.” When I spoke with a Berawan informant, Samuel, about local employees at the park, he said, “Kelabit is not local! Kayan is not local! Not all Penan are local! They might be local to Sarawak but not many who work at the park are local here” (personal communication, May 31, 2019).

Table 5.0: Local and Non-Local Employment (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020)

Company	**Local**	**Married to Local**	**Non-local**	**Total**
Borsarmulu Park Management (Office Admin, Park Guides, Security, Park Maintenance, General Workers)	58	11	3	72
Borsarmulu Park Enterprise	31	6	-	37

(Office Admin, Housekeeping, Cafe, Gallery Staff)				
Total	89	17	3	108

While park management showcases their success in the percentage of park staff who are local to Mulu, a tourism research study from Kathrin Lilienberg in 2016 concluded that Mulu Park cannot offer employment to all locals, considering the limited number of positions ranging from 110 to 130 (Lilienberg, 2017). In this way, it is crucial to focus not on the percentage of park employees who are local, but instead on the percentage of local people who are employees. In other words, according to Mosen, out of the 250-300 residents, only 12 work at Mulu Park. While the percentage of employees on the Mulu Park limited staff roster is quite high, the percentage of residents in the Mulu area who actually benefit economically from the park is very low. Chis, a resident of Batu Bungan, explained that 30 people from Batu Bungan work for the park. Most of them are employed as boat drivers, housekeepers, and other maintenance positions. Very few community members are tour guides because so few speak English or have a high enough level of education. In addition, residents complained that working at the handicraft market does not provide them with stable income, and only allows them to scrape by on a daily basis (Lilienberg, 2017). Lilienberg's interviewees at Batu Bungan said things like, "Only enough to just live for the day" (p. 53). With a limited number of opportunities, in a business model that prioritizes tourism over all other kinds of

economic livelihoods, the small corporation Borsarmulu and the Sarawak Forestry Corporation control the economic and ideological framework of an area almost the size of Chicago. They control the way interactions with the land are allowed to happen.

Ownership of Stories

At Long Iman, some of my informants expressed frustration and discomfort over territorial disputes between Penan and Berawan, explaining that Berawan people often claim certain land in and around the park, when it really belongs to them. Berawan also claim ownership of certain stories and discoveries that are allegedly those of Penan origin. In explaining the origins of Lang Cave, Wawan explained, "Berawan people claim that the cave was named after a Berawan who discovered it. This is not true. Penan found it and named it Eagle Cave" (personal communication, June 2, 2019). Mosen hesitated to tell me about cave discoveries. He was concerned that Berawan people would be angry with him if they found out he was claiming that Penan discovered these caves (personal communication, June 2, 2019). However, Mosen, Wawan, and Kus all confidently asserted Penan people's collective ownership of these stories. Furthermore, these disputes reflect tension in claims of origin and indigeneity to the Mulu area.

While residents of Long Iman disclosed their culture and versions of stories to me, the Garden of Eden tour and the encounter with the poison dart tree illustrate how Penan culture and stories are misrepresented, if not omitted. After identifying the tree and its purpose in Penan life, our guide proceeded to explain that Penan thought that it is taboo to eat garlic or onion with any animal that was killed with the blowpipe. He said they believed it would make the meat poisonous to eat. He then alluded to his own

culture, Berawan, and said, “Meat is gross without garlic or onion. Fortunately, Berawan people don’t have this belief. We make our food delicious.” While the guide’s comparison between Penan culture and his own may have been perceived as a joke, the comment negatively portrayed a culture that was not easily defended, and more easily misrepresented, as Berawan make up a larger percentage of guides than Penan.

In addition, our guide led us to Lang Cave and Deer cave, where he described the caves’ discoveries. He explained that a Berawan man named Lang discovered the cave in the 1970s while chasing a wild boar. He told us the story behind the name of Deer Cave, that locals would hunt the deer that gathered inside the cave to drink the salty guano water. When I asked him when the cave was discovered, he said the 1830s, but was also quick to add that a Berawan person discovered it. In this instance, Berawan are more easily able to tell their version of these stories than Penan.

Figure 5.13: Garden of Eden Tour, Deer Cave (June 9, 2019)

Obstacles for Employment

As previously mentioned, 12 Penan from Long Iman (Mosen, personal communication, June 3, 2019) and 30 from Batu Bungan (Chris, personal communication, May 27, 2019) work for the park. Berawan make up 60% of the guides, while Penan constitute 19% (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020). This means that Berawan are more often able to share their perspectives on cave discoveries and stories of the land compared to Penan. One of the reasons for the low number of Penan guides is because the courses and exams to become a licensed guide are difficult to pass. Perspective guides must pass a three-week Generic Park Guiding Course run by the Sarawak Forestry Corporation and a two-week Mulu Park Product Course. This course consists of ecology and geological sciences (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020).

Wawan told me, "I could not become a tour guide because I did not pass the required geology course" (personal communication, June 2, 2019). Wawan, the man who led me on a hike, pointing out forest materials and explaining their purpose, could not obtain a guide license. He speculated that it is difficult for people like him to pass the course because many Penan do not have a high school education. Secondary school costs money, and many Penan do not have enough money to send their children to school past primary school (Wawan, personal communication, June 2, 2019). There are other obstacles as well. I met a 15-year-old girl at Long Iman who could not join her friends at the secondary boarding school because she grew up in a nomadic family and did not have a birth certificate. All things considered, the fact that park management hires Penan to teach certified guides about their culture, but are not considered to be qualified guides

themselves, reflects the valuation of natural/scientific knowledge as more important and legitimate than Penan knowledge of the land. The park's refusal to recognize Penan as valid knowledge holders further separates people from the land they previously inhabited.

"Pristine" Wilderness and Hunting Rights

On our walk through the secondary forest surrounding Long Iman, Wawan noted that Penan often hunt(ed) with blowpipes, showed me the types of wood and rattan vines used to construct the weapon, and identified the tree that produces the sap used for the poison darts that kills their game. He explained that the game commonly hunted such as deer and wild boar become more difficult to find as deforestation outside of the park worsens due to oil palm plantations (personal communication, June 2, 2019).

According to Walsh, the Gunung Mulu National Park Proclamation of 1974 outlines the "privileges given to local communities to hunt deer, mouse deer, wild boar and to collect certain non-timber forest products in specific areas of the park" (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020, Gunung Mulu National Park Proclamation 1974). Notice that Walsh identified local access to the park's resources as a "privilege," but not a right. According to Dimas, a community leader at Batu Bungan, while Penan in the surrounding communities utilize their hunting and foraging privileges, park management wants them to avoid heavily trafficked tourist areas (Dimas, personal communication, May 27, 2019). This is not just for safety reasons. He said, "Sometimes tourists see somebody with a rifle or blowpipe and will wonder why hunting is allowed in a national park." He explained that instead of telling tourists about the local access agreement, tour guides must lie and tell visitors that people only carry weapons for

protection. His son chimed in, “I wish people knew more about our way of life. The park could do better with that” (Chris, personal communication, May 27, 2019). This situation depicts how Penan livelihoods are at odds with the “pristine” image that the park management wants to project to the world.

Dimas also expressed anxiety that they could lose their privileges to hunt and forage. When I initially asked him and Chris if Batu Bungan residents are allowed to hunt inside the park, he said, “Legally, no.” They explained that park management looks the other way and lets them as long as they are discreet and stay out of the way. The Proclamation of 1974 (National Parks and Nature Reserves Ordinance, 1998, 2008) explains the parameters of local privileges to hunt and gather specific forest resources, including a list of communities that fall under this jurisdiction (1974). However, Batu Bungan is not on the list, even though it is directly across the river from the park boundary. In this way, the people at Batu Bungan experience a constant threat of losing a vital aspect of their economic stability and culture.

In this chapter, I reported the narratives that Penan residents and park management tell about the land at Mulu Park. While visiting Penan communities Long Iman and Batu Bungan, I found that my Penan informants’ narratives of the forest reflected ways of life, memories, discoveries, and legends that illustrate a relationship to land connected to Penan identity. At the same time, narratives conveyed to visitors within Mulu Park reflected World Heritage OUV. Furthermore, most aspects of the park were centered from a business perspective. The few allusions to Penan were presented in ways that commodified and objectified their culture, and the scarcity of Penan tour guides results in the misrepresentation or omission of Penan narratives. In brief, I observed that

Mulu Park protects and promotes World Heritage values and neoliberal conservation management approaches much more than they protect or recognize local Penan values and livelihoods. In the next chapter, I explore how these World Heritage values and conservation agendas advance neocolonial environmental governance at Mulu Park.

Chapter 6:

Results Part II: World Heritage as a Neocolonial Paradigm for Environmental Governance

According to IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer, Christine Gomez, the responsibility of World Heritage Site conservation always lies with the state party (personal communication, May 6, 2020). In the case of Mulu Park, the Sarawak Forestry Department oversees the management of World Heritage Sites in Sarawak (IUCN, 2000). "The World Heritage Committee and IUCN are only technical and international support," Gomez said (personal communication, May 6, 2020). Although UNESCO and IUCN claim only a small role in the management of World Heritage Sites, Mulu Park management aligns much more with UNESCO conservation ideals than local values. Penan values reflect livelihoods and places of memory within the park, while park narratives reflect the Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) for which the site earned its World Heritage status. The park's tourism and education highlight its geological and ecological importance to the world, including some of the largest and most biodiverse caves in the world and notable bat populations. There is very little focus on cultural values, except for passing remarks on cave tours. Park values distinctly align more with UNESCO Outstanding Universal Values than Penan.

There are two ways in which World Heritage contributes to a neocolonial framework for environmental management at Mulu Park. First, World Heritage universalizes natural values in a way that includes some aspects of the land and excludes

others. In this way, World Heritage tells a story that separates marginalized people from their lands and knowledges for the benefit of power-laden systems (Haraway, 1988). Second, when addressing "human" aspects of a natural site, they rely on "antipolitical strategies to produce the appearance of inclusion and to naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority in ... traditional territories" (Youdelis, 2016, p. 1374). In what follows, I provide evidence of how the World Heritage paradigm and management help perpetuate colonial legacies of environmental governance at Mulu Park.

Setting "Natural" Values in Stone

"How does IUCN define 'nature'?" I asked World Heritage Conservation Officer, Christine Gomez. She proceeded to describe the 4 natural OUV criteria used to determine natural World Heritage nominations: natural beauty (vii), significant geological processes (viii), outstanding ecosystems (ix), and biodiversity (x). She made it clear that the World Heritage definitions of natural values are "set in stone," meaning they can only be interpreted within the bounds of the OUV descriptions (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). The rigid definitions of natural values allow no room for aspects of a site that do not fall under the OUV criteria. The Conservation Officer also informed me, "Effective site management is determined by how well a site conserves their outstanding universal values." As a result, UNESCO and IUCN treat site values that do not fall under the OUV criteria as secondary, and do not prioritize the local livelihood and cultural values in the conservation of a site.

The prioritizing of science and natural resource conservation contributes to the absence of narratives about people and culture in the park. The "natural" OUV criteria for

nomination to the World Heritage List reinforces these conservation priorities. For example, criteria (x) states:

> (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation. (UNESCO, n.d. -c)

The caves at Mulu have the largest number of different species of bats, and one of the largest colonies of free tailed bats in the world (UNESCO, n.d. -a). The bat colonies in Deer Cave are one of the most popular attractions at Mulu Park, and according to UNESCO, one of the most important phenomena from a conservation standpoint. It is important to note the phrase, "from the point of view of science and conservation." The problem with this notion is that science and conservation cannot have a point of view. Only people have points of view. In this way, UNESCO uses the "god trick" (Haraway, 1988) by claiming objective judgement via science and conservation. The reification of OUV emulates Haraway's argument that power-laden systems work by claiming to see "everything from nowhere" (p. 581). UNESCO's strategy works to validate and naturalize an exclusive conservation agenda.

"Threats" to OUV

Not only does this focus on OUV exclude local values, it can also foster opposition to local values. For example, the most recent IUCN Outlook Assessment for Mulu Park identifies traditional hunting and gathering as a "moderate" threat to the OUV of the park due to potential overexploitation (2017). IUCN requests updates on the monitoring and management of traditional hunting privileges for local communities. In fact, hunting rights are considered the only "current" threat to the park, while logging, oil palm plantations, and over-tourism are considered "potential" threats. In this way, the

WHC pits Indigenous livelihoods against OUV. They support and promote the pristine narrative that Mulu Park management presents to the world and serves to hide Penan narratives, needs, and livelihoods. The classification of both local and corporate extractive behavior as threats further reflects the Western idea that humans are universally damaging to nature (Gomez-Pampa & Kaus, 1992).

Furthermore, my IUCN informant, Christine Gomez, explained that threats to any OUV of a site are considered a global issue because sites are of global importance. "If a site loses its status, it is sad, not only for the site or the nation, but for the world." She used poaching for illegal international trade as an example. The problem of poaching at a site is likely a problem of the nation, and therefore a problem of the world (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). While claiming global responsibility for World Heritage Sites may seem appropriate, it elicits conflicts of heritage ownership, sacrificing situated knowledges and values for the sake of a "greater cause" and excludes locals. Sachs (2010) explains that in this way humanity is burdened with an expectation that everyone must protect the earth in the same Eurocentric way. UNESCO adopts a universalizing approach to a list of hegemonic values towards heritage, which adversely work to romanticize and protect certain 'universal' natural phenomena while ignoring others. At Mulu Park, the caves and bats are showcased and protected for all the world, while Penan livelihoods and values are not. The reliance on OUV creates distance between people and their land by claiming global ownership of particular resources of value within the property.

Neocolonialism in Mulu Park World Heritage Evaluations

IUCN Outlook Assessment

Because there are thousands of World Heritage Sites, the WHC claims it cannot monitor them all. The WHC only monitors and evaluates sites when issues are brought to their attention that would require a State of Conservation review. While WHC State of Conservation reviews are conducted as needed, the IUCN Outlook Assessments are completed for all natural and mixed sites every 3 years (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). The assessment is meant to recognize well managed sites, and help identify the most pressing conservation issues. It involves assessing the current state and trends, threats, and effectiveness of protection and management of the site's OUV (IUCN, 2012).

Every 3 years, IUCN site assessors draft an assessment. It is then reviewed by knowledge-holder consultation groups (including researchers, site managers, NGOs, relevant national management authorities, community groups, etc.) and expert reviewers (IUCN, 2012). Next, the report is assessed by state parties. They pay close attention to any discrepancies or conflicting information to confirm that the report is accurate (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). Reports are then reviewed by experts in the region before they are passed on to the regional office. The assessment is then reviewed and approved by the IUCN World Heritage panel (IUCN, n.d. b).

The site management effectiveness is then rated on a scale from "Good" to "Critical". The Conservation Officer said that they try to make sure that the ratings are fair, since not all state parties have the same resources. Also, according to the Outlook Guidelines, "no new research is carried out and site visits are not involved." Therefore, the Outlook

Assessment does not replace more in-depth evaluation processes such as the WHC State of Conservation reports. The IUCN World Heritage Outlook assessment is important for keeping track of the state of conservation of natural WHS so that they can provide technical assistance to sites that need it (IUCN, n.d. b).

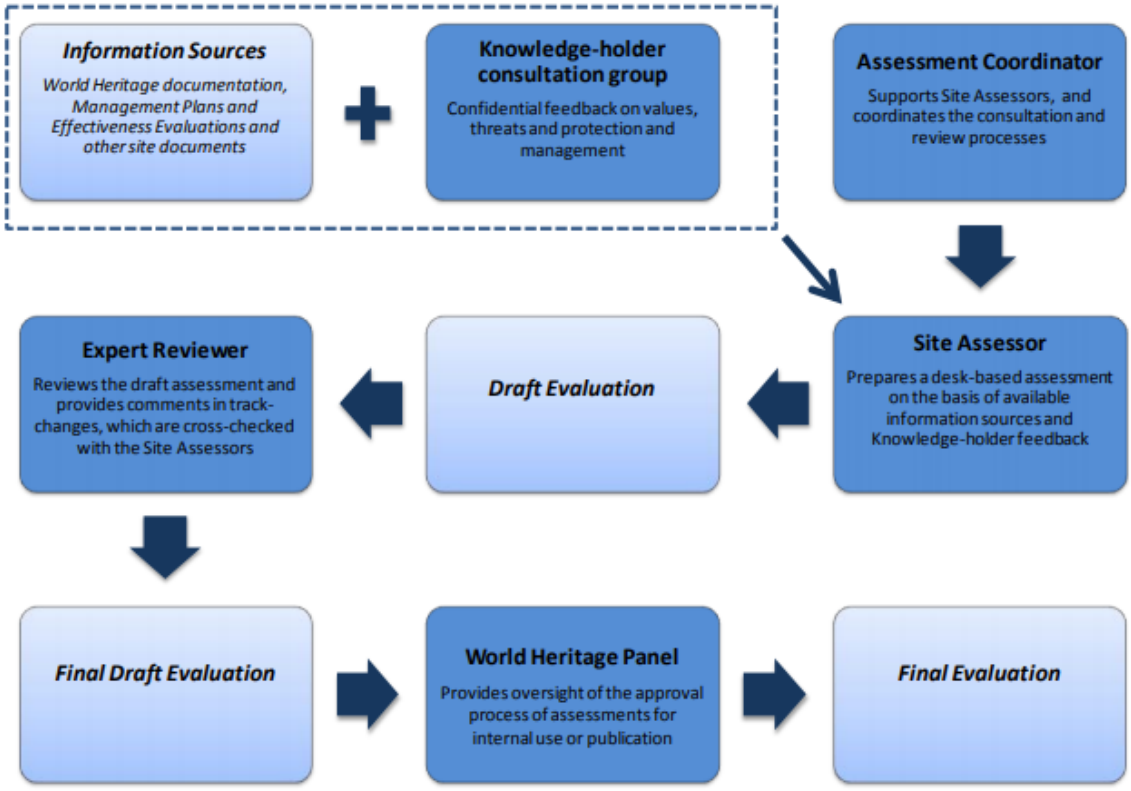


Figure 6.0: Roles in the Conservation Outlook Assessment Process (IUCN, 2012, p.11)

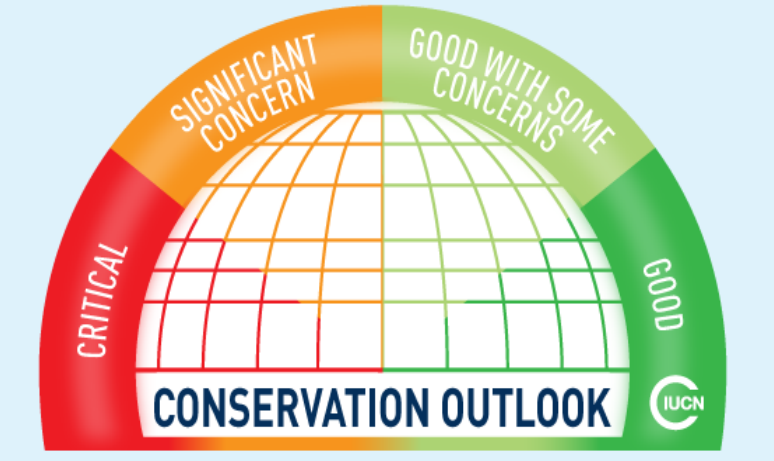


Figure 6.1: Rating categories for Conservation Outlook Assessments (IUCN, n.d. -d)

While the Outlook Assessment allows community groups the opportunity to contribute to the site evaluation process, there are also barriers to local participation. First, if the consultation form is only available in English, Spanish, and French, local stakeholders who do not speak these languages would find difficulty providing information. Because of this, many Penan would struggle to contribute to the assessment. Also, while they rely on the WHC State of Conservation to produce more in-depth evaluations of sites, the Conservation Officer informed me that the State of Conservation reports are only conducted when issues are brought to UNESCO's attention (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). As a result, the last time the WHC conducted a State of Conservation report at Mulu Park was in 2010 because that was the last time anyone informed UNESCO about an issue.

Mulu Park State of Conservation Reports

Issues threatening the state of conservation at Mulu Park were brought to UNESCO's attention in 2001 and 2009, with respective follow-up reports in 2002 and

2010. The State of Conservation reports are public documents on the UNESCO World Heritage website for each WHS. In 2001, Indigenous groups had concerns regarding the expansion of Mulu Park to include the Gunung Buda area because of their lack of inclusion in the expansion proposal. Specifically, Indigenous groups in Gunung Buda submitted a claim with a land tribunal to argue that they should be allowed to manage the Gunung Buda area. The Sarawak government denied their claim because "there was no properly surveyed boundary of their claimed lands" (UNESCO, 2001). For this reason, the people of Gunung Buda were against the proposed expansion of Mulu Park into their traditional lands. According to the State of Conservation report, IUCN said that the Sarawak government assured that "the new management plan addresses issues relating to local peoples' use of and benefits from the Park as well as the new contractual arrangements for management of the Park…" (UNESCO, 2001). The 2002 report resolves these concerns, stating that the government made the decision not to expand Mulu Park to include Gunung Buda (UNESCO, 2002).

In 2009, the WHC and IUCN received word of hydro-electric dam projects that could threaten the OUV of Mulu Park, and marginalization of local communities because of lack of inclusion in the park or consultation in park decisions (UNESCO, 2009). For example, the report described the conflict between Mulu Park and Berawan communities because of "lack of compensation for traditional land rights obtained for construction and expansion of hotel development e.g. the Royal Mulu Resort, on land which has traditionally belonged to the Berawan people" (UNESCO, 2009). Furthermore, the report mentions complaints that Indigenous people in the Mulu area do not benefit from the park tourism industry, and suggests that the park management hire more locals as guides. The

WHC claims, “this lack of engagement of local communities could threaten the effectiveness of management and impact the integrity of the property” (UNESCO, 2009). The WHC provided a list of requests of the Sarawak government and Mulu Park management to remedy the above issues. The World Heritage Committee “recommended that the State Party give due consideration to the involvement of Indigenous peoples and other local communities in planning and implementing decisions … and to seek their full co-operation in its management” (UNESCO, 2009). WHC then provided the document in Figure 6.2, explaining their various requests, including an updated report in 2010 detailing the State Party’s solutions to these problems.

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document *WHC-09/33.COM/7B*,

2. Recalling Decision **26 COM 21B.15**, adopted at its 26th session (Budapest, 2002),

3. Takes note of the reports of on-going conflict of land rights within and adjacent to the property which, if not urgently resolved, could threaten the effectiveness in managing the property and impact its integrity;

4. Requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed on the above allegations concerning unresolved claims of traditional land use as well as on ways in which the State Party and the management authority of the property have been engaging with community leaders to effectively resolve conflicts surrounding land rights and benefit sharing from tourism;

5. Also requests the State Party, in line with the provisions under Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, to provide information on development of dams in the region surrounding the property and to carry out an assessment of potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;

6. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2010,** a progress report on the above issues, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010.

Figure 6.2: Gunung Mulu National Park (Malaysia) (N 1013) (UNESCO, 2009)

In 2010, the Sarawak government submitted a new report to the WHC explaining the conflicts at hand and their resolutions. The report detailed the insignificance of land

disputes in relation to the park, the percentage of local hires, and other benefits that local communities reap from the park economy. The State of Conservation report starts:

> The State Party acknowledges that there have been land-claims by a group of local people, but notes that the land under dispute is outside the boundary of the property, and is owned by a private company. The State Party's report gives an explanation of the legal basis for land claims and compensation and considers that the claims are tenuous. It notes that the impact of these disputes on the management of the property is not significant. (UNESCO, 2010)

In other words, because the Indigenous land disputes were outside the boundary of the park, the disputes were not relevant and did not affect the integrity of the park. Furthermore, the Sarawak government argued that these land claims were illegitimate.

Regarding Indigenous community involvement at the park, the WHC stated that the government provided direct evidence of local community inclusion. The State Party mentioned hunting and foraging rights of local community members. They also noted that 84% of the 94 employees of Mulu Park were from local communities, mostly Berawan and Penan. 72% of guides also came from these communities (UNESCO, 2010). The report also mentioned that the Special Park Committee included local community leaders, which gives them decision-making influence at the park. Furthermore, the Sarawak government included other benefits to local communities, "including the contributions of tourism income to local people, such as through service provision and handicraft products" (UNESCO, 2010). Overall, the WHC and IUCN perceived that Mulu Park had sufficient procedures in place for conflict resolution and cooperation between park management and local communities.

Analysis

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, IUCN and the UNESCO WHC hold the park to strict standards regarding environmental conservation practices. UNESCO acknowledges the subsistence and social value of land to Indigenous people, and includes participation of local people in conservation projects as an important component of World Heritage. Paragraph 14 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention states, "Participation of local people in the [World Heritage Site] nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the site" (Colchester, 2003, p. 40). However, after reading UNESCO's State of Conservation reports for Mulu Park, UNESCO's prioritization of local community inclusion is not convincing.

As Borras & Franco (2010) explain, international organizations tend to assume that Indigenous integration into the market economy is inevitable, and therefore the displacement and exclusion problem in protected areas is considered a "side effect" of development, rather than a problem to tackle directly. For example, the 2002 State of Conservation Report documents a concern for the lack of inclusion of the local people in decisions regarding plans to expand Mulu Park. Although UNESCO emphasized inclusion of locals in decision-making, the report explicitly prioritizes the expansion of the park rather than the wishes of the locals. It states:

> The World Heritage Committee recommends that the State Party raise the issue of the possible participation of Indigenous people in the planning of the extension of the World Heritage site at the appropriate time in the future. (UNESCO, 2002)

The idea of expansion of Gunung Mulu Park was a concern for local people, and UNESCO requested that the state of Sarawak attempt to include them in the planning

process. However the report never directly requested that the state give local communities decision-making power regarding the proposal to expand. In fact, the IUCN World Heritage Nomination proposal for Mulu Park explicitly supported the expansion, that Gunung Buda would be a very important addition to the WHS. “Certainly the Gunung Buda area has substantial values and should be eventually incorporated into the site” (IUCN, 2000, p. 58). Similar language was used regarding land disputes in the 2009 report. The WHC recommended that park management “seek their full co-operation” in park decisions (UNESCO, 2009). Cooperation does not equate to consensual or equal participation in park decisions, and implies that park goals should move forward regardless.

Furthermore, UNESCO and IUCN have different standards of what counts as local inclusion compared to Penan ideas of inclusion. For UNESCO and IUCN, income from selling handicrafts was a satisfactory way for local people to be included in the park economy. This standard is contrary to Penan, who expressed concerns about lack of community funding or compensation from the park, and the meager income earned from the handicraft market. Regarding local employment, while UNESCO and IUCN applauded the 84% local employment rate at the park, my Penan informants found these numbers to be controversial (see *Local Hires* section in Part I).

While UNESCO and IUCN publish guidelines for local consultation and inclusion, and involve local stakeholders in their monitoring and evaluation procedures, protocol surrounding consultation and inclusion of local and/or Indigenous people in national parks is a tool to neutralize Indigenous challenges while maintaining colonial power structures (Youdelis, 2016). Overall, UNESCO and IUCN claim to prioritize local

inclusion in natural WHS, yet if local stakeholders voice complaints, all they require is an explanation from the state party. In this way, the State of Conservation reports and Outlook Assessments show favor to the state parties and their neoliberal agenda for conservation, instead of catering to local needs.

Anti-Politics, Local Inclusion, and Private Management

Anti-Political Strategies for Local Involvement

UNESCO and IUCN encourage anti-political methods of local community relations at sites such as "local inclusion/participation," "consultation," "technical support," and "Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)," that encourage superficial inclusion of local people into site initiatives. Vague anti-political guidelines for "local participation," for example, can easily be interpreted by the park management as hiring Penan to sell bracelets to passing tourists, as described in the previous chapter. These formalities allow World Heritage Sites to meet a particular standard in management best practices, while still maintaining authority in decision-making power. From the perspective of my Penan informants, relations between their communities and Mulu Park management are less than satisfactory, and their inclusion in the park decisions and economy are not acceptable.

IUCN stresses that "consultation is indispensable" to the Outlook assessment process (IUCN, n.d. -a). The IUCN Conservation Officer said IUCN requires that site managers practice "proper stakeholder consultation," encouraging sites to make sure that there is discussion among park managers and local stakeholders to prevent conflict, and

ensure that “everyone is on the same page” (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention explains, “States Parties to the Convention are encouraged to ensure the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities … in the identification, nomination and protection of World Heritage properties" (UNESCO, 2019). The manual later states, “Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to enable them to have a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the property” (p. 30).

The IUCN Conservation Officer stressed that FPIC is an important component of the Outlook Assessment process (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). Site managers must comply with FPIC by safeguarding local stakeholders’ decision-making abilities. She also emphasized that IUCN and the WHC serve only as technical support of WHS, but that the responsibility of conservation falls on the state parties (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020). Technical support is a term used to deny responsibility for decisions that are inherently political. While science and technical methods of support should not be motivated by politics, “these processes are themselves always infused by politics, and occur within larger political contexts” (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 50). According to Buscher (2010), “Since development institutions are not mandated to mingle in politics, but to stimulate ‘technical’ development, they must follow the political strategy of portraying their development targets as non-political in order to justify their intervention … thereby replacing (local) alternatives” (pp. 31-32).

These are some examples of anti-political management methods that are used for WHS. While they claim to value local communities as partners in the protection of World Heritage, both the Conservation Officer and Operational Guidelines provided very little direction regarding what consultation and participation should entail. At Mulu Park, the consultations that UNESCO and IUCN conducted for their evaluations have not relieved any local grievances. Antipolitics is a strategy used in conservation projects to maintain legitimacy when faced with conflicts, contributes to the neoliberal economy, and "fuels and obscures (global) inequality" (Buscher, 2010, p. 29). Buscher explains, "Conceptually vague and anti-political policy discourse is 'required to conceal ideological differences, to allow compromise and the enrollment of different interests to build coalitions, to distribute agency and to multiply criteria of success within project systems'" (Mosse, 2004, cited in Buscher, 2010, p. 29). UNESCO and IUCN encourage anti-political methods at sites that encourage cursory inclusion of local people in site initiatives without challenging the neocolonial structure in place. These priorities are clear both in UNESCO/IUCN's anti-political solutions and their support of private management of WHS.

Because UNESCO and IUCN only work with aspects of natural World Heritage Sites that fall under their own narrow list of values, they do not prioritize local sovereignty over site management. In fact, IUCN encourages private management of sites. Regarding ownership of Mulu Park, both IUCN and the UNESCO WHC approve its privatization. The IUCN World Heritage Nomination states, "the proposal to contract the management out to a private body … could result in a more effective management regime" (IUCN, 2017, p. 59). In the State of Conservation report for 2001, the WHC

mentions the plan to privatize the park "aimed at enhancing management," and that the plan "has been drafted in a manner that supports this possibility" (UNESCO, 2001). The WHC and IUCN work directly with state parties, and are therefore most likely to support state agendas. As Youdelis (2016) states, "this apolitical approach facilitates tourism development projects that benefit government and industry and not Indigenous people" (p. 1374).

Conclusion

I investigated the World Heritage system's role in supporting and perpetuating neocolonial structures of environmental governance at Mulu Park. I first found that World Heritage universalizes natural values in a way that prioritizes the protection of certain aspects of a site and excludes others (Haraway, 1988). While the World Heritage system claims to have little power over site management, the influence of World Heritage is clear throughout Mulu Park. Mulu Park management prioritizes OUV and scientific knowledge over local values and knowledge, and World Heritage agencies like IUCN consider OUV criteria to be "set in stone" (Gomez, personal communication, May 6, 2020).

In addition, UNESCO and IUCN's World Heritage policy discourse reflect neocolonial, neoliberal, and anti-political procedures for site management. World Heritage nomination and management plans for Mulu Park support the privatization of the park under the Borsarmulu tourism agency, uphold the ideology that humans are damaging to nature, and use technocratic language for addressing conflict. World Heritage agencies employ anti-political approaches to solving problems related to local

community inclusion, which results in the persistent centering of state and Western powers for meaningful decision-making at the park (Coulthard, 2014).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In my research, my intention was to juxtapose what the park prioritizes for conservation, scientific inquiry, and commercialism through the messages (both explicit and implied) delivered to visitors, in opposition to what locals told me about their lifeways and values with regard to the same landscape. I immersed myself in the Mulu Park experience as a tourist, and conducted informal interviews with local residents about their values regarding the land. During my week at Long Iman, I found out that Penan stories of the land reflect livelihoods, memories, and cultural meaning. On the other hand, during my time at Mulu Park, I found that park narratives reflect UNESCO World Heritage OUV and neoliberal agendas of capitalist consumption of nature and culture. My results raise important questions about how Penan are excluded from park management, the influence of BINGOs in which aspects of the park are valued and protected, and which narratives are emphasized and which are omitted.

Although UNESCO and IUCN declare that they play a minor role in the management of WHS, Mulu Park management aligns much more with UNESCO conservation ideals and management guidelines than local values. This is important because while state parties are responsible for the management of World Heritage Sites, the World Heritage paradigm shapes discourse around conservation while exonerating themselves of responsibility. They use anti-political tools to maintain their status as a technocratic support system, as Gomez claimed (personal communication, May 6, 2020),

while endorsing and aiding state parties in neoliberal agendas for environmental governance and tourism. In this way, World Heritage works to naturalize conservation of what global entities deem important and valuable at the expense of local knowledges and livelihoods.

Mulu Park is a neocolonial conservation project.

Immediately upon arrival at Mulu Park, the World Heritage influence was clear. First, all of the tours offered, information on display, and promotional materials reflected the natural OUV criteria for selection to the World Heritage List. The park's attractions showcase caves, limestone formations, and forest and cave wildlife. When asked to explain places of importance inside Mulu Park, my Penan informants reported the importance of rivers, landmarks, land use, and past events. The park does not reflect the values or narratives that Penan informants illustrated. Instead, all of these features of the land that the park highlights were studied and promoted in the UK based Royal Geographical Society's Mulu Expedition in 1977, which initiated Mulu's nomination to the World Heritage List in 2000.

Because the park reflects European scientific and World Heritage "universal" values more than it reflects the situated values of local communities, Mulu Park follows the generalized global approach to environmental governance that legitimizes certain forms of knowledge while excluding others (Rodriguez et al., 2007). UNESCO World Heritage employs OUV to highlight the world's similarities as "a reminder of all that unites humanity" (Labadi, 2013). However, at Mulu Park, the application of OUV to a place with situated and embodied values excludes Penan narratives, and alienate residents from the land where they have built their lives for many generations.

In addition, while Labadi (2013) claims that OUV are intended to serve as "reiterative universalism" for state parties to interpret loosely, Gomez, the Conservation Officer from IUCN, declared that the OUV criteria are fixed and inflexible. Furthermore, as UNESCO and IUCN are diplomatic agencies that only work with nation-state parties, and not at the local level, they can easily ignore the cultural politics of specific places like Mulu in the name of dominant conservation agendas. In this way, while Labadi (2013) argues that the World Heritage Convention is not a "neo-Orientalist" system, but is "above all a result of the visions and agendas of the States parties" (p. 20), I argue that the evidence at Mulu Park suggests otherwise. World Heritage is the dominant narrative at Mulu Park, reflecting Haraway's (1988) notion that a place loses its situated knowledges for the advancement of hegemonic scientific and neoliberal projects. In this way, the ideology and management of World Heritage Sites works to advance neocolonial agendas that separates marginalized people from their lands and knowledges for the benefit of power-laden systems.

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention and IUCN advance neocolonial frameworks of environmental governance because they structure their World Heritage nomination criteria, management guidelines, and site evaluations in ways that give precedence to certain conservation values and ideals over others. For natural World Heritage Sites like Mulu Park, UNESCO and IUCN target the property's biodiversity and geological OUV as the central emphasis for conservation, tourism, and scientific inquiry. They use this narrow list of values that reflects their own conservation agendas, and legitimize their influence in the name of science and for the benefit of the world. As a result, Indigenous groups like the Penan, with their own sets of values and livelihoods,

are excluded from narratives about the park land because UNESCO and IUCN defer conservation policy and management to the state parties and themselves, rather than helping to enable environmental governance at the local level.

Mulu Park is entrenched in neoliberal logics of conservation.

Every aspect of the park, whether in tours or interviews with employees, demonstrated neoliberal agendas that prioritized tourism profit over anything else. As reported, the Clearwater and Cave of the Winds Tour commodified and objectified Penan people through the selling of their traditional goods, and reduced their culture and history to run-down information panels. Furthermore, the park built a boardwalk on top of Penan remains, confirming park management's priorities of entertainment and geological education for paying customers over respect for people.

My interview with Park Manager Erik Bauer (personal communication, June 24, 2020) indicated that he gauges the success of the park through a business perspective, and views local Penan community inclusion as a challenge and a "risk" from a business standpoint. He described the importance of local participation from a perspective of how the park benefits from local communities, and not the other way around. For example, he rendered the value of Penan within the park only as a tourism asset, and offered no evidence of local leadership, influence, or collaboration. Three Penan informants (Dimas, Chris, and Kus) echoed this notion that Penan communities do not have much influence in park decision-making (personal communication, May-June 2019). Bauer expressed that the park management plan states that the park must benefit communities, but he only made this suggestion in terms of capitalist development. He also claimed that "the park is

the people," but discussed human relationships with land in terms of its "management." His notion that managing the park "inherently" manages the relationships between people and the park naturalizes the current management structure, and results in what Coulthard (2014) calls "structured dispossession." This perspective reflects the neoliberal ideology that capitalism is the "best" way forward for conservation and sustainable development (Bee et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the neoliberal conservation project of Mulu Park does not connect Penan people to the land, but instead alienates and misrepresents Penan people and narratives through what Salemink (2016) describes as "heritagisation as disconnection". He describes "heritagisation" as a process similar to Harvey's "accumulation by dispossession," commoditizing culture and people, separating the culture/skills/lifeways (object of knowledge) from the people who embody them. For example, when the Berawan tour guide misrepresented and undermined Penan's use of the poison dart tree, he objectified and interpreted Penan culture for the purpose of conveying a narrative different from what Penan may have told. Furthermore, park management hired Penan to teach guides about their culture (Walsh, personal communication, June 19, 2020), instead of hiring Penan to teach visitors themselves. In this way, the park appropriates and controls Penan culture, disconnecting Penan as producers of knowledge, so that park management can control the economic value of heritage (Salemink, 2016).

Mulu Park and the World Heritage Convention employ anti-politics.

UNESCO and IUCN wield anti-political language in their Operational Guidelines, State of Conservation reports, and Outlook Assessment methods and reports. They use

anti-politics as a tactic to take glaringly political decisions and deny the politics of those decisions in order to legitimize bureaucratic power (Ferguson, 1994). Buscher (2010) describes the anti-political discourse as "mobilizing metaphors such as participation, ownership, capacity building and good governance, in order to ensure and justify support and resources (Mosse, 2004, in Buscher 2010, p. 29). These "mobilizing metaphors" are easily recognizable at Mulu Park and in UNESCO and IUCN's language around the involvement of local people in World Heritage Sites.

Mulu Park established what scholars identify as "community departments," highlighting the benefits communities receive from the existence of the park (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). These departments use anti-political "mobilizing metaphors" to claim inclusivity and legitimize the current management structure (Myers et al., 2018; Youdelis, 2016). As discussed, there is a disconnect between what she described as the park's definition of "local" compared to what some of my local informants defined as "local." Also, the opportunities that she described in which local culture is included at the park is objectifying and alienates people from their culture.

My research suggests that UNESCO and IUCN prioritize global or universalized OUV over local values through their monitoring and evaluation protocol and approaches to local inclusion, and use anti-political language to claim local consultation on a performative, superficial level. The State of Conservation reports for Mulu often use words like "cooperation" and "participation" in regard to local inclusion in park decision-making. However, "cooperation" does not equate to consensual or equal participation in park decisions, and implies that park goals should move forward regardless. According to Youdelis (2016), this anti-political protocol for encouraging cooperation among parks

and people is a "tool that helps evade present-day Indigenous politics" (p. 1377), and serves to "naturalize the park's ultimate decision-making authority" (p. 1374). Their strategies perpetuate neocolonial power dynamics that further inequality and dehumanization of Indigenous people at Mulu Park, rather than alleviate it.

Mulu Park and the World Heritage Convention cause Indigenous dispossession.

Scholarship discussing neoliberal conservation, anti-politics, and universalizing hegemony in science and policy, argue that all of these processes cause the dispossession of marginalized groups of people (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020; Coulthard, 2014; Ferguson, 1994; Haraway, 1988; Nichols, 2020; Salemink, 2016; Simpson, 2014; Youdelis, 2016). Capitalism and protected areas share the same violent process of enclosing land in ways that transform social relations, and separate people from social practices (Buscher & Fletcher, 2020). Nature and people in both capitalism and protected areas are "appropriated, preserved, enslaved, exalted, or otherwise made flexible for disposal" (Haraway, 1988, p. 592). While my Penan informants expressed their relationship to the land in terms of situated, embodied experiences, Mulu Park appropriated these assets to assemble an enclosure for scientific research and tourism. In addition, the World Heritage Convention appropriates and exalts Mulu Park as a place of global importance, meaning Mulu belongs "to all the peoples of the world" (UNESCO, n.d. d). This dismisses Penan ownership--or what Leanne Simpson (2017) refers to as "consensual attachment"--to the land for the sake of a united humanity and opportunities for capitalist development (Sachs, 2010).

As a neoliberal conservation project, Mulu Park dispossesses Penan people because dispossession is necessary for capitalism to exist and thrive (Nichols, 2020). Neoliberal conservation management at Mulu Park requires exploitative relationships with land that erase non-capitalist relations, and in the process, producers are separated from their subsistence or cultural product (Salemink, 2016). Applying Coulthard's (2014) understanding that capitalism and dispossession are entrenched in colonialism, I argue that the dispossession of Penan at Mulu Park is neocolonial as well. Mulu Park's dispossession of Penan is connected to colonialism not only because the Sarawak government displaced them from their land for territorial expansion and control. The state also reifies exploitative interactions with land in ways that separate Penan people from their particular relationships with the land.

Furthermore, it can be said that Penan communities around Mulu Park experience what Parrenas (2018) calls "arrested autonomy," or "those who appear free but are really not" (p. 156). We can see arrested autonomy in the fact that certain Penan communities have access privileges within Mulu Park, but these policies are subject to the whims of the Sarawak Forest Department, and subject to change. We can see it in the forest surrounding Long Iman that Penan rely upon but risk losing to corporate palm oil. Arrested autonomy is also present in the opportunity to sell handicrafts to tourists, even though it does not provide a living wage. It is clear in the freedom to apply to become a tour guide, despite obstacles that make chances of employment slim. Penan surrounding Mulu Park seemingly have the freedom to make independent choices about their livelihoods. However, these choices can be made only within the confines of

(neo)colonial governance that transformed their lands for capitalist projects that escalate uneven development.

Conclusion

Considering my research results, and the differences in narratives between Mulu Park management and Penan informants, I conclude that there are fundamental issues with the conservation of park values and the story they project to the world. However, the latest IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment for Mulu Park states, "GMNP [Mulu] is an outstanding protected area in an excellent condition and with an effective professional management regime" (2017). Because UNESCO and IUCN measure the site's management based on the effective conservation of the narrow list of OUV, and performative local consultation guidelines, Mulu Park is considered a revered and successful World Heritage Site. The celebration of Mulu Park as a model World Heritage Site endorses neocolonial environmental management structures and ignores the interests, values, and struggles of Penan people in their traditional territories.

Future Considerations

While I conducted fieldwork at Mulu Park in May - June 2019, Penan and Berawan in the Mulu area organized protests and erected blockades near Long Terawan, a Berawan community close to the location of Radiant Lagoon's oil palm project, cutting thousands of acres of forest proclaimed as NCR land up to the Mulu Park boundary. Governor Taib Mahmud often snatches land for his own benefit (*Sarawak Report*, November 25, 2010). As mentioned in chapter two, Taib gifted his son, owner of Radiant Lagoon, the land near Long Terawan, for this extractive project (Figure 7.0). Samuel, a Berawan homestay owner on the Mulu Park border, drew for me the web of corporate

owners and family members of the governor controlling and squeezing every possible financial benefit out of the lands in the Mulu area. From Taib's son, Abu Bekir, deriving benefits from Radiant Lagoon's palm oil project, to Taib's sister, Raziah's, ownership of Borsarmulu Park Management, the money circulating back to Taib "has made them some of the richest people on the planet" (*Sarawak Report*, May 6, 2019). Samuel pointed out that these connections mean that the money tourists pay for admission to Mulu Park, one of the last remaining old-growth forests in Eastern Malaysia, circulates back to palm oil corporations that destroy the remaining lands, right up to the Mulu Park border (personal communication, May 31, 2019).

The circumstances of Mulu Park's existence as a neoliberal enclosure within the grip of nepotism is important because while the land within Mulu Park might be protected, the park is part of the same capitalist system that destroys the land outside of it, and these processes are intrinsically dependent upon each other. As Larsen (2016) reminds us, "Conservation is no longer the bulwark against neoliberalism and the penetration of market ideology, but intimately tied to it" (p. 25). The existence of Mulu Park as a place of conservation allows for there to be places of extraction and deforestation elsewhere (Sullivan, 2009).

In addition, international NGOs use an anti-political approach to environmental governance that influences not only conservation management within park boundaries, but also works to endorse extractive industries beyond conservation enclosures (Chapin, 2004; Corson, 2011; Fairhead et al., 2012; Ojeda, 2013; Rocheleau, 2015). In the eyes of international powers in conservation, human rights and the politics of state parties are irrelevant to global environmental agendas. For example, as previously discussed,

effective management of World Heritage Sites is evaluated based on the successful management of the site's OUV. Deforestation outside of the park border are considered "potential" threats to Mulu Park, but only if the extraction penetrates the alleged park boundary (UNESCO, 2001; 2002; 2009; 2010), and is therefore not a viable reason to remove Mulu Park from the World Heritage List, let alone move it to the "List of Heritage in Danger".

While some might argue that the horrors of deforestation in Sarawak (and Indigenous land loss therein) far outweigh the struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in an area stringently protected from harm, I argue that there is more potential for research in this area. Future research could examine more closely the Mulu land grabs, and the relationship between Borsarmulu, Radiant Lagoon, and World Heritage in endorsing destructive extraction industries illegally encroaching on NCR land just beyond the Mulu Park enclosure. At Mulu Park, I observed indifference to the land grabs, and no UNESCO State of Conservation report was issued for the 2019 grievances. This begs the question, where was IUCN and the World Heritage Committee during this social justice and environmental crisis? How do these conservation superstructures endorse and perpetuate environmental imperialism when such crises are a stone-throw away from World Heritage Sites and dramatically affect the communities who help maintain the site's integrity? How does Mulu Park's conservation serve as a justification to destroy forests elsewhere? This research would require a closer examination of the Sarawak Forestry Corporation and the bureaucratic roles of international actors both fighting for and hindering Penan land rights in Sarawak.

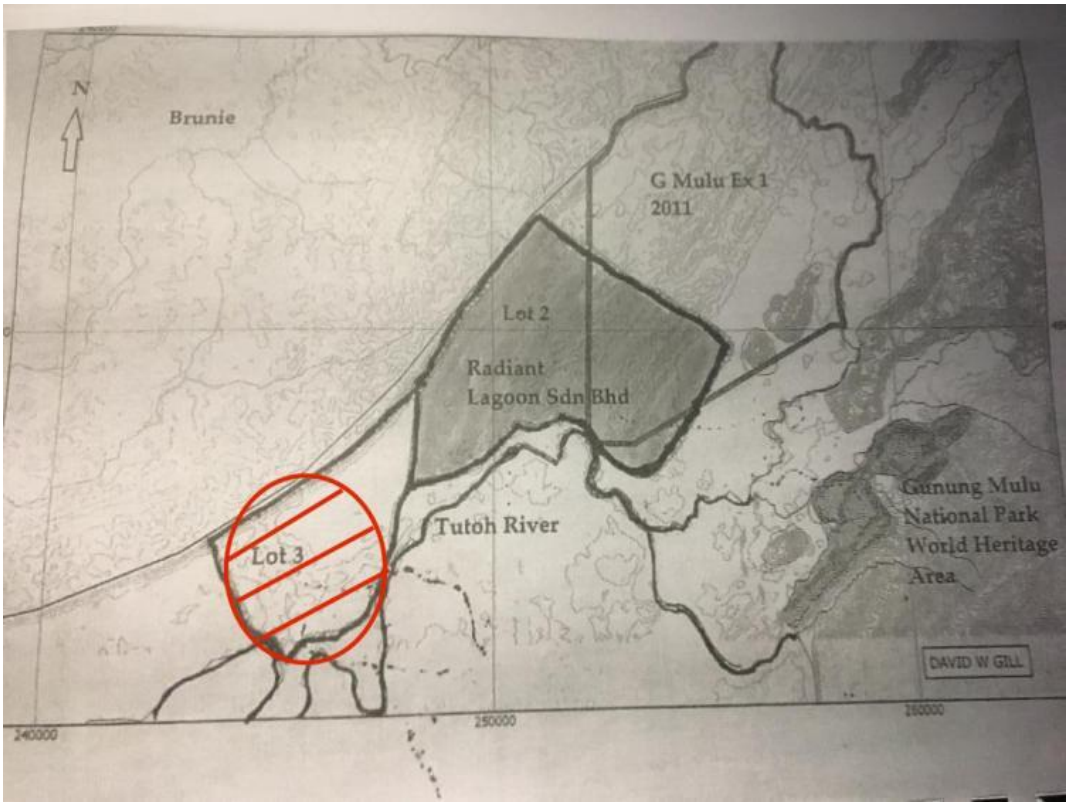


Figure 7.0: Half of lot 3 has been flattened but the remainder can still be saved (*Sarawak Report*, May 5, 2019)

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Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Balqish: Go-along interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 05 June 2019. Translated by Vina. Long Iman resident; female, middle-aged; expert knowledge about edible and medicinal plants; as a tourism opportunity showed me around the medicinal garden (**Vina** occupied the role of translator.)

Bauer, Erik (Park Manager): Email interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 24 June 2020. Male from South Africa.

Chris: Semi-structured interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 27 May 2019. Resident of Batu Bungan; Penan, male, young adult; freelance tour guide.

David: Long Iman resident; male, approx. 30 years old; speaks English; freelance tour guide of Mulu Park; led Night Walk Tour of surrounding forest of Long Iman, pointing out night critters; wants to encourage tourism at Long Iman to help economy.

Dimas: Batu Bungan leader; male, middle-aged; activist against palm oil and native land encroachment. Funded by Bruno Manser Fund, went to the UK and Paris to report Sarawak's Native Customary Rights violations. Interviewed him about his (or community's) relationship with Mulu Park management. (**Chris**, his son, freelance tour guide, occupied the role of translator.)

Gomez, Christine: IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer. Remote interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 06 May 2020. IUCN World Heritage Conservation Officer; located in the UK.

Kus: Semi-structured interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 02 June 2019. Translated by Wawan. Long Iman leader; male, middle-aged, activist against palm oil and native

land encroachment. Starred in the latest Bruno Manser film (released July 2019); asked him about relations with park management and places of memory/significance within the park boundaries. (**Wawan** occupied the role of translator.)

Mosen: Semi-structured interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 03 June 2019. Translated by David. Long Iman leader; male, middle-aged; "supports government/palm oil" (according to others in the community); asked him about places of significance/memory within park boundaries. (**David** served as translator.)

Nanik: Semi-stuctured interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 06 June 2019. Translated by Vina and David. Long Iman resident; female, elderly (in her 80s); played various Penan instruments and sang; asked her about places of memory/significance. (**David** and **Vina** served as translators.)

Samuel: Informal interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 31 May 2019. Homestay owner in Mulu, male, middle aged, Berawan; speaks English.

Vina: Informal interview. Conducted by Haley DeLoach, 05 June 2019. Long Iman native but lives in the city of Miri; female, young adult; speaks English; owns a weaving shop in Miri (weaves traditional Penan baskets, bags, mats); we would eat together, walk together, and she taught me to weave.

Walsh, Cara: Email interview, conducted by Haley DeLoach, 19 June 2020. Community Education and Research Liaison Officer at Mulu Park; female, origin unknown.

Wawan: Go-along interview, conducted by Haley DeLoach, 02 June 2019.

Long Iman resident; male, middle-aged; speaks English; freelance tour guide of Mulu Park; took me on hike to waterfall (not inside park) pointing out useful/edible/medicinal forest resources along the way, explaining history and politics, etc.

Appendix B: Mulu Park World Heritage Nomination Criteria

Criterion (i): Earth's history and geological features
The concentration of caves in Mulu's Melinau Formation with its geomorphic and structural characteristics are an outstanding resource which allows a greater understanding of earth's history. The caves of Mulu are important for their classic features of underground geomorphology, notably the sediment sequence and the layered sequences of wall notches that demonstrate an evolutionary history of more than 1.5 million years. This exceptionally long period makes the caves a valuable data source on geo-climatic fluctuations during the Pleistocene. The giant doline of the "Garden of Eden" is a massive expression of karstic collapse whose proximity to the nearby Sarawak Chamber (the world's largest) offers one of the world's finest examples of the collapse process in Karstic terrain. Also of significance are the foot caves found around the base of the limestone mountains which demonstrate the processes of lateral planation in a karst environment. IUCN considers that the nominated site meets this criterion.

Criterion (ii): Ecological Processes
GMNP provides outstanding scientific opportunities to study theories on the origins of cave faunas. The food webs of Mulu's caves and the large-scale transfer of food energy from forest to caves by bats and swiftlets is an exceptionally well-studied process here. Many of Mulu's troglodytes belong to very ancient groups which have largely disappeared from the modern land surface and are now represented by a few widely scattered species. These evolutionary processes in response to tectonic change are on-going. IUCN considers that the nominated site meets this criterion.

Criterion (iii): Superlative natural phenomena or natural beauty and aesthetic importance
With its deeply-incised canyons, wild rivers, rainforest-covered mountains, spectacular limestone pinnacles, cave passages and decorations, Mulu has outstanding scenic values. The natural phenomenon of millions of bats and swiflets leaving and entering the caves is a superlative wildlife spectacle as is the less-easily appreciated life of the invertebrate world in the caves. IUCN considers that the nominated site meets this criterion.

Criterion (iv): Biodiversity and threatened species
GMNP also provides significant natural habitat for a wide range of plant and animal diversity both above and below ground. Its lowland and montane forests are botanically-rich in species and high in endemism. Mulu is one of the richest sites in the world for palm species and assumes greater importance in perspective of the transformation of much of Borneo's forests. The park also hosts one of the highest number of bat species (28) and populations in the region as well as a exceptionally diverse range of troglobitic species. IUCN considers that the nominated site meets this criterion.

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